

Prophets

God's courageous communicators

Throughout the Old Testament, God used prophets to call out rulers, nations, and communities for their disobedience and to warn them of the consequences of continuing to move away from God. These weren't exactly easy messages to proclaim. Nevertheless, the prophets courageously communicated God's word to the people.

Deuteronomy 18:22

"If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it."

Messages on Display

INSERT
PHRASE
HERE

PROPHETS-R-US

POSITION: Prophet

SUPERVISOR: The Lord

TERMS:

- Working hours: 24/7/365
- Annual salary: \$0,000
- Vacation: Not a chance

REQUIREMENTS:

- Prepared to begin at a moment's notice.
- Passion for God's word and strict adherence to it.
- Member of God's covenant community.
- Ability to handle intense situations and constant scorn.

ACCEPT DECLINE

For each of the phrases below, fill in one of the boxes between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating you'd be totally uncomfortable displaying the phrase on a sign and 5 indicating you'd be totally comfortable displaying the phrase on a sign.

	<i>No way I'd wear that!</i>			<i>I'd totally wear that!</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5
WORLD PEACE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
KETCHUP IS RED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TURN FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOD LOVES YOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I AM A SINNER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why would the prophets want to do this? Do you think they had a choice?

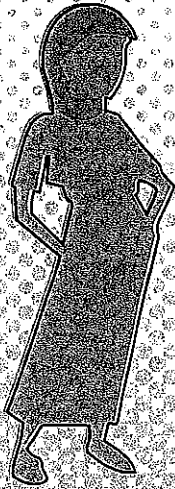
Do you wish these prophets made you a prophet? Do you believe in the ability of the Holy Spirit?

How to Spot a Prophet

The Bible contains a bunch of examples of prophets. But in general, if you can identify the four attributes listed on these pages, you just might have spotted yourself a real-life, genuine prophet.

Not Just a Boys' Club

Although the Bible contains no stand-alone books named after a female prophet, there are references to at least six female prophets: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, and Isaiah's wife are cited as prophets in the Old Testament, as is Anna in the Gospel of Luke.



1

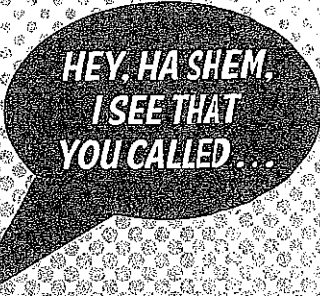
CALLING

Prophets were ordinary, unremarkable people chosen or "called" by God to become God's spokespeople. This calling endowed the prophets with a special message and mission from God.

2

CONTENT

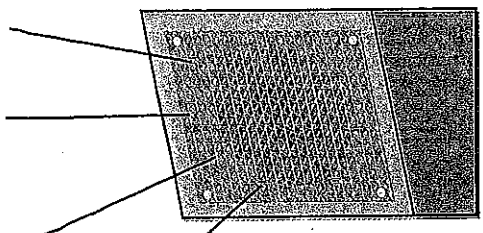
Prophets always spoke on behalf of God—never themselves. The messages they relayed were sometimes harsh—challenging injustice and warning God's covenant people of the consequences of disobedience. But they also communicated a message of grace—that is, the abiding goodness of God's promises.



The call stories of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel all follow a similar pattern. Draw a line connecting each passage from Isaiah's call story with the part of the call story it represents.

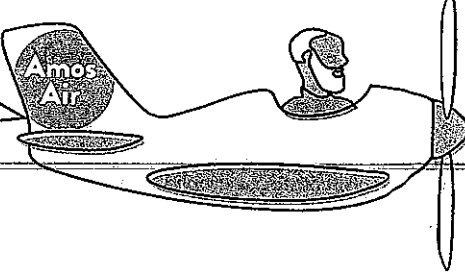
- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| A DIVINE ENCOUNTER | ISAIAH 6:11-13 |
| AN INTRODUCTION OR GREETING | ISAIAH 6:5 |
| AN OBJECTION TO THE CALL | ISAIAH 6:1-2 |
| A COMMISSIONING STATEMENT | ISAIAH 6:9-10 |
| A SIGN OF EMPOWERMENT | ISAIAH 6:3-4 |

What is a message you think everyone in your school would benefit from hearing? Write it on the speaker's sound lines below.



ANSWERS: ISAIAH 6:1-2; ISAIAH 6:3-4; ISAIAH 6:5; ISAIAH 6:9-10; ISAIAH 6:11-13

TURN OR BURN!



Major or Minor?

Scholars often make a distinction between the Bible's major and minor prophets based on the length of the books, not their importance. In fact, the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are each longer than the combined length of the Minor Prophets! How many of the minor prophets have you heard of? Circle them.

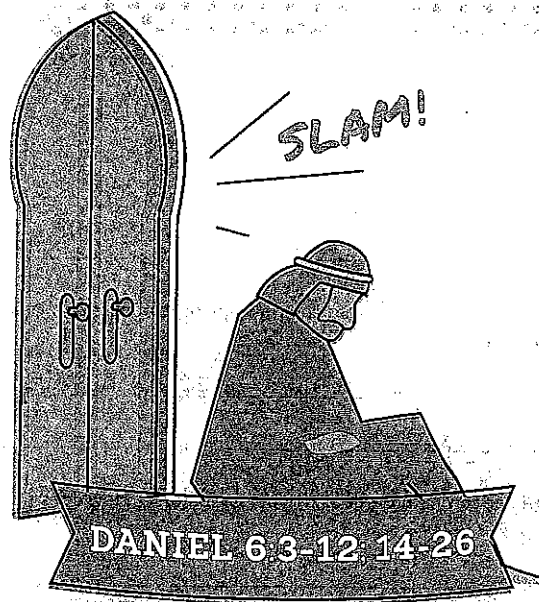
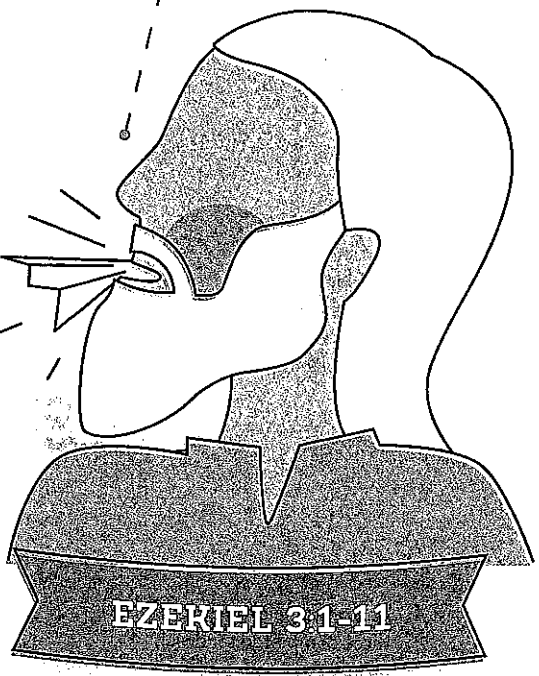
3
COMMUNITY
 While prophets sometimes condemned entire nations, they almost always spoke to communities to which they belonged. In other words, whatever message God wanted the people to hear was also meant for the prophet speaking on God's behalf.

4
CONSEQUENCES
 Because the messages prophets communicated on behalf of God often included colorful descriptions of the disasters that would befall the people if they didn't change their ways, prophets were regularly scorned and even rejected by their own communities.

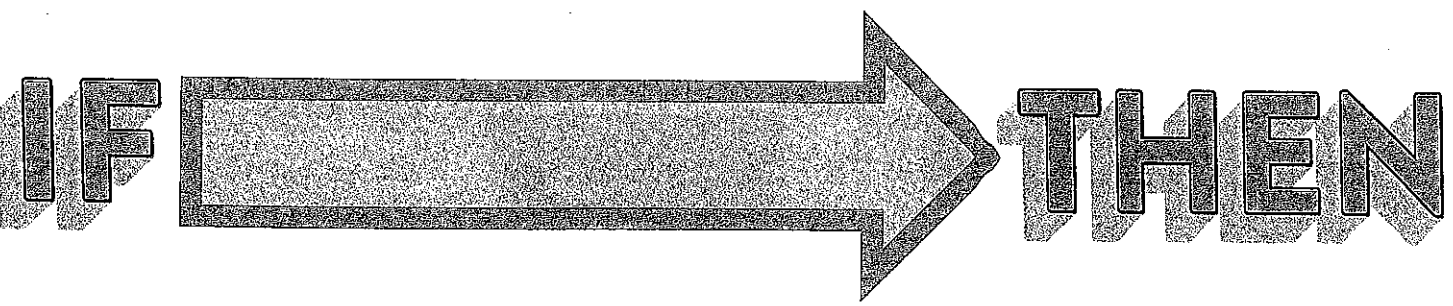
Major
 ISAIAH JEREMIAH
 EZEKIEL DANIEL

Minor
 HOSEA MICAH JONAH
 JOEL ZECHARIAH
 AMOS HAGGAI MALACHI
 NAHUM ZEPHANIAH
 OBADIAH HABAKKUK

Non-prophets
 In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns the people about false prophets. Thankfully, Jesus tells us how to identify false prophets. Read Matthew 7:15-20 and write the giveaway in the space below. (Hint: it's mentioned twice.)



List three things that might happen if you told the truth all the time. Write your answers in the arrow.



Prophecy in the Present

There's no denying that God used prophets to proclaim messages of radical justice and overflowing grace. But is God still speaking through prophets today? If so, can anybody become a prophet? Can you?

Option 1: Modern-Day Prophets

Think of someone in recent history whom you or others might consider a prophet. Fill in the blanks below with information about the person you've chosen, then decide if your modern-day prophet's experiences line up with those of the biblical prophets.



1. **Calling:** When and how was this person called or chosen by God?

2. **Content:** What is this person's primary message? Does the message urge people to change their ways or remind them of God's promises?

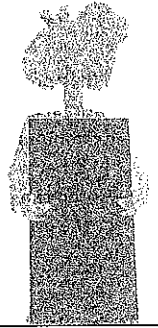
3. **Community:** To what community or communities does this person belong? How does the community relate to the message?

4. **Consequences:** Do some people respond negatively to this person's message? How so?

Option 2: Walking the Talk

Supplies: butcher paper, markers, tape

1. Working in pairs, cut paper to create two giant rectangles that are 2 feet by 3 feet each. These will be the front and back of a sandwich board.



2. Together, choose a phrase a modern-day prophet would say to the world. Write the phrase on both rectangles.



3. Cut out two shoulder straps for the sandwich board, and attach them with tape.



4. As a group, pick two or three completed sandwich boards and choose volunteers to wear them outside your church's sanctuary before the next worship service.



1. Think

2. Share

3. Discuss

What qualifies someone to be a prophet?

