

to the prophet \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 15:10; 2 Sam. 7:4; 24:11; Is. 38:4; Ezek. 1:3; Jonah 1:1, etc.). In several passages this is said to happen at a very specific time: 'And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him' (2 Kgs. 20:4; cf. 1 Kgs. 18:1; Jer. 42:7; Ezek. 3:16; Zech. 1:7). Sometimes the \*word of the Lord comes in the form of a spoken question which the prophet immediately answers (1 Kgs. 19:9; Jer. 1:11, 13). Finally, in many long sections in the writing prophets, the content of the prophet's message is just presented, with no indication as to how the prophet received it.

The Holy Spirit (often called the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Lord) is seen as the personal agent who comes upon a prophet and makes God's message known to him (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; and note the general statements in Neh. 9:30; Zech. 7:12; cf. Num. 11:24-29).

The prophet is in a regular and unusually vital personal relationship with God and therefore in frequent personal communication with God. It is prophets who stand in the 'council' of the Lord (Jer. 23:18, 22), and the Lord makes known to them what he is going to do before he does it: 'Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7). Such statements connote an amazing picture of personal friendship with God, which is realized in the experience of Abraham (2 Chr. 20:7; Is. 41:8; cf. Jas. 2:23) and Moses (Exod. 33:11; Deut. 34:10). Because prophets are in such close communication with God, they will often just 'know' something that they could not have known using their natural faculties alone, but that had to be revealed by God (1 Kgs. 14:4-6; 2 Kgs. 5:25-26; 6:12; 8:12-13; note Elisha's surprise in 2 Kgs. 4:27 that there was something the Lord had not told him). In the light of such a close personal relationship between God and the prophets, it is noteworthy that the NT epistle of James presents Elijah's prayer life as a pattern for Christians to imitate (Jas. 5:16-18).

### How did the prophets deliver their messages?

Most often prophetic messages were simply spoken aloud, with an affirmation that they were indeed words of the Lord. The prophetic messenger formula, 'Thus says the Lord' occurs hundreds of times throughout the OT. The content of the prophetic message: *God's words to guide, warn, predict, and interpret*

All the kinds of messages needed in a relationship between God and his people are obeyed. respect to the new covenant) also to (when understood and applied rightly with which he requires his people to believe and under obligation to treat all the words of the prophets as the very words of God, words of God's people throughout all ages are under obligation to treat all the words of the Scriptures, they present a strong *prima facie* argument regarding the authority of Scripture. Because many of these authoritative prophetic words were recorded in the OT (cf. Deut. 18:19).

8:7; 1 Kgs. 20:36; 2 Chr. 25:16; Is. 30:12-14; prophet is to disobey or disobey God, and therefore, to disobey or disobey a true the very words of God (2 Chr. 36:15-16). Hag. 1:12), for the words of the prophets are believe and obey them. To believe God is to therefore the people have an obligation to The prophets' words are words of God; surely happen.

potent God predicts something, then it will why this should be so: if an omniscient, omni- 7:16; 14:25; 24:2). It is easy to understand 14:18; 16:12, 34; 17:16; 22:38; 2 Kgs. 1:17; which he spoke by the prophet ... (1 Kgs. pass, 'according to the word of the LORD predicts events, those events surely come to the very words of God. When a true prophet Throughout the OT the prophets' words are *The authority of the prophetic message*

From time to time, dramatic physical symbolism accompanied a spoken prophetic message. Ahijah tore a new garment into twelve pieces and gave ten to Jeroboam to symbolize the division of the kingdom (1 Kgs. 11:30-31); Elisha had King Joash shoot an arrow symbolizing victory over the Syrians (2 Kgs. 13:15-18); Jeremiah smashed a potter's vessel to symbolize irreparable \*judgment coming on Jerusalem (Jer. 19:10-13); Ezekiel dug through the city wall and carried baggage out, symbolizing forthcoming \*exile (Ezek. 12:3-6). Such symbolic acts did not merely make the message unforgettable; they were one form in which the message came.