

Ezek. 1:1-3; Amos 7:14, 15), by which means they also knew what to proclaim. (Acts 28:25; 2 Pet. 1:21) Some showed great reluctance initially. (Ex. 3:11; 4:10-17; Jer. 1:4-10) In Elisha's case, his divine appointment came through his predecessor, Elijah, and was symbolized by Elijah's throwing his mantle or official garment over Elisha.—1 Ki. 19:19-21; see DARRS, pages 467, 468.

Though appointed by Jehovah's spirit, it does not appear that the prophets spoke continually under inspiration. Rather, God's spirit 'came upon them' at certain times, revealing the messages to be announced. (Ezek. 11:4, 5; Mic. 3:8) This had a stirring effect upon them, impelling them to speak. (1 Sam. 10:10; Jer. 20:9; Amos 3:8) They not only did things that were out of the ordinary but also their expression and manner doubtless reflected the intensity of their feeling. This may explain in part what is meant by individuals' "behaving like prophets." (1 Sam. 10:6-11; 19:20-24; Jer. 29:24-32; compare Acts 2:4, 12-17; 6:15; 7:55.) Their total concentration and zealous boldness in their mission might cause their behavior to appear strange, even irrational, to others, just as a prophet so appeared to military chiefs when Jehu was anointed. Yet, on realizing that the man was a prophet, the chiefs accepted his message with full seriousness. (2 Ki. 9:1-13; compare Acts 26:24, 25.) When Saul, in pursuit of David, was caused to 'behave like a prophet,' he 'stripped off his garments and lay "naked all that day and all that night," during which time David evidently escaped. (1 Sam. 19:18-20:1) This does not mean that prophets frequently went naked, for the Biblical record shows the contrary. In the two other cases recorded, the prophet went naked for a purpose, to represent some facet of his prophecy. (Isa. 20:2-4; Mic. 1:8-11) The reason for Saul's nakedness—whether to show him as a mere man, divested of his royal garments, impotent against Jehovah's own regal authority and power, or for some other purpose—is not stated.

Jehovah used various methods to inspire the prophets: verbal communication through angels (Ex. 3:2-4; compare Luke 1:11-17; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:1, 2), visions that impressed God's message on the conscious mind (Isa. 1:1; Hab. 1:1), dreams or night visions given while the prophet slept (Dan. 7:1), and messages conveyed while the person was in a trance. (Acts 10:10, 11; 22:17-21) On occasion, music might contribute to the prophet's receiving the divine communication. (1 Sam. 10:5; 2 Ki. 3:15) Similarly, the proclamation of the inspired message was effected in diverse manners. (Heb. 1:1) Generally the prophet spoke it out orally, both in public places and in sparsely populated regions. (Jer. 7:1, 2; 36:4-13; Matt. 3:3) But he might dramatize the message by use of symbols or symbolic acts, as in Ezekiel's portraying the siege of Jerusalem by use of a brick, or in Hosea's marriage to Gomer.—Ezek. 4:1-3; Hos. 1:2, 3; compare 1 Kings 11:30-39; 2 Kings 13:14-19; Jeremiah 19:1, 10, 11; see DREAM; INSPIRATION; VISION.

DISTINGUISHING THE TRUE FROM THE FALSE

In some cases, such as that of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus, God's prophets performed miraculous works that attested the genuineness of their message and office. Not all, however, are recorded as performing such powerful works. (The three essentials for establishing the credentials of the true prophet as given through Moses were: the true prophet would speak in Jehovah's name; the things foretold would come to pass (Deut. 18:20-22); and his prophesying must promote true worship, being in harmony with God's revealed word and commandments. (Deut. 13:1-4) The last requirement was probably the most vital and decisive, for an individual might hypocritically use God's name and, by coincidence, his prediction might see fulfillment. But the true prophet was not solely or even primarily a prognosticator, as has been shown. Rather, he was an advocate of righteousness, and his message dealt primarily with moral standards and their application. He expressed God's mind on

matters. (Isa. 1:10-20; Mic. 6:1-12) Hence, it was not necessary to wait perhaps for years or generations to determine whether the prophet was true or false by fulfillment of a prediction. If his message contradicted God's revealed will and standards he was false. Thus, a prophet who foretold peace for Israel or Judah at a time when the people were engaging in disobedience to God's Word and Law, of necessity was false.—Jer. 6:13, 14; 14:11-16.

Jesus' later warning concerning false prophets paralleled that of Moses. Though using his name, and giving "signs and wonders to lead astray," their fruits would prove them "workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:15-23; Mark 13:21-23; compare 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3.

The true prophet never foretold simply to satisfy human curiosity. Every prediction related to God's will, purpose, standards or judgment. (1 Ki. 11:29-39; Isa. 7:3-9) Often the future events foretold were the consequence of existing conditions; as the people sowed, so they would reap. The false prophets lulled the people and their leaders with soothing assurances that, despite their unrighteous course, God was still with them to protect and prosper them. (Jer. 23:16-20; 28:1-14; Ezek. 13:1-16; compare Luke 6:26.) They imitated the true prophets, employing symbolic language and actions. (1 Ki. 22:11; Jer. 28:10-14) While some were outright frauds, many were evidently prophets who became delinquent or apostate. (Compare 1 Kings 18:19; 22:5-7; Isaiah 28:7; Jeremiah 23:11-15.) Some were women, false prophetesses. (Ezek. 13:17-23; compare Revelation 2:20.) A "spirit of uncleanness" replaced God's spirit. All such false prophets were to be put to death.—Zech. 13:2, 3; Deut. 13:5.

As to those measuring up to the divine standards, the fulfillment of certain "short-range" prophecies, some being accomplished in just a day or a year, gave basis for confidence that their prophecies relating to a more distant future would also see fulfillment.—1 Ki. 13:1-5; 14:12, 17; 2 Ki. 4:16, 17; 7:1, 2, 16-20.

"SONS OF THE PROPHETS"

As Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar explains (second edition, 1952 printing; p. 418), the Hebrew *ben* (son of) or *benet* (sons of) may denote "membership of a guild or society (or of a tribe, or any definite class)." (Compare Nehemiah 3:8, where "a member of the ointment mixers" is literally "a son of the ointment mixers.") The "sons of the prophets" may thus describe a school of instruction for those called to this vocation or simply a cooperative association of prophets. Such prophetic groups are mentioned as being at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal. (2 Ki. 2:3, 5; 4:38; compare 1 Samuel 10:5, 10.) Samuel presided over a group at Ramah (1 Sam. 19:19, 20), and Elisha seems to have held a similar position in his day. (2 Ki. 4:38; 6:1-3; compare 1 Kings 18:13.) The record mentions their building their own dwelling place and the use of a borrowed tool, which may indicate that they lived simply. Though often sharing quarters and food in common, they might receive individual assignments to go out on prophetic missions.—1 Ki. 20:35-42; 2 Ki. 4:1, 2, 39; 6:1-17; 9:1, 2.

PROPHETS IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES

The *prophetes* corresponds to the Hebrew *na'vi'*. The priest Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, acted as prophet in revealing God's purpose concerning his son, John, who would be "called a prophet of the Most High." (Luke 1:76) John's simple mode of life and his message were reminiscent of earlier Hebrew prophets. He was widely recognized as a prophet; even Herod felt some restraint due to him. (Mark 1:4-6; Matt. 21:26; Mark 6:20) Jesus said John was "far more than a prophet."—Matt. 11:7-10; compare Luke 16, 17; John 3:27-30.

Jesus, the Messiah, was "The Prophet," the long-awaited one foretold by Moses. (John 1:19-21, 25-27; 6:14; 7:40; Deut. 18:16, 18; Acts 3:19-26) His ability