

Does the world need prophets today?

Key terms	
Discrimination	Treating people differently, often unfairly.
Justice	Fairness, treating people equally
Oppression	When powerful people treat others badly
Peace	Harmony between people, an absence of conflict
Prophet	A messenger from God who reminds people about God's will and calls them back to follow him. They speak out about what is wrong, challenge people to change and give visions of what a better world would be like.
Racism	Discrimination on the grounds of your race or the colour of your skin
Righteousness	Doing what is right according to God
Speaking truth to power	Challenging leaders when they are wrong and telling them to change.
Tax	When the authorities take a percentage of people's money
Vision	A view of how things could be better

There are many prophets in the Bible.

- ✓ They denounce what is wrong
- ✓ They remind people what is important
- ✓ They call on people to change
- ✓ They call on people to return to God
- ✓ They announce good news and visions for the future
- ✓ They use powerful language and strong imagery to grab people's attention and shock them
- ✓ They encounter opposition and hostility
- ✓ They put themselves in danger and suffer for it



Hosea lived about 700 BCE. He criticised people for forgetting God's laws - lying, stealing, committing adultery and killing others.

Jeremiah lived around 600BCE. He criticised people for treating workers unfairly. The authorities arrested him and tried to execute him, but this did not put him off speaking God's message.

The prophet **Amos** lived around 700BCE. He criticised people for

- Lying
 - Cheating
 - Bribery
 - Denying justice to the poor
 - Treating good people badly
 - Oppressing the poor
 - Money-grabbing
 - Taxing poor people heavily
- For example →

And he threatened them with what God would do to show his anger.

For I know how many are your offences and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts ...

In that day,' declares the Sovereign Lord, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your religious festivals into mourning.

The prophet **Isaiah** lived around 700 BCE.

He gave people a vision of the future, announcing what the world would be like when everyone believes in God and follows his laws.

Jewish tradition says that he was executed by being sawn in half for speaking against the authorities.



the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more ...

The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.

⁵ Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

A modern Christian leader, Bishop Dinis of Maputo, in Mozambique, was inspired by Isaiah's words when he was worried about people storing guns in their homes after a war.

He was given funds by the charity Christian Aid to buy gardening tools and encouraged people to swap their guns for tools. The guns that were handed in were turned into beautiful sculptures like this one.



Modern prophets - Christians today continue to speak out about what is wrong and call on people to change. They offer a vision of a better world if people change their ways.

Archbishop Oscar Romero spoke out in the 1970s about injustice in El Salvador. The country was controlled by the army and by a small group of rich and powerful families, who treated the poor badly. People had their homes and farms taken off them and were arrested, tortured and killed.



He broadcast weekly sermons on the radio telling those in charge that they were wrong and should change their ways.

He was killed by an assassin in 1980 while celebrating Mass in church.

Dr Martin Luther King was a Christian minister who led peaceful protests against racism and to support workers' rights in the USA in the 1960s.

In his famous 'I have a dream' speech, he gave people a vision of what the world could be like if racism ended.

He was assassinated in 1968.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.



