

Kgs. 2:3), Jericho (2 Kgs. 2:5, 7), and Gilgal (2 Kgs. 4:38).

These bands of prophets are viewed not as false prophets but as servants of the one true God, and were affiliated with true prophets such as Elijah (2 Kgs. 2:3, 5, 7). Therefore they must have received some kinds of message or revelation from God; this was the essential requirement for being called a 'prophet'. (For example, they had special knowledge from God that he would take Elijah on a certain day; 2 Kgs. 2:3, 5.) However, none of their prophetic utterances is preserved in the canonical Scriptures, which may suggest that their prophesying was not ordinarily counted equal in value or equal in authority to the messages of the primary, established prophets such as Samuel and Elijah. The distribution of prophecy to these bands of prophets foreshadows the outpouring of prophecy on 'sons and daughters ... menservants and maidservants' (Acts 2:17-18) in the new covenant.

The involuntary 'prophesying' and physical incapacity of Saul and his messengers (1 Sam. 19:20-24) is a unique incident in Scripture, and should not be generalized into a claim that there were 'ecstatic' bands of prophets throughout the land. (1 Sam. 10:5-13 indicates that prophecies were accompanied by music, but not that they were involuntary or ecstatic.)

#### *Women as prophets*

Several women are named as prophets in the OT: Miriam in the Pentateuch (Exod. 15:20); and in subsequent books Deborah (Judg. 4), Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14-20; 2 Chr. 34:22-28), and the wife of Isaiah (Is. 8:3). (There is also a female false prophet, Noadiah, in Neh. 6:14.) These women prophets also foreshadowed the new covenant, when God would pour out his Spirit on all people, and 'sons and daughters' and 'menservants and maidservants' would all prophesy (see Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18).

Apart from Miriam's ministry in song and the song of Deborah and Barak, women prophets in the OT ministered privately to individuals rather than publicly to large groups; thus Deborah rendered private judgments (Heb. *mišpat*, Judg. 4:5; see also 2 Kgs. 22:14; 2 Chr. 34:22). The activity of women as prophets was distinct from the activity of the OT \*priests, who were male, and who

had the responsibility of teaching God's laws to the people (Mal. 2:7; cf. Deut. 24:8; 2 Kgs. 12:2; 17:27-28; 2 Chr. 15:3; Neh. 8:9; Hos. 4:6; Mic. 3:11), and was distinct also from the activity of kings, who ruled the people. Thus the OT also foreshadows both the NT's encouragement of women to prophesy in churches (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5) and its prohibition of their teaching or governing the whole church (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:2; 1 Cor. 14:33-35). (See \*Man and woman.)

#### *Other names for prophets*

Other names applied to prophets include 'man of God' (1 Sam. 2:27; 9:6; 1 Kgs. 13:1-10; 17:24; etc.) and 'seer' (this English term translates two different Hebrew words which seem to be nearly synonymous: *rō'eh* in 1 Sam. 9:9, 11; 1 Chr. 9:22; 29:29, etc., and *hōzeh* in 2 Sam. 24:11; 2 Kgs. 17:13; 1 Chr. 21:9, etc.). Another common title is that of God's 'servants' (1 Kgs. 14:18; 18:36; Jer. 25:4), and God himself calls them 'my servants the prophets' (2 Kgs. 9:7; 17:13; Amos 3:7), a title which suggests that God frequently sends them to perform various tasks.

#### *How did prophets receive a message from God?*

The OT records various means of receiving a message from God, including visions (1 Sam. 3:1, 15; 2 Sam. 7:17; Is. 1:1; 6:1-3; Ezek. 11:24; Dan. 8:1-2, etc.; cf. Num. 12:6). Dreams are also mentioned in the foundational passage, Numbers 12:6 ('If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream'), and Joel 2:28 promises dreams in connection with the future outpouring of a prophetic gift.

The most common means of communication from God to a prophet was a direct verbal message. Several times it is said simply that God put his words in the mouth of the prophet (Is. 51:16; Jer. 1:9; etc.; cf. Deut. 18:18). In places the message is called a 'burden' (Heb. *māsā'*, commonly translated 'oracle'; Is. 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; Jer. 23:33-40; Nah. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1; Mal. 1:1), suggesting that a heavy sense of responsibility and perhaps reluctance was felt by the prophet who received it. In over a hundred cases the reader is told, without further explanation, that 'the word of the Lord came