

Hebrew Terminology for Prophet

Nabhi. It was formerly held that the word is derived from the verb nabha, bubble forth, pour out . . . and was said to describe the ecstatic character of inspiration. This view has been now quite generally abandoned. Others have sought to derive the word from an Arab root meaning announce. . . . W. F. Albright calls attention to the common Akkad. verb nabu, to call, and refers to the Code of Hammurabi where the verbal adjective has the meaning of called T. J. Meek, on the basis of the same Akkad. root, says the word means not only to call, but also to call out or to speak. He therefore interprets the meaning of the word as speaker or spokesman. . . . Meek . . . supports his contention by reference to . . . Exod 7.1-2 . . . The best clue to the meaning of the word is the Akkad. nabu, but its precise denotation is not certain.

Ro'eh.
Hoze'h.

Near Eastern Prophecy

There were prophets in other lands of the ancient Near East and indeed long before Israel appeared on the historical horizon. J. H. Breasted has written . . . about prophets among the ancient Egyptians . . . That there were prophets in Canaan is corroborated both by the OT and by extrabiblical records. . . . It is probable that the immediate origins of Israelite prophecy are to be traced to a Canaanite milieu.

Prophecy in Israel

Yet Israelite prophecy advanced in a direction quite different from that of her neighbours. ((The prophets sought to perpetuate and interpret the implications of Israel's redemption from Egypt. They insisted upon the uniqueness of Israel's God))

The Israelite Prophet - expressions used to describe him

1. In the early period hâ is frequently called a man of God 1 Sam. 9.6-10; 1 Kg. 12.22; 13.1; 2 Kg. 1.9-13,4-8. Does not mean he was a godly man but rather that he is psychically related to Yahweh and is an extension of the divine holiness, 2 Kg. 2.9. He shares in the mystery and power of a supernatural order. Kings and peasants alike recognise his great authority and strange power.

2. The prophet is also a messenger, Hag. 1.13. He is a herald who has received a report or a disclosure from Yahweh. . . . It was his task to declare to Israel what Yahweh is doing and is about to do. He speaks of the future as well as of the present. The notion commonly held in the past that the prophets did not predict or foretell events is contradicted by every prophet whose words have been preserved.

3. The prophet is Yahweh's servant, 2 Kg. 21.10; Isa. 20.3; Am. 3.7

4. The prophet is a watchman who takes his post on the watch-tower that he may warn Israel of the approach of danger and to sound the signal, Isa. 21.11-12; Ezek. 3.17; 33.2-7; Hab. 2.1