

6. How God Talks to Prophets

What are some ways you talk with your friends? Do you get together at a park to play and talk, or do you sometimes go to a friend's home? If you don't live close enough to visit, you could talk on the telephone or write a letter. Can you think of other ways to communicate with your friends?



How does God talk with His prophets? The Bible tells us that God uses several different ways: **“God, ... at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets” (Hebrews 1:1).** Let's learn about some of those ways.

Face to Face: In the Old Testament times, Jesus sometimes hid His glory and made Himself look just like a man so He could talk with His prophets face to face. One day Abraham saw three travelers walking down the road near his tent, and he invited them to rest and eat a meal with him. Later, Abraham found out that his visitors were really Jesus and two angels. (Genesis 18:1, 2.)



Do you think he was glad he had been kind to them?

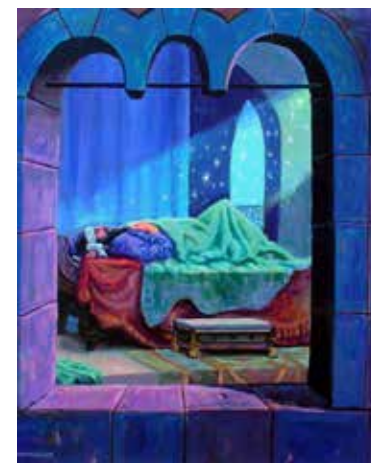
Speaking Out Loud: God sometimes speaks out loud so the prophet can hear Him, but not see Him. Do you remember how God spoke to Samuel one night when he



was just a little boy? Samuel had gone to bed when he thought he heard Eli calling his name; but it was really God's voice. **“Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel answered, ‘Speak, for Your servant hears.’”** Samuel listened very carefully to the message God wanted him to

tell Eli. (1 Samuel 3:1–14.)

3. Dreams: God does not always speak out loud to His prophets. He sometimes gives them dreams during the night. The Bible says, **“If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream” (Numbers 12:6).** Do you remember the story of when King Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream? God's prophet Daniel and his three friends prayed to God and asked Him to reveal the king's dream to them. That very night He gave Daniel the same dream and told him what it meant. In the



morning, Daniel told the king the important message God wanted him to know. (Daniel 2.)

4. Visions: God sometimes gives His prophets a vision. A vision is a lot like a dream, except a vision happens when the prophet is not sleeping, but awake. In a vision, angels or Jesus can talk to the prophet and show him things that are happening or will be happening in our world—or even in heaven.

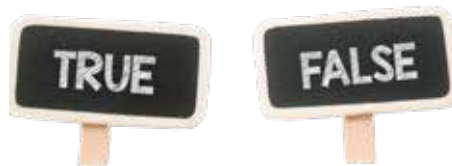
God often gave visions to His prophets. Here is an example of a vision: One day Isaiah was in the temple at

8. Watch Out for Counterfeits

Do you know what a counterfeit is? A counterfeit is something that is fake, but is made to look like the real thing. Here is a picture of a real dollar bill and a fake one. Can you tell the difference? Of course. It's easy to tell these pictures apart. But the best counterfeits or fakes look so much like the real thing that it's very hard to tell them apart.



Satan loves to make up fake things—fake news, fake promises, and even fake prophecies. He loves to trick people into believing something that isn't true.



When Satan saw that God was sending prophets to warn people about his



lies, he decided that he would have his own prophets. He would get evil men to tell fake or counterfeit prophecies that

were not true, but that sounded true. The Bible warns us that **“many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.” “False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:11, 24).**

Imagine that! False or fake prophets can seem so much like God's prophets that it can be hard to tell that they are



really from Satan. Satan even gives some of those false prophets the power to do amazing wonders and miracles. Maybe they will seem to heal the sick, or make fire come down from heaven, or preach a sermon that sounds right but is not. They may say things that people *want* to hear, instead of what they *need* to hear. They will even try to get people to believe that God has changed some of what He has told us in the Bible. How sad it is that many people believe these false prophets!

Jesus knew that Satan would send his own false prophets, so He gave us warnings about them. Here is one warning we find in the Bible. It says, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).**



Do you know what the word “vigilant” means? It means to watch very carefully and to pay close attention. If a lion were loose in your neighborhood, don't you think you would want to be especially vigilant? Our enemy, Satan, is like that roaring lion because he wants to hurt us; and if we are not careful, we will believe his terrible lies.

One time God told the prophet Jeremiah, **“The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart” (Jeremiah 14:14).** (See Jeremiah 23.)

