

# The Prophet-Leader

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While visiting historic Williamsburg, Virginia, I happened upon the Powell House nestled in the eastern end of the city. It was a cheery home that exhibited family life in the eighteenth century. The guide pointed out that Benjamin Powell had acquired the property in 1763 and practiced his career as an “undertaker” there until 1782. Learning that Powell was a mortician, I immediately looked around the home thinking that I would never have guessed that the lively house was actually a funeral home. Apparently I was not alone in this assumption as another guest verbalized what I was thinking. The guide politely chuckled and then pointed out that in the eighteenth century an *undertaker* was actually what we now call a *contractor*. In truth, Benjamin Powell was a carpenter who *undertook* building projects in the community.

As I imagined the look on the face of a present-day contractor being referred to as an undertaker or a mortician being called a contractor, I was reminded of the confusion and misunderstanding that is caused by using modern definitions and perspectives to frame historical terms and concepts. This misaligned association is known as *presentism*, a term that describes using present-day terms and understanding when considering the historical past. Thus, whenever anyone makes an assumption based on modern or personal experience (or lack thereof) without gaining an accurate historical perspective, they have exercised presentism and jeopardize accurately understanding the past. Like my

experience with the eighteenth-century undertaker, such assumptions distort accurate understanding and lead to faulty conclusions, especially of familiar terms and common concepts.

When it comes to Old Testament leadership, none are more familiar than the prophets. Unlike other contemporary leaders, the Old Testament prophet held a dominant position unparalleled in Hebrew history. Often considered more than a match for kings, priests, and even the masses, Israel's prophets influenced not only the people's religiosity, but also their society's concept of leadership.<sup>1</sup> As such, many considered the Hebrew prophet to be the most important person in Israel's ancient community.<sup>2</sup> With such importance placed upon Israel's prophets and the profound impact they had in unfolding Israel's identity and direction, the Old Testament prophet could be considered Israel's leader extraordinaire.

Understanding the role and position of this leader is especially problematic because of our familiarity with the term and our preconceptions concerning prophets or, in other words, because of presentism. "The word *prophet*'s contemporary usage in our vernaculars is very fluid," Joseph Blenkinsopp points out, "covering such things as prediction, emotional preaching, social protest, and, within the sociological community, millenarian movements and their founders."<sup>3</sup> Accurately understanding the prophet as a leader in the Old Testament requires discipline to avoid the easy association of modern conceptions and terminology. This discipline behooves both a textual and contextual investigation.

### Israel's Textual Prophet

Defining the word *prophet* is a challenging task because so many individuals, roles, and functions have been subsumed under the precept of prophecy. However, many people define the term *prophet* as a person who tells what will happen. Assuming that the ancient Israelites defined and viewed a prophet exclusively as a predictor and prognosticator would be like assuming that Benjamin Powell was a mortician.

An etymological investigation of the terms *prophet* and *leader* can help frame an accurate concept of the prophet-leader in the Old Testament. The English term *prophet* is derived from the Greek *prophetes*, meaning "to speak on behalf of gods." While this is a step in the right direction, the Old Testament's textual origin is Hebrew rather than Greek, so a look at Hebrew word origins should help to establish a good starting point in understanding how the Hebrews defined their prophets. The Hebrew definition of prophet is actually derived from

four Hebrew terms used throughout the Old Testament: *nabi'*, *naba'*, *nataph*, and *hozeh*. With a careful tracing of word histories, these terms can be linked together etymologically and render the meaning of *spokesman*.<sup>4</sup> This definition differs from modern views that a prophet only predicts and prognosticates. When Rodney R. Hutton concluded, "In actual fact, there were no prophets in Israel," he was actually saying there was nothing like what we define and envision as prophets today in ancient Israel.<sup>5</sup> The spokesman conception is illustrated well in Jehovah's description of His prophet: "I will raise them up a prophet [*nabi'*] from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses], and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18; see also Exodus 4:12; Jeremiah 1:7).

Thus, as a spokesman, the Old Testament prophet would say whatever God required him to. If God told the prophet to prophesy of future events, teach, enlighten, chasten, or even criticize, then as God's spokesman, the prophet would do as instructed. If the prophet failed to express God's words, desires, and wishes appropriately, then he would no longer be a spokesman but a voice independent of God (Deuteronomy 13). Thus his role would be violated, and he would be a false spokesman.

Although an adequate historical definition is necessary to understand a prophet, if our examination stops with textual definitions, the concept of the Old Testament prophet might be lost. For example, the Mari letters and the Letters from Lachish also describe their prophets as messengers or spokesmen. In fact, the textual Lachish prophet was also termed *nabi'*.<sup>6</sup> In some ways the Hebrew prophet was similar to the Mesopotamian oracular speakers as well as to the Canaanite and Syrian prophets. But despite the general textual definitions and similarities, Smith concluded that there was a "vast gulf between Israelite and non-Israelite prophecy."<sup>7</sup> The gulf between the ancient prophets is evident as soon as one moves beyond the textual comparisons. For example, when Sidney B. Sperry compared the Hebrew prophet with the Greeks, Babylonians, and others, he wrote: "None had a 'prophet' in the *Hebrew connotation* of the word."<sup>8</sup>

One connotation of the Hebrew prophet [*nabi'*] is its textual connection with leadership. This unique relationship between biblical leadership and prophets is supported by a further look at how the Hebrews textually defined their leadership. A *leader*, in Old Testament Hebrew, is translated from either *nasi'*, *nagiyd*, *sar*, or *rosh*. Once again we find that the oldest available origins of these four related terms render the definition of a leader as a "spokesman" or he who "speaks for another."<sup>9</sup> By definition

the prophet and leader for the Hebrews were synonymous. Orelli once wrote, “No phenomenon analogous to Biblical prophecy, even in form, is anywhere to be found in the world of nations.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, it was not merely having a prophet that separated the Hebrews from their contemporaries, but it was the way the Hebrews conceived of their prophets (spokesmen) that separated them from the rest of the world. This becomes more evident as we step beyond the textual definitions and examine more contextual concepts and prophetic practices in the Old Testament.

### Israel’s Contextual Prophet

*Prophetic selection.* While Moses instructed seventy elders at the tabernacle, Eldad and Medad remained in the camp and prophesied. Upon hearing of the events in the camp, Joshua turned to Moses and said, “My lord Moses, forbid them” (Numbers 11:28). Moses’s reply adds deep insight to the Hebrew connotation of a spokesman and its connection with leadership: “Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29). It seems possible that under the Hebrew connotation of a prophet, every individual who possessed the Lord’s spirit could (or should) speak Jehovah’s words. Not only was this in the realm of possibility, but Moses’s statement also puts it in the realm of desirability.

It must be clear, however, that Moses’s desire that “all the Lord’s people were prophets” was an invitation to speak the words *of* Jehovah but not an invitation to speak *for* Jehovah. Elder Bruce R. McConkie described this difference as “ranks and grades of prophetic responsibility and authority.” He further declared that “every member of the Church should be a prophet as pertaining to his own affairs” and “those who hold offices in the Church . . . should be prophets both as pertaining to their own affairs and the affairs of the organization over which they preside.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, while men and women sometimes performed the prophetic function of speaking Jehovah’s words, their role is distinguished from those who were selected to speak for Jehovah and to be His prophets and leaders. This distinction was reiterated as Christ reminded the restored church of the similarities between the modern prophet, Joseph Smith, and the Hebrew prophet, Moses. He said: “But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses” (D&C 28:2; see also Exodus 4:16).

In this light, Hebrew prophets were not just common messengers, but also exclusive spokesmen for Jehovah. They did not merely exercise

a personal spiritual right but were *selected* by Jehovah as *His* mouthpiece for the Church (1 Kings 14:18). The prophets' confidence in speaking for Jehovah began with an assurance that Jehovah had personally selected them for service. This selection process bound the ancient prophets' allegiance to Jehovah rather than to the people.

Since the Hebrew prophet was selected by Jehovah Himself, he was not bound nor influenced by elections, popular opinions, political persuasion, or public polls. It is evident that the Old Testament *nabi*' did not seek to become Jehovah's spokesman. As a matter of fact, many of the Old Testament prophets attempted to elude the Lord's bidding to prophetic service. Enoch, for example, tried to dissuade Jehovah from extending a prophetic calling, reminding the Lord that he was "but a lad" (Moses 6:31–32). In like manner, Moses tried in vain to convince Jehovah that he was not qualified as a spokesman for he was "slow of speech." Other prophets who attempted similar patterns include Amos (Amos 3:8), Hosea (Hosea 1:2), Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4), and Jonah (Jonah 1–2). Perhaps the prophets' reluctance to accept this calling was due to personal feelings of inadequacy and an overwhelming awe of responsibility. While the Old Testament does not detail every prophet's selection, it is reasonable to assume that the ancient prophets began their prophetic careers with Jehovah's invitation.<sup>12</sup>

The importance of being selected to prophetic service was emphasized by the prophets themselves. For example, Amaziah, a priest of Beth-el, scornfully told Amos to prophesy in Judah, where he could make a living out of it. Amos replied that he was a prophet not because he wanted material gain, nor because of heredity, but because "as I followed the flock and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (Amos 7:15). Not motivated by personal gain or the spokespersonship, the Hebrew leader was in complete servitude to Jehovah because he was called into service by Jehovah.

### **Presentation of the Prophet's Personal Character**

There are over three hundred references about the Old Testament prophets (*nabim*). These refer to individuals ranging from Abraham (Genesis 20:7) to Zechariah (Zechariah 1:7). With such a large group, there is an incredible diversity when taking their personal backgrounds and characteristics into consideration. A quick survey reveals that Abraham roamed the deserts; Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court; Samuel was an apprentice in Shiloah sanctuary; Nathan and Gad were royal chaplains; Amos tended sheep in the hills of Hebron; Elisha was often found behind his father's plow in Jordan Valley; and Isaiah was a

confidant of kings.<sup>13</sup> The noted Jewish historian, Cecil Roth, suggested that Israel's prophets "might be drawn from all ranks of society, from the highest to the lowest."<sup>14</sup>

The Old Testament not only expresses the diversity among the prophets, but it also shows many of the prophets' personal weaknesses. Rather than attempting to embellish competence and boost the people's confidence in a leader by hiding personal imperfections, the Hebrews openly recognized their leaders as *mortal*. Johnson described this phenomenon in the following words: "Jewish writers and sages, fighting against the strong tendency in antiquity to deify founder-figures, often went out of their way to stress the human weaknesses and failings."<sup>15</sup> A good example of this phenomenon is the occasional portrayal of Moses as bewildered, confused, angry, and sometimes doubting.

This candid portrayal is baffling for those who think it weakens the prophet's leadership position in the minds of the people. For the Hebrews, this actually strengthened the position of the prophet rather than weakened it. It demonstrated that it really didn't matter who the prophet was as long as he or she was selected by Jehovah. It wasn't the prophet's personal charisma, style, or connections that defined the essence of Hebrew leadership; it was Jehovah. This emphasized the people's allegiance to Jehovah. Thus, the prophet was accepted as a link between the people and Jehovah by definition, selection, and personal description.

### The Prophetic Message

The prophets emphasized their role as spokesmen by emphasizing that they delivered Jehovah's message, and not their own. In many instances, the prophet introduced messages with specific statements that declared Jehovah as the source of the message. Scholars refer to this as the "messenger formula."<sup>16</sup> The most common phrase used in the messenger formula is: "Thus saith the Lord." Moses used this statement when declaring Jehovah's will to Pharaoh (Exodus 4:22), emphasizing that the fight was not between Pharaoh and Moses, but a matter between Pharaoh and Jehovah. Moses was merely Jehovah's proxy. Other prophets who used this phrase in their declarations include: Joshua (Joshua 7:13), Samuel (1 Samuel 2:27), Nathan (2 Samuel 7:5), Ahijah (1 Kings 11:31), Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:24), Elijah (1 Kings 17:14), Zedekiah (1 Kings 22:11), Elisha (2 Kings 3:16–17), Isaiah (2 Kings 19:6), Gad (1 Chronicles 21:10–11), Obadiah (Obadiah 1:1), and Micah (Micah 2:3). The phrase itself is actually used 413 times throughout the Old Testament text. Other

phrases included in the messenger formula are: “these are the words of the Lord” and “this is the word of the Lord.” Some of the prophets even opened their written works with a messenger formula-type statement. An example of this would be Hosea’s opening words: “The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea” (Hosea 1:1).<sup>17</sup>

Some may suppose that since a prophet is merely a man, the purpose of the messenger formula was to distinguish when the prophet was speaking as a man and when he was speaking as Jehovah’s official messenger. This argument results in endless rationalizations. “Sometimes there are those who haggle over words,” Ezra Taft Benson explained. “They might say the prophet gave us counsel but that we are not obligated to follow it unless he says it is a commandment.”<sup>18</sup> In like manner, some feel that unless a prophet prefaces his message with one of the phrases of the messenger formula, it is not of God. President J. Reuben Clark taught: “There are those who insist that unless the Prophet of the Lord declares ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ the message may not be taken as revelation. This is a false testing standard.”<sup>19</sup> The formula was not provided so the people could determine which of the utterances were truly prophetic, but it was provided as an emphasis and reminder of the prophet’s function as spokesman for the Lord.

### Prophetic Titles

There are numerous titles in the Old Testament text that aid in reconstructing an accurate picture of the ancient Hebrew prophet-leader. While they cannot be considered as definitive terms, they do add to the portrait of the ancient prophet. The titles are important as they often describe various functions of the Old Testament prophet. The most common titles associated with the Old Testament prophet are: Man of God, Seer, and Jehovah’s Servant (or *my* or *His* [Jehovah’s] servants).

*Man of God (is ha’elohim)*. The most obvious meaning drawn from this title is a man who resembles God—a *godly* man. This title describes more than a righteous man and was considered a title of honor. Many thought this title to be synonymous with the word *prophet*.<sup>20</sup> It is important to consider that rather than the prophet just being described as a *godly man* (even though we would assume that he was), *is ha’elohim* affirms the calling of the prophet as God’s (Jehovah’s) man—meaning, chosen by Him. This separates the *Man of God* from all other Israelites, including those who were otherwise *godly*. The title was first bestowed (at least textually) upon Moses (Deuteronomy 33:1).<sup>21</sup>

*Seer (ro'eh)*. Literally translated, *ro'eh* means “one who sees.” Traditionally, it is interpreted as *seer*, “one gifted with second sight or extrasensory perception.”<sup>22</sup> Jehovah allowed certain individuals to see, understand, receive divine communication, or insight as “one who sees with spiritual eyes . . . that which seems obscure to others.”<sup>23</sup> The first mention of a seer is Samuel (1 Samuel 9:19; 1 Chronicles 9:22; 26:28; 29:29). Others connected with this title were Hanai (2 Chronicles 16:7, 10) and Zadok.<sup>24</sup> To assume that these three men of the Old Testament were the only seers would be not only incorrect but also unfortunate. Scholars debate attempts to make the terms, functions, and titles of the Old Testament prophets mutually exclusive. From a contextual perspective, the titles and terms of *prophet* and *seer* appear “parallel in function” rather than exclusive traits.<sup>25</sup> Moses clearly saw things to come and understood that which was obscure to others. This applies to almost every Old Testament prophet as well. Elder John A. Widtsoe taught: “In the sense that a prophet is a man who receives revelations from the Lord, the titles ‘seer and revelator’ merely amplify the larger and inclusive meaning of the title prophet.”<sup>26</sup>

*Servant of Jehovah (ebed)*. Some felt that this title was one of the most important general titles applied to the Hebrew prophet.<sup>27</sup> This title directly links the prophet as a slave, property, or an indentured servant of Jehovah and was attributed to many of the Old Testament prophets.<sup>28</sup> It would be odd for a servant to accept adulation, praise, or glory that rightfully belonged to his or her master. Likewise, the prophets directed the glory and praise to their master, Jehovah. If an indentured servant performed a service contrary to the will of the master, then the servant would be discharged. Likewise, the Old Testament prophets served Jehovah in thought, word, and deed. If there was a deviation, the servant would be dismissed. Moses painfully learned this concept at the rock of Horeb where he failed to follow the instructions of Jehovah (Moses struck the rock rather than speaking to it) and then seemed to present himself as the deliverer when he said: “Must we [Moses and Aaron] fetch you water out of this rock?” (Numbers 20:10) Jehovah chastised Moses for deviating from the title *ebed* (servant) and the role of spokesman by saying, “Ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Numbers 20:12).

## Roles of the Old Testament Prophets

It is important to note that the titles attributed to the Old Testament prophet are wholly consistent with the definition of the *nabi*' (spokesman). This is also the case when considering the roles of the Old Testament prophet-leader. Significant roles attributed to the *nabi*' throughout the Old Testament include intercessor, watchman, and political protector.

*Intercessor.* Lindbloom wrote: "In ancient Israelite society, intercession with Yahweh (Jehovah) was regarded as a function belonging to men who occupied a special position in relation to God."<sup>29</sup> While patriarchs and kings were considered intercessors, the prophets were considered "intercessors par excellence."<sup>30</sup> The intercessor served a dual role by representing Jehovah to the people by speaking Jehovah's words and commands, while at the same time serving as the people's representative to Jehovah.

Numerous examples of intercession are in the Old Testament. Abraham sought to intercede in behalf of the doomed inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah as Jehovah declared His intention to destroy the two wicked cities. Moses spent a lifetime in the role of intercessor or mediator. For example, Moses was sent to Mount Sinai by the children of Israel to hear the word of the Lord (Deuteronomy 5:24). After the Lord spoke to him, Moses said: "I stood between the Lord and you at the time to convey the Lord's word to you, for you were afraid of the fire and did not go up to the mountain" (Deuteronomy 5:5; Exodus 19:9). Not only did Moses carry Jehovah's word to the people, but he also brought the pleas of an iniquitous people to Jehovah. To this, Jehovah responded by saying, "I have pardoned according to thy [Moses's] word" (Numbers 14:20). Samuel, the only other Old Testament *nabi*', who was also called an intercessor, pleaded for the people as he mediated their political desires (1 Samuel 12:19, 23). The intercessory prophets (especially Moses and Samuel), were praised in song (Psalm 99:6), nostalgically remembered by other prophets (Jeremiah 15:1), and considered to be the "exemplars of great intercessors"<sup>31</sup>

*Watchman.* In truth, the watchman could be considered a prophetic title just as easily as a role. It was Isaiah who was specifically referred to as a "watchman" (Isaiah 21:6, 11). Similar terms, such as "scout" and "lookout" also appear in the Old Testament. The role of the watchman was to watch over the people and protect them from immediate harm and loss of identity and theology. In this way, the Old Testament prophet was not only the defender of the people, but the

defender of the faith as well. It is important to note that the prophet not only would see and warn of impending danger from outside the wall, but because of his unique positioning, he would also see and warn of dangers within the walls. Chamberlain described a prophet as one who “fought with tongue and pen, and even life itself, to save the nation from the attacks of its outward foes, and from the social and religious dissension which disturbed it within.”<sup>32</sup>

Although the watchman is textually linked to Isaiah, this role was established long before Isaiah’s birth. While the name itself does not appear in the earlier texts, this prophetic role appears throughout Israel’s history. For example, Noah warned of the impending flood; Joseph forecast the famine; Moses prepared his people for the impending plagues; and Samuel warned the Israelites of the dangers of adopting the ways of their contemporaries when the Israelites desired a king to make them “like all the nations” (1 Samuel 8:20).

*Political protector.* Similar to the watchman, part of the role of the prophets was directly related to the political venue of their time. The prophets were not political revolutionaries, as their aim was to purge the institutions of the kingdom of vice and not to overthrow them.<sup>33</sup> Since the prophet was Jehovah’s spokesman, he represented the Heavenly King before an earthly king. Even though David was anointed by the previous prophet, Samuel, Nathan felt responsible to rebuke David for his conduct with Bathsheba and Uriah. Likewise, Ahijah announced Jeroboam’s selection and his rejection as Israel’s king. Other prophets involved with political intercession and protection can include Azariah (2 Chronicles 15:1), Hanani (2 Chronicles 16:7), Jehu (2 Chronicles 19:2–3), and Elisha (2 Kings 3:16; 9; 13:14).

## Conclusion

With a comprehensive understanding of Old Testament prophets, it becomes evident that they were much more than modern concepts of prophets. Prophets were Jehovah’s spokesmen and as such were obligated to speak His words regardless of what that might include. If a prophet ever deviated from God’s direction and words, then he was considered a *false* prophet. In addition to their defined role as spokesmen, they were selected by Jehovah Himself without regard to training, profession, or rank of society, to be His mouthpiece on earth. As such, the Hebrew prophet became the people’s spiritual guide and life-leader. The Old Testament leader was a watchman, intercessor, and visionary. In reality, his comprehensive role was a role of complete servitude that positioned the Old Testament prophet as Jehovah’s proxy

on earth. Most importantly, the prophet-leader of the Old Testament was a literal reminder by definition, title, and role that it was Jehovah who was their only king, ultimate leader, and only God. If the prophet did not reflect Jehovah, he was a false prophet.

The importance of accurately understanding the Old Testament prophet is essential for those of the restored gospel today. In 1842, Joseph Smith wrote that the Latter-day Saints believed “in the same organization that existed in the primitive church” and then specifically named prophets as part of that organization. When Joseph Smith was establishing the Church in 1830, the Savior commanded the Saints to “give heed unto all his [Joseph’s] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:4–5). In 1835, when establishing the organization of the hierarchy of the Church, Joseph was instructed that the leader of the Church “is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses—behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church” (D&C 107:91–92). It appears that when it comes to understanding the prophet-leader, there are still meaningful connections between the prophet of the Old Testament and the prophet of the Saints in the latter days. With an increased understanding of the prophet-leader, it is easy to understand why Elder M. Russell Ballard would exclaim, “It is no small thing, my brothers and sisters, to have a prophet of God in our midst.”<sup>34</sup> **RE**

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## Notes

1. J. S. Mill, *On Liberty, Representative Government, the Subjection of Women: Three Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

2. Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961); P. H. Woods and F. E. Powell, *The Hebrew Prophets for English Readers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

3. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 2.

4. While there are many texts that cover some etymological studies of *prophetic* terms, a lengthy section of etymological roots and comparisons of *nabi'*, *naba'*, *nataph*, and *hozeh* is compiled in Matthew O. Richardson, “The World Perspective and its Impact on Leadership Conceptions: An Examination of Leadership in a Theocentric World Perspective” (EdD diss., Brigham Young University, 1996). This dissertation also contains a bibliography listing related texts.

5. Rodney R. Hutton, *Charisma and Authority in Israelite Society* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 110.

6. The Ostrakon III (Lachish Letters) points out that the *nabi*' was not only a messenger but also a spokesman sent in behalf of the sender. The prophets in these letters dealt mostly with cultic and political matters. For further discussion on this comparison, see D. W. Thomas, *Documents from the Old Testament Times* (London: Thomas Nelson and Son, 1958), 215; B. D. Napier, s.v. "Prophet," G. A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962).

7. G. V. Smith, s.v. "Prophets," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 992.

8. Sidney B. Sperry, *The Spirit of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 118; emphasis added.

9. J. Barth, *Etymologische Studein zum Semitischen, Insbesondere zum Hebraischen Lixicon*, in E. Klein, ed., *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (New York: MacMillan, 1987); F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981); Richardson, "The World Perspective and its Impact on Leadership Conceptions."

10. C. von Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy and the Consummation of God's Kingdom: Traced in its Historical Development* (Edinburgh: T&T, 1889), 24.

11. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 606.

12. Seilhammer emphasized this point as he wrote: "If there is one characteristic that was common to all biblical prophets, it was their absolute assurance that God had called them personally into his service" (F. H. Seilhamer, *Prophets and Prophecy: Seven Key Messengers* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 2).

13. Joan Comay, *The Hebrew Kings* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1977), 150.

14. Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews: From Earliest Times through the Six Day War* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 48.

15. Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 27–28.

16. B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (England: Almond Press, 1983), 71.

17. The books of Amos and Micah also begin with the messenger formula.

18. Ezra Taft Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet," *Speeches of the Year, 1980* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1981), 27–28.

19. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "When Are Church Leader's Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?" *Church News*, July 31, 1954.

20. C. F. Keil, and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 125.

21. Other *Men of God* in the Old Testament included Samuel (1 Samuel 9:6), Elijah (1 Kings 13:4–24), Elisha (2 Kings 4:7), Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22), the unnamed prophet in 1 Kings 13, the anonymous prophet who warned Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:7–9), and David (2 Chronicles 8:14). Crenshaw felt that the unnamed prophet in 1 Kings 13 was actually Amos (James L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic*

*Conflict and Its Effects upon the Israelite Religion* [Walter de Gruyter, 1971]).

22. Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 124.
23. John A. Widstoe, in *Evidences and Reconciliations*, ed. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 258.
24. While Zadok is mentioned here for consideration, it should also be pointed out that Zadok's position as *ro'eb* is often considered dubious and is often disputed (see 1 Samuel 15:26).
25. B. D. Napier, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 897.
26. John A. Widstoe, in *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 258.
27. G. V. Smith, "Prophets," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.
28. Ahijah (1 Kings 14:18), Abraham (Genesis 26:24), Moses (Numbers 12:7-8), Jonah (2 Kings 14:25), Elijah (1 Kings 18:36), and Isaiah (Isaiah 20:3) were all known as both a *nabi'* (spokesman) and an *ebed* (servant of Jehovah). Others attributed as *ebed* included Jacob (Isaiah 44:1, 2, 21), Caleb (Numbers 14:24), Job (Job 1:8), David (2 Samuel 7:5, 8), and Eliakim (Isaiah 22:20).
29. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962), 204.
30. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, 204.
31. Walter S. Wurzbarger, "Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House), 13:1170.
32. G. L. Chamberlain, *The Hebrew Prophets, or Patriots and Leaders of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 4.
33. Joan Comay, *The Hebrew Kings* (New York: William and Morrow, 1977), 152.
34. M. Russell Ballard, "His Word Ye Shall Receive," *Ensign*, May 2001, 65.