

If you are like most people, the word **prophet** and the idea of “prophesy” will seem to have something to do with fortune-telling or with foretelling future events.

But that was not the main work or purpose of the Old Testament prophets. Some of the prophets did speak of things that would or might happen in the future—but they were putting 2 and 2 together, using their common sense. If things keep going on as they have been, they said, then such and such is sure to happen. But the main purpose of the Old Testament prophets was to bring people back to God, their creator and Lord. They tried to encourage people to be attentive to God’s commandments. They tried to draw the people away from the “make-believe” gods, back to worship of the one and true God.

The prophets were especially sensitive to God’s voice in the world. They had the difficult task of trying to make other people

more sensitive to God’s presence in the world.

No one succeeded in that better than Jesus. As the only-begotten Son of God, he was in a unique position to draw people back to God, and to make them aware of God’s love and mercy.

All those who have been baptized are therefore also called to become more aware of God’s presence and to make a fitting place for God in their lives. We answer that call by following Christ. In our prayers—just because we **are** praying—we put ourselves in God’s presence! Everything we do in the presence of other people, everything we say to them or about them—literally everything—either tends to help others come closer to God or to encourage them away from God. So if we **call** ourselves Christians (followers of Christ), but in fact, by our behavior, lead people into selfishness and sin—well, we certainly cannot claim to share in the work of Christ the prophet.

