

Seers

Messengers Series Part 2

As we continue our look at God's messengers, we start with Hebrews 1:1 in several different translations. Finding the common idea behind the different words used, we can gain a better understanding of when and how God expressed Himself to people. The English Standard Version translates, *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets."* The New American Standard Bible translates, *"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways."* The Bible in Basic English has the time and ways expressed as *"in different parts and in different ways."* The translations may vary on the translation into times, portions, and parts, but all agree on the translation of ways.

God used many different ways to get His message to the minds of people.

The scriptures do not say how God talked to Cain and Noah. But it was not the same way He talked with Adam and Eve before Genesis 3. We can, however, read how He communicated to Abram. *"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision"* (Genesis 15:1). From this passage, we begin to see a progression of both ways and messengers used by God to speak to mankind. From the visions shown to the patriarchs to the visions shown to John on the island of Patmos, holy men received a "view" of God's will for mankind and a look into the future.

Some men received visions that they were to describe to others as a way of teaching them the will of God. These individuals were called **Seers**. The Hebrew word for Seer is a compound word indicating the "seer of prophetic visions." An example of one that saw visions in dreams and taught is Balaam, from the town of Pethor in Mesopotamia, Numbers 22 to 24. Balaam tried to curse God's people for money but knew he could not curse what God had blessed. *"Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God'"* (Numbers 22:18). He tried anyway and was confronted by a very unique messenger, a donkey. *"And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey"* (Numbers 22:28-30). The Angel of the Lord further admonished Balaam and said, *"Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I tell you"* (Numbers 22:35). Reading the complete text, we find that a heavenly messenger, an angel, was sent with a sword to kill the disobedient Balaam, but the mercy of God came through the unlikely messenger, the donkey.

We usually think of Samuel as a judge and prophet, but Samuel referred to himself as the Seer in 1 Samuel 9:19. In time, the title of prophet replaced the title seer for the men and women receiving the messages from God. There is a parenthetical note added to 1 Samuel 9:9 as an explanation of the terms used. *"(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, 'Come, and let us go to the seer'; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)"* This apparent side note has been retained in modern texts as it does help our understanding.

2 Samuel 24 is the account of King David demanding a census be taken of Israel and Judah. Although Joab reminded him that God had prohibited this, David pressed on. Later, *"David's heart troubled him ... When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's Seer, saying, 'Go and speak to David'"* (2 Samuel 24:10-12). The word came to the Seer, but a powerful divine messenger also came (2 Samuel 24:15-16). Seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died, then the angel turned toward Jerusalem to destroy it. At that point, God stopped

the angel from going any farther. All messages to David came through the Seer, but the wrath of God was through the actions of the angel.

It is also evident that the chronicles of Judah and Israel were written and kept by seers. 2 Chronicles 9:29 and 12:15 refer to the visions and records of Iddo the Seer. 2 Chronicles 29:30 mentions Asaph the Seer. This is probably the same Asaph that wrote many inspired Psalms. Even the prophet Amos is called a seer by the wicked king of Israel. "Then Amaziah said to Amos, *'Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying'*" (Amos 7:12). In all these examples, the Seer was an individual with many talents, inspired through visions, and tasked to speak God's thoughts and desires to his people.

In the last article, 'Introduction to "Messengers"', we see that Angelos is translated as either messenger or angel. Now, thinking about Hebrews 13:2 answer this question. Would you prefer a stranger like the seers, someone capable of teaching God's word knock at your door, or a heavenly messenger, a powerful representative of God's judgment?