PROPHETAE · QUI LOCUTUS EST PER PROPHETAS

# The Prophets

Men raised up by God to speak in His name: to call His people to repentance, to rebuke unfaithful kings, and above all to prepare the way for the Messiah. The Holy Ghost "spoke by the prophets," as the Creed professes, and Christ is the fulfillment of all they foretold.

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by his Son." — Hebrews 1:1–2*

## The Four Major Prophets

*"major" for the length of their books*




### Isaias

*Isaiah · Judah, c. 740–700 BC*

The "evangelist of the Old Testament," who foretold the Virgin Birth, the Suffering Servant and the reign of the Messiah. Tradition says he was sawn in two under King Manasses.

> *"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel."* Is 7:14




### Jeremias

*Jeremiah · Judah, c. 627–580 BC*

Sanctified from the womb, he warned of Jerusalem's fall and wept over its ruin in the Lamentations. His disciple Baruch recorded his words. Tradition holds he was stoned in Egypt.

> *"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Juda."* Jer 31:31




### Ezechiel

*Ezekiel · Babylon, c. 593–571 BC*

A priest among the exiles, he saw the four living creatures — later symbols of the Evangelists — and the valley of dry bones restored to life.

> *"This gate shall be shut … because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it."* Ez 44:2 — read of Mary's perpetual virginity




### Daniel

*Babylon, 6th century BC*

A young noble of Judah at the court of Babylon, delivered from the lions' den. He foretold the "seventy weeks" until the coming of the Messiah.

> *"Lo, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven."* Dan 7:13

*Michelangelo, frescoes of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, 1508–1512 · Vatican*

## The Twelve Minor Prophets

*Douay names, with common English forms*

**Osee** *Hosea* — 8th c. BC
God's faithful love for unfaithful Israel; "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

**Joel** — date uncertain
"I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," fulfilled at Pentecost.

**Amos** — 8th c. BC
A herdsman of Thecua who thundered against the oppression of the poor.

**Abdias** *Obadiah* — 6th c. BC
The shortest book of the Old Testament: judgment on proud Edom.

**Jonas** *Jonah* — 8th c. BC
Three days in the whale: the sign of Christ's Resurrection (Mt 12:40).

**Michaeas** *Micah* — 8th c. BC
Named Bethlehem as the birthplace of the ruler of Israel (Mic 5:2).

**Nahum** — 7th c. BC
Foretold the fall of Nineveh, the cruel Assyrian capital.

**Habacuc** *Habakkuk* — 7th c. BC
"The just shall live in his faith"; carried to feed Daniel in the lions' den.

**Sophonias** *Zephaniah* — 7th c. BC
"That day is a day of wrath" — the source of the *Dies Irae*.

**Aggeus** *Haggai* — 520 BC
Urged the rebuilding of the Temple: "the Desired of all nations shall come."

**Zacharias** *Zechariah* — 520 BC
The King riding on an ass, the thirty pieces of silver, and "him whom they have pierced."

**Malachias** *Malachi* — 5th c. BC
A "clean oblation" offered in every place — the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (Mal 1:11).

## Other Great Prophets

*who left no book of their own*

**Moses**
Lawgiver of Sinai, who spoke with God face to face and promised "a prophet like me" (Deut 18:15).

**Samuel**
Last of the judges, given to God as a child, who anointed Saul and then David as king.

**Nathan**
Rebuked David for his sin, and foretold that David's throne would endure for ever.

**Elias** *Elijah*
Called down fire on Carmel and was taken up in a fiery chariot; he appeared with Moses at the Transfiguration.

**Eliseus** *Elisha*
Heir to a double portion of Elias's spirit; he healed Naaman the leper and raised the dead.

**St. John the Baptist**
The last and greatest prophet of the Old Covenant — "more than a prophet" (Lk 7:26) — who pointed to the Lamb of God.

*The Catholic Old Testament also includes the prophecy of Baruch, Jeremias's secretary, and the Lamentations of Jeremias.*