

How many prophets are in the Bible?

A prophet in the Bible was someone who revealed God's messages to others. Some, like Moses, heard directly from God and passed on the words through writing or speech. Some, like Joseph and Daniel, interpreted the dreams and/or visions of others. The messages could be prophecies of the future, messages for the listener, or warnings for others. The life of a godly prophet was never an easy one (see Acts 7:52). Here is a list of prophets found in the Bible:

Prophets in the Old Testament

- Noah: Noah was a prophet in that God spoke to him about the future and he possibly preached judgment against others. Genesis 7:1-4; 8:16-17, 21-22; and 9:1-16 record times when God spoke to Noah directly. Hebrews 11:7 is sometimes interpreted to mean that God told Noah to preach against the evil people he lived near, but the words "by his faith he condemned the world" can also mean that Noah's faith was an example of how they should have acted and proof that faith was possible.
- Abraham: God spoke to Abraham several times. Many of their conversations were filled with instruction, but God also gave Abraham glimpses of the future. In fact, in their first meeting, God started by telling Abram to leave his country and travel to a new place (Genesis 12:1) and then went straight into a blessing that doubled as a prophecy of the future (Genesis 12:2-3).
- Jacob: In Genesis 28:10-22, Jacob had his dream of the stairway to heaven and a reiteration of God's promise to his father Abraham. In Genesis 49, Jacob gave an accurate prophecy of the future of his sons' descendants.

- Joseph: In our first introduction to Joseph, in Genesis 37:3-11, he related two dreams he'd had—prophecies that he would one day rule over his brothers and parents. His dreams incensed his brothers so much they sold him into slavery, which eventually led him to such a high political position they had to come to him for food, thus fulfilling his dream. Before Joseph reached that position, however, he interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (Genesis 40) and then Pharaoh's own dream (Genesis 41:1-40).

- Moses: Much of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are filled with God's messages to and through Moses. They begin in Exodus 3 when God called Moses from the burning bush to return to Egypt to speak judgment against the Pharaoh and rescue the Israelites. Moses' prophecies include both rebuke against the Israelites and predictions of the future. God spoke more to Moses than anyone else in the Bible.

- Aaron: When Moses complained that he wasn't a good public speaker, God made his brother, Aaron, his mouthpiece. In Exodus 7:1-7, Aaron began his career as God's prophet, rebuking and giving warnings to others.

- Miriam: In Exodus 15:20 Moses' sister, Miriam, is identified as a prophet. We don't know specifically what message God gave her, apart from the song she sings in verse 21. In Numbers 12, however, we find neither her nor Aaron's judgment was always informed by God's guidance.

- The seventy elders of Israel: Although God had provided the Israelites with manna and water, they demanded meat, as well. God promised to oblige. In preparation, Moses

ordered seventy elders to the tent of meeting, and the Holy Spirit temporarily endowed them with the ability to prophesy (Numbers 11:25).

- Eldad and Medad: Eldad and Medad were two of the seventy elders, but for an unknown reason they stayed in the camp and did not go to the tent of meeting. The Holy Spirit found them, anyway, and they prophesied for a short time (Numbers 11:26).

- Balaam: Balaam has the distinction of being a true prophet who was also an evil man. The king of Moab tried to bribe him to curse Israel. Balaam tried, but his fear of God, his integrity as a prophet, and his stubborn donkey overcame his greed (Numbers 22-24). The sin of Balaam is warned against in Jude 1:11.

- Elihu: Job's less-than-supportive three friends are well known, but mid-way through their counsel, Elihu arrived. His long message (Job 32-35) condemned the other three friends, confronted Job about his lack of trust in God, and reminded them all that God is just.

- Joshua: When Moses died, Joshua took command of the Israelites' campaign into the Promised Land. In Joshua 1:1-9, God gave him encouragement for the hard task ahead and a promise of success. He also gave Joshua a warning to obey the law God had given Moses.

- Deborah: Deborah is the only recorded female judge of Israel, and Judges 4:4 indicates she was a prophetess, as well. In Judges 4:6-7, Deborah either passed on God's message to the military commander Barak or enforced it; in Judges 4:9, she related a prophecy of future events.

- Gideon: Gideon was one of the Bible's least willing prophets. Throughout Judges 6-8, God led Gideon to take a small army and destroy the oppressive Midianites and Amalekites. It's unclear if Gideon was the prophet who relayed God's promise in Judges 6:8-10.
- Samuel: Samuel received his first message from God in 1 Samuel 3:4 when he was a small boy. He spent his life as God's messenger; two of his most significant acts were anointing Saul (1 Samuel 9) and David (1 Samuel 16:1-13) to be king. Samuel's words of God's wisdom to Saul went mostly unheeded, and Samuel even returned from the grave to announce God's punishment for Saul's disobedience (1 Samuel 28:15-19).
- A procession of prophets: Shortly after Saul's anointing as king, he met with seventy prophets and joined them (1 Samuel 10:10).
- King Saul: Samuel gave Saul specific instructions right after Samuel anointed him to be king. In the process of heeding Samuel's directions, Saul met with a group of prophets and prophesied with them (1 Samuel 10:10).
- Gad: While being chased by Saul, David and a group of followers hid in a stronghold. Gad the prophet sent him a word from God as to what he was to do next (1 Samuel 22:5).
- Nathan: Nathan seems to have been David's primary link to God's words. In 2 Samuel 7:4-17, Nathan told David that Solomon would build the temple. In 2 Samuel 12:1-15, Nathan rebuked David for committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband.
- David: In the time of the kings, God tended to speak to the king through prophets,

rather than directly as He had with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, and Gideon. David must have received some kind of message from God, however, as so many of his psalms prophesy the coming of Jesus (Psalm 8; 22; 110).

- Asaph: Asaph was one of the worship leaders appointed by King David. He was a Levite and a prolific writer—many of the psalms were written either by him or by the guild he inspired. His songs were sung along with David's at the time of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:30).

- Tabernacle musicians: First Chronicles 25:1-7 lists the musicians whom David commissioned to perform before the tabernacle and identifies them as prophets. They include Heman, the grandson of Samuel; Jeduthun; and Asaph, as well as their sons.

- Writers of the Psalms: Many of the psalms besides those directly identified as having been written by David refer to the coming Christ, including Psalms 2, 18, 89 (by Ethan the Ezrahite), 132, and many others.

- King Solomon: In 1 Kings 3, God asked Solomon in a dream if there was anything Solomon would like from Him. Solomon chose wisdom.

- Agur: Agur, the son of Jekeh, is cited as the author of Proverbs 30. Nothing else is known about him.

- Ahijah: Unfortunately, Solomon didn't always use his wisdom. He married too many women and was drawn into worshipping their gods. In 1 Kings 11:29-39, Ahijah told Jeroboam that he would take command of ten of the tribes of Israel after Solomon died. Several years

later, Ahijah told Jeroboam's wife that, because of Jeroboam's sin against God, not only would their son die, but Jeroboam's entire line would be cut off (1 Kings 14:1-18).

- Iddo: Iddo the prophet is mentioned several times, and at least one passage suggests he at one point had his own book, but not much is recorded in the Bible about him. Iddo predicted the rise of Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 9:29) and wrote a record of Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 12:15) and Abijah (2 Chronicles 13:17).

- Shemaiah: After the ten northern tribes followed Jeroboam, Solomon's son Rehoboam prepared the southern tribes for battle. God sent Shemaiah to tell them to return home (1 Kings 12:22).

- A man of God from Judah: God sent this unnamed prophet to Bethel to confront the sin of King Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:1-10). God told this prophet not to eat or drink on his journey and to return home to Judah a different way than he had gone. While speaking to the king, the prophet performed a sign to authenticate his words: the altar used by Jeroboam split in two, and the ashes spilled out. When the king tried to arrest the man of God, the king's hand withered; when the man of God prayed for the king, the king's hand was healed.

- An old prophet in Bethel: This unnamed prophet intercepted the man of God on his way home to Judah and deceived him into dining at his house (1 Kings 13:11-32). In this way, the old prophet caused the man of God from Judah to disobey the Lord's command. The result was that the man of God from Judah was mauled to death by a lion in the way. The old prophet buried the man of God and instructed his sons to bury him beside the man of God some day.

- Azariah: Several Azariahs are mentioned in the Bible, including a long-lived king of Judah (2 Kings 15), but only one is specifically called a prophet. He gave God's warning to King Asa, encouraging him to rid the nation of Judah of idols (2 Chronicles 15:1-7).
- Hanani: Although King Asa trusted God, he also bribed the king of Syria to break his pact with King Baasha of Israel. Hanani told Asa that God would have destroyed Syria's king for him if he'd followed the Lord. Asa responded by putting Hanani in stocks in prison and taking out his anger on some of his people (2 Chronicles 16:7-10).
- Jehu: The prophet Jehu lived in the time of King Baasha and was Hanani's son. Jehu announced God's judgment against Baasha, saying that, because of his sin, the dogs and birds would eat his family's bodies (1 Kings 16:1-7).
- Elijah: Elijah was probably the most significant prophet who didn't write his own book. He proclaimed God's word in the northern kingdom of Israel at the time of the evil King Ahab. It was he who ensured a widow was always supplied with oil and flour (1 Kings 17:8-16), raised that same widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24), who had a showdown with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-40), and who was strengthened by God's still voice in his fatigue and depression (2 Kings 2:1-11). At the end of his life, a chariot of fire took him to heaven, and his mantle fell to Elisha as his successor (2 Kings 2:1-12).
- Unnamed Prophet: When the northern kingdom of Israel was threatened by Syria, this prophet assured King Ahab that Israel would triumph with God's help. Ahab did triumph—twice. But he let Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, live. Another, or perhaps the

same, prophet disguised himself as a wounded soldier and prophesied against Ahab for not killing Ben-hadad (1 Kings 20).

- Micaiah: For some reason, the good king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, got along fairly well with the evil king of Israel, Ahab. Ahab invited Jehoshaphat to battle with him against Ramoth-Gilead, and Jehoshaphat agreed—but not before finding a prophet to ask God’s guidance. Ahab had four hundred false prophets who told them God was with them, but Jehoshaphat insisted on a prophet who actually heard from God. Ahab knew of one, but was reluctant to call him, since he never had anything good to say. Micaiah revealed that God had sent a lying spirit to the four hundred prophets in order to lure Ahab to his death. Ahab went to battle anyway and was struck and killed by a random arrow (1 Kings 22:13-28).

- Jahaziel: When threatened by the Moabites and Ammonites, King Jehoshaphat took the unusual step of fasting and calling all Judah to seek help from God. God answered through Jahaziel who prophesied that Judah would destroy its enemies and even gave counsel on how to accomplish the rout (2 Chronicles 20:1-23).

- Eliezer: The usually wise Jehoshaphat joined the evil King Ahaziah of Israel to build some ships. Eliezer confronted Jehoshaphat, saying that, because he had joined with Ahaziah, God would destroy what he had made. The ships were wrecked before they could reach their destination (2 Chronicles 20:35-37).

- Unknown prophets: Various prophets lived during the time of Elijah and Elisha, belonging to the school of prophets. Nothing is known about these prophets except some lived in Bethel (2 Kings 2:3) and some in Jericho (2 Kings 2:5), and they all annoyed

Elisha by reminding him that Elijah's departure was imminent.

- Elisha: Elisha was Elijah's successor and the second-most important prophet without a book. He spent seven or eight years as Elijah's apprentice before Elijah was taken to heaven. He then helped wipe out organized Baal worship (2 Kings 10:28), brought a widow's son back to life (2 Kings 4:18-37), and cured Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings 5). His power and authority through God was so great that, when a dead man was thrown into Elisha's grave, the man sprang back to life (2 Kings 13:2-21).

- Zechariah the priest: When King Joash was a baby, he was hidden from his patricidal grandmother, Athaliah, and raised by the priest Jehoiada until the priests could arrange for the queen's death. Joash began as a very good king but like many others grew to rely on himself too much. Upon Jehoiada's death, Joash was quickly led to idol worship. When Jehoiada's son Zechariah confronted Joash and the people, the king ordered him to be stoned (2 Chronicles 24:20-22).

- Jonah: Jonah is best known for the book that bears his name and his great reluctance to go to Nineveh. But he also served as a prophet in Israel in the time of Jeroboam II. Although the king was as evil as any other, God did not yet want Israel to be destroyed. He sent Jonah to Jeroboam and led him to restore a border against their enemies (2 Kings 14:23-27).

- Joel: After Judah's crops were obliterated by a swarm of locusts, Joel compared the devastation to what God would do if the people didn't return to Him. Joel also predicted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Joel 2:28; cf. Acts 2:16-21).

- Amos: Amos was a Judean shepherd who was tasked with prophesying against Israel. His warnings were ignored, and Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria some time later.
- Hosea: God often asked a great deal of His prophets, and Hosea was a prime example. In order to illustrate the unfaithfulness of the northern kingdom of Israel, God had Hosea marry a prostitute who remained unfaithful after they married. To show how God longed to forgive His people, He told Hosea to take Gomer back. In addition to the message to Israel of God's faithfulness, Hosea includes a prophecy that Gentiles would one day follow God (Hosea 2:23).
- Isaiah: Isaiah holds the record for being the prophet who is most quoted in the New Testament. He was an adviser to King Hezekiah of Judah but also had to walk barefoot and naked for three years as a portent against Egypt and Cush. His book contains prophecies of Jesus and John the Baptist, and Jesus used Isaiah 61:1-2 to begin His ministry in Nazareth. It's possible that Isaiah was also a priest (Isaiah 6:4).
- Micah: Micah served as a prophet during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. His message mixed condemnation of sin with the promise of the coming Messiah. His book contains the only mention of Bethlehem as the place of the Messiah's birth.
- Oded: Although the kings of Judah were generally better than the kings of Israel, there were still some who worshiped idols and even sacrificed their children. When Ahaz did so, God brought the Syrians to punish them. The Syrians killed at least 120,000 and took 200,000 captive. The prophet Oded, on God's orders, stopped them, telling the invaders they had gone far enough and they should set the captives free and return the spoils, which they did (2 Chronicles 28:1-15).

- Zephaniah: Zephaniah was yet another prophet who warned Judah about their impending doom. He condemned their idolatry in their actions and in their hearts. But he also relayed God's promise that a remnant would return.

- Nahum: One hundred and fifty years after Jonah, Nineveh was out of second chances. Nahum promised that Assyria's days were numbered and that Judah would be delivered from their threat.

- Huldah: Huldah was one of a handful of women identified as a prophetess in the Bible. When the priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law in the temple and took it to King Josiah, the king turned to Huldah to find out what they should do. She affirmed that Judah's rejection of God meant the nation would be destroyed, but because of Josiah's penitence it would not be in his time (2 Kings 22:8-20).

- Jeremiah: Jeremiah was one of the last prophets of the Kingdom of Judah and watched helplessly as it was picked apart by the Babylonians. Known as "the weeping prophet" because of how his words from God affected him, Jeremiah also gave the people a word of hope that they would return from captivity in 70 years. His counsel to submit to God's judgment was ignored, and he was eventually taken to Egypt with the remnant of the royal family (2 Kings 25:26). Jeremiah also wrote the book of Lamentations, a lament for the fall of Jerusalem.

- Uriah: Jeremiah was not completely alone in his thankless job. Uriah also prophesied against the evil in Judah. He was hunted down and killed by King Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:20-23).

- **Habakkuk:** Habakkuk covered a lot of ground in such a short book. He prophesied Assyria's fall, the Babylonian exile, and the future victory of the Persians. His prophecies were revealed in the context of a conversation with God, wherein Habakkuk asked God questions, and God responded.

- **Obadiah:** Like Jonah, the prophet Obadiah had a message for a nation other than Israel or Judah. He prophesied against Edom, the descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau. Edom effectively disappeared after their removal from Petra in the fifth century BC.

- **Daniel:** Daniel was one of the first Jews to be taken into exile in Babylon. As part of the royal household, Daniel was trained to be an official in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar got more than he bargained for, however, when he discovered Daniel was not only intelligent, but he could also interpret dreams. Daniel served several generations of leaders including Belshazzar, who saw the writing on the wall, and Darius, who was horrified to discover he'd been tricked into sending Daniel to the lions' den. In the visions and angelic encounters of Daniel 7-12, Daniel revealed more about the end times than any other book besides Revelation.

- **Ezekiel:** Ezekiel's book of prophecy appears somewhat psychedelic, with its strange visions. Ezekiel was a priest exiled to Babylon in the second wave of deportations and relayed God's judgment to the rebellious people. He also made several prophecies about the future, including the coming of Jesus, the New Jerusalem (Ezekiel 48:30-35), and the millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 44). Ezekiel was one of the few prophets who eagerly spread God's message no matter what resistance he encountered—although that may have been because God told him if he didn't prophesy he would be held accountable for the souls of

those he didn't warn (Ezekiel 33).

- Haggai: Haggai worked with Zechariah and Zerubbabel to get the Jews who had returned from exile back on track. Specifically, he called the people to seriously consider their priorities and get the temple rebuilt.
- Zechariah the prophet: The son of Berechiah, along with the prophet Haggai, encouraged the Jews to finish the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity. In a series of eight related visions, Zechariah received a broad-ranging message of God's plan for the Israelites. Along the way, he spoke quite a bit about the Messiah and the fact that people from all over the world would follow Him.
- Malachi: He was the last prophet to prophecy in Israel until an angel visited Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. As such, Malachi's message was a call to obedience and a promise of the coming Messiah. Following Malachi's oracle were 400 years of divine silence.

Prophets in the New Testament

- Zechariah, father of John the Baptist: Zechariah was a priest and was chosen to burn incense in the temple. While inside, an angel appeared and told him that his elderly wife would become pregnant with a son. They were to name him John, and he would turn the hearts of the people back to God (Luke 1:8-23). Zechariah also prophesied after John's birth (Luke 1:67-79).
- Mary: Mary, an engaged virgin, was told by Gabriel that she would become pregnant with

the Messiah (Luke 1:26-28). Her prophecy is found in Luke 1:46-55.

- Joseph: Joseph received a message from an angel that Mary was pregnant with the Messiah (Matthew 1:20).

- Elizabeth: While Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she visited her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. When they met, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed that Mary's child was the Messiah (Luke 1:41-45).

- Simeon: Simeon, a righteous old man, had been promised by God that he would see the Messiah before he died. When Joseph and Mary came to the temple with the baby Jesus, Simeon immediately knew who He was and warned Mary that she would suffer (Luke 2:22-35).

- Anna: Anna was an elderly prophetess who spent her days worshiping at the temple. She, too, knew that the baby Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah (Luke 2:36-38).

- John the Baptist: The Holy Spirit lay mightily on John, and the prophet spent his life exhorting people to confess their sins, turn to God, and follow Jesus (John 1:19-28).

- Philip: Philip the evangelist was an early believer with a mission. An angel told Philip to go to a deserted place where he found an Ethiopian court official riding in his chariot. Philip witnessed to him, and the official accepted Christ and was baptized (Acts 8:26-40).

- Paul: Paul was a prophet both in the prophetic, convicting words he wrote in his letters and in his prophecies of the end times. His letters to the Thessalonians, in

particular, give information on the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), the coming judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:5-12), and the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:1-11).

- Peter: Peter had the advantage of spending a great amount of time with Jesus during His three-year ministry, but he also heard from heaven after the ascension. After King Herod killed James, the brother of John, he imprisoned Peter. An angel came to Peter, spoke to him, and helped him escape (Acts 12:6-12). In 2 Peter 3, the apostle and prophet foretells events associated with the Day of the Lord.

- Barnabas, Lucius of Cyrene, Manahen, and Simeon Niger: These four men are identified as prophets in Acts 13:1.

- Judas Barsabbas and Silas: Judas and Silas are identified as prophets in Acts 15:30-33.

- Philip's four daughters: These women are labeled as prophets in Acts 21:7-8.

- Agabus: Agabus, a prophet in the early church, had the unenviable task of predicting Paul's future imprisonment (Acts 21:10-11).

- John: John the apostle, the brother of James, is perhaps the most famous prophet in the New Testament. His book Revelation is filled with admonishment for churches and prophecies about the end times.

- Two Witnesses: The last prophets promised to us are the two witnesses, who will appear during the tribulation. They will perform signs and prophesy in Jerusalem for 1,260

days, be assassinated, and then return to life (Revelation 11:3-12).

False prophets

- **Zedekiah:** Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah seems to have been the leader of the four hundred false prophets who encouraged Ahab and Jehoshaphat to war against Ramoth-gilead. It turned out they all had a lying spirit sent by God for the purpose of luring Ahab to his death (1 Kings 22:1-12).
- **Hananiah:** The years leading up to the Babylonian Captivity were scary times for unbelieving Jews, and it didn't help that Jeremiah kept telling them to submit to the Babylonians and trust God to return them from exile. Prophets like Hananiah publicly contradicted Jeremiah's prophecies and denied that God was angry with His people (Jeremiah 28).
- **Ahab and Zedekiah:** In his letter to the Babylonian exiles, Jeremiah encouraged them with their promised return to Judah and foretold great hardships for those who stayed in Jerusalem. He particularly rebuked Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, who falsely prophesied in God's name (Jeremiah 29:15-23).
- **Shemaiaha and Noadiah:** Although Artaxerxes had told the returned exiles in Jerusalem they could rebuild the city wall, their neighbors opposed their efforts and threatened them. Nehemiah arrived from Babylon with supplies and the drive to get the wall finished. Shemaiah tried to trick Nehemiah into hiding in the temple. It's unclear what Noadiah and the other prophets did, but Nehemiah trusted God and was not caught in their traps (Nehemiah 6:9-14).

- Simon the magician: Simon had been a magician in Samaria when the gospel arrived. Simon made a profession of accepting Christ, but he also wanted a share in the apostles' power. After being rebuked by Peter, he asked the apostles to pray for him (Acts 8:9-24).
- Elymas (a.k.a. Bar-Jesus): Barnabas and Paul met the Jewish false prophet Elymas on Cyprus. Elymas tried to distract the proconsul from Paul and Barnabas's message, but Paul cursed him with blindness and the proconsul believed (Acts 13:4-12).
- The fortune-telling girl: Paul and Silas were staying with Lydia in Philippi when they were met by a slave girl who was possessed with a spirit of divination. The young slave girl followed them for several days, announcing who they were. Paul grew weary of her unwanted prophecies and finally told the spirit to leave her. It did, and the girl's owners had Paul and Silas thrown into prison for ruining their fortune-telling business (Acts 16:16-24).
- Jezebel: In Jesus' rebuke of the church in Thyatira, He condemned their acceptance of "that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess" and who was leading God's people into sexual immorality and idolatry (Revelation 2:20-23).
- The False Prophet: Just as many of the kings of Judah and Israel had particular prophets who gave them God's guidance, so the Antichrist in the end times will have a false prophet. His job will be to entice the world to worship the Antichrist, and he'll be able to perform extensive miracles to lead the world astray (Revelation 13:11-15; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).