

VIII. **The Minor/Major Prophets - Books of Isaiah – Malachi (16 prophets) / Restoration Writers - Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (3)**

The term minor and major prophetic writing is a valuation of the volume of content and a reference to the value of content. The separation is made in the Christian text only, no such distinction was made in the Hebrew canon.

There are 17 prophetic writings/16 Prophets captured in the canon of scripture.

Old Testament Prophets are designated into two large groups. Prophets assigned to the two tribal divisions of the house of Israel are prophets to the Congregation, and a prophet assigned to a people group other than Israel is considered a prophet to the nations or Gentiles.

There are also three unassigned Old Testament prophets: Joel, Habakkuk, and Malachi.

The time period of the writings represents people and events during a time of admonishment before captivity and the time of adjudication resulting from the failure of both the Northern and Southern tribes of Israel to repent.

Before adjudication, the prophets compelled both the Northern and Southern kingdoms to repent and return to the Lord. The general response to prophetic warnings was dull, with many believing that God would never resolve to punish the people He'd chosen.

The Prophet to the Congregation of Israel /Judah

The Old Testament Prophets to the Congregation are assigned either to the Northern or Southern Kingdoms.

The Northern Kingdom has a single prophet:

Micah 1:1 - *Samaria* and Judah

The Southern Kingdom has six prophetic voices assigned before their captivity:

Isaiah 1:1 – King(s) during prophetic office: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz

Hosea 1:1 - King(s) during prophetic office: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz

Micah 1:1 - *Samaria* and **Judah** Kings during prophetic office: Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah

Amos 1:1 - King(s) during prophetic office: Uzziah

Jeremiah 1:1-3 - King(s) during prophetic office: Josiah, Jehoiakim, until Zedekiah

Zephaniah 1:1 - King(s) during prophetic office: Josiah

Captivity Prophets: four prophets assigned during the captivity Judah:

Daniel 1:1 – King(s) during prophetic office: Jehoiakim (under siege) / Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon)

Ezekiel 1:1 - Judah / Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon)

Haggai 1:1 - Judah / Darius 2nd Year (Persia/Archimedean Empire) / Zerubbabel (Priest)

Zechariah 1:1 - Judah / Darius 2nd Year (Persia/Archimedean Empire) / Zerubbabel (Priest)

The Prophet to the Nations

There are three Old Testament prophets assigned to Gentile nations:

Obadiah 1:1 - Edom-Esau / (judged/punished for rejoicing over Judah's fall/demise; failure to assist)

Jonah 1:1 - Nineveh (capital of Assyria; future oppressor of Northern Tribes, IIKings 18:9-11)

Nahum 1:1 - Nineveh (capital of Assyria; future oppressor of Northern Tribes, IIKings 18:9-11)

APOSTLE DEL PHILLIPS – COPYRIGHT 2025



Prophetic Book Summations – featured samples

Isaiah appeals to the House of Judah (Southern Kingdom) and Israel (Northern Kingdom) to repent and return to the Lord. [Isaiah chapters 1-10, 64-66](#)

Jeremiah appeals to the House of Judah (Southern Kingdom) to repent and return to the Lord. [Jeremiah chapters 1-10,52](#)

Lamentations - The prophet Jeremiah laments concerning the fate of the House of Judah (Southern Kingdom) in the Babylonian Empire's custody. [Lamentations chapters 1,5](#)

Ezekiel is the word of the Lord received by the prophet in captivity. The House of Judah (Southern Kingdom) is in the Babylonian Empire's custody. [Ezekiel chapters 1-3,36-37](#)

Daniel is among the elite Hebrew children taken in the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian King. His writings offer a diary of the first years during the siege and eventual demise of the house of Judah (Southern Kingdom). Several years later under the leadership of Darius, the third ruler of the Median-Persian Empire (522-486 BC), Daniel was appointed chief among the three presidents assigned to oversee the 120 princes and principalities of the empire.

In Daniel's adult years he receives four extraordinary visions (cp 7-8, 10-11) from God and one prominent prophetic revelation applied to the apocalypse timeline of the future. (cp 9) [Daniel chapters 1-6,7-11](#)

Vision One: cp 7 – In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, “Vision of four great beasts: The Lion, The Bear, The Leopard, and the Dreadful Beast.” The night vision begins with the four winds wrestling against the sea. Four distinct creatures arise from the clashing sea.

The **first beast** was like a lion with the wings of an Eagle (Babylonian Empire); its wings were plucked, and it was left standing like a man with a human heart.

The **second beast** was like a Bear (Median-Persian Empire) standing on its hind legs with three ribs between its teeth. The Bear devoured the flesh of its predecessor.

The **third beast** was like a four-winged Leopard (Greek Empire-Alexander the Great), the last of the three empires, rising to prominence with four heads branching out with power and dominion. (Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, four conquerors who inherited the remnants of Alexander's kingdom).

The **fourth beast** was dreadful and terrible and exceptionally strong. The kingdom and dominion of the four-winged leopard were devoured and broken into pieces by the dreadful beast. The dreadful beast had ten horns of power branching out across the world (Roman Empire).

A separate single horn sprouted from the dreadful beast, usurping three of the existing ten horns. The empowered single horn had the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great offensives to make war against the saints of God. This is a forecast of the final human dictator that will arise, notably the Antichrist, as characterized by the boastful, blasphemous speech. (Revelation 13:5-6). The single horn prevailed against the saints for a **time** (one year) and **times** (two years) and **half of time** (half a year), which is equivalent to three and one-half years.

APOSTLE DEL PHILLIPS – COPYRIGHT 2025



When the season of oppression expires, the defender of the oppressed will overthrow the dominion of the dreadful oppressor. The saints of the most High will join the defender, the Son of Man (Judge of all Humanity), who will subdue and take dominion of the great kingdom.

The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man (Judge of all Humanity) will have possession of the kingdom forever without fear of future opposition or interruption.

Daniel asked the Angel for a truthful explanation, specifically about the fourth beast. The fourth beast represented the next Empire that would follow the regimes that currently ruled the world. Daniel and other fellow captives would soon be released from their captivity, awaiting a terrible greater threat than the oppressors they'd known for the past seventy years. He had even greater anxiety and fearful thoughts regarding the single-horn ruler that would come at some point in the future. Learning that the entire world would be intimidated by a dictator-ruler who would contend with the God of creation was startling to Daniel, causing a worrisome change in his countenance.

The summary hope of believers should rest in knowing that in the end, the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man will prevail. The threat of a future anti-Christ leader and system cannot be avoided, but that system and leader is time-limited. The disorder and disruption that it will bring will not last. At the end of its scheduled term, God and the saints of the most High will prevail forever without limitation or interruption.

Vision Two: cp 8 – In the third year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Shushan in the province of Elam by the river of Ulai - “Vision of The Ram and The Goat ”: *The last end of the indignation for the time appointed the end.*

The Ram by the river of Ulai had two horns, one higher than the other. The horns represent two kingdoms (Media-Persia) with the higher horn appearing after the first, identifying the successor kingdom that becomes stronger and greater than the former. Median kingdom was a contemporary to Babylon, the succeeding Persian Empire would be greater and stronger. The successor kingdom (Persia) pushed against western, northern, and southern kingdoms and could not be defeated. While it occupied its eastern dominion, it had the power to accomplish everything it desired without interference and the authority to control kingdoms far beyond its boundaries.

In time, a rough Goat (Greek Empire) with a notable horn of power between its eyes rises to power from the western hemisphere. The single-horn (first King of Greece- Alexander the Great) of the goat had the strength to move the Ram from its seat of power. [Note: the “goat” was already a known symbol for the Greeks, who were often referred to as “*The goat’s people.*”]

The Goat moved against the Ram with great bitterness and cast its kingdom to the ground, stomping it into dust to remove all appearances of its influence. No forces could prevent the Goat, representing the successor kingdom, from overthrowing the empire represented by the Ram.

The single great horn is broken, and its kingdom is scattered. Four new Kings rise from the scattered remains. [Cassander (Greece), Lysimachus (Asia), Seleucus (Syria), and Ptolemy (Egypt), four conquerors who inherited the remnants of Alexander’s kingdom] The four new kings are self-directed with no allegiance to the former Greek predecessor.

The vacuum of world dominance in the aftermath and demise of the Great Greek ruler left a vast dominion over which competing conquerors fought to control. The Roman Empire would eventually rise as the new dominant world empire, but not without a clash with the Seleucids, specifically the house of Antiochus. At the time of Daniel’s vision, the forecast of a leader with a fierce countenance and an ability to understand dark mysteries pointed at Antiochus Epiphanes IV (175 – 164 BC).



His reputation in history includes an identity and ego that not only reached the heavens but contended for God's titulary. He was weaponized to direct his power against others, especially the Holy people of God. He amassed great wealth and created policies to sustain his rulership and fortune. His grand proposals to bring peace, most often ended with the destruction of many.

Daniel was instructed to hide the vision he received and that it would not come to fruition for many days. The threat of Antiochus Epiphanes IV would soon become apparent during a period when Jews living in the province controlled by Rome had not yet officially subjected them to Roman sovereignty. In 171 BC, the Seleucid leader banned Jewish worship rituals, seized and desecrated their temple, and banished them from their homestead. He suppressed Jewish and Samaritan religious and cultural observances and imposed Hellenistic practices to replace all religious observances.

TSL #1: cp 9 – In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus/Xerxes I (4th Median-Persian Empire 486-465 BC).

Daniel was taken into captivity as a child. He was consciously aware of the timeline predicted for the number of years Judah (Southern Kingdom) would be held in captivity. Daniel was tracking years to account for the seventy years the prophet Jeremiah forewarned to prepare God's people for the judgment set against them. (Jeremiah 25:11-12)

As year seventy approached, Daniel began to pray and fast, seeking God for confirmation that the release of God's people would be realized. In his prayer Daniel acknowledges the disobedience of God's people, failing to keep His commandments, specifically the wickedness of their idolatry. He includes himself among the entire house of Judah in repentance for their rebellion and turning away from the God who delivered them from captivity in Egypt.

With great sincerity, Daniel petitions for God's forgiveness, asking Him to incline his ear to hear and open His eyes to see their desolation. He asked God not to defer their release and to respond for the sake of His name assigned to the city and the people called by His name.

Daniel understood there was a set time for the captivity and release for his people but he did not understand how their captivity was connected to events in the future. He was unaware that their sin of idolatry was symbolic of the sin that would overtake many other people and cultures throughout the world. The sin and redemption of Judah (Southern Tribe) are symbolic of God's universal plan to punish and ultimately save the world.

Gabriel presented a timeline for events to come. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city" (*Daniel 9:24*) The calculation in Hebrew terminology represents 490 years. In Leviticus 25:4-5, Sabbath years represent seven-year intervals. The Hebrew calculation is based on Sabbath year sets or seventy sabbatical years, 70 x 7 sabbath years, which is a total of 490 years.



The Angel goes on to list six accomplishments at the end of the 490-year period.

Finish the transgression: Humanity's rebellion against God will end, because a new kingdom order will be inaugurated.

Make an end of sins: The practice of sin and the need for restraint will come to an end. Because sin is eliminated, the guilt and penalty of sin will also end.

Reconciliation for iniquity: God's work to remedy the curse of sin will be fulfilled. The crucifixion of the only begotten son of God will pay in full the debt to sin.

Fulfillment of everlasting righteousness: God's righteousness will be established as the single standard, and the rightness of God will permanently bring order to the earth.

Vision and Prophecy Sealed: Final prophecies will be fulfilled and conclude the final stage of human history, culminating with the reign of the Son of God.

Anoint the Most Holy: Anointing the Holy City of God set apart to honor and worship Him.

Gabriel's message continues, explaining when the 490 year period would begin. "*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the **commandment** to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks*".

Using the same sabbath calculation, seven weeks represents one set of seven years. Threescore and two weeks represent sixty-two years. Together the total is 483 years or 69 units of seven sabbath years from the time of the commandment to rebuild and restore the Temple and the birth of the promised Messiah.

There are multiple commandments made by multiple persons empowered to give the Hebrews permission to rebuild their Temple after their exile in captivity. Cyrus, Darius, and Ahasuerus/Xerxes I all provided permission at different times during the fulfillment of God's instructions to King Cyrus in a dream. The last authorization was made by Ahasuerus/Xerxes I (Nehemiah 2:1-8), which also aligns with the 483-year countdown to the birth of the Messiah.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:26)

The Messiah would be cut off, a term in Hebrew context which means execution, is a reference to the crucifixion death. The crucifixion can be calculated to have occurred at the expiration of the 483-year countdown period. The prophecy of the city and the sanctuary being destroyed occurs in 70 AD, approximately thirty-seven years after the crucifixion.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)

The final week of the 490-year period is outstanding, pointing to the period known as the apocalypse. The Hebrew calculation of one sabbath week is seven years. These events are captured with details in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.



Vision 3: cp 10-11 – In the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, Daniel has another vision.

This vision occurs at the time when many exiled Hebrews have returned to their homeland, resulting from the proclamation of King Cyrus to return and restore the Temple City, instructions the King received from God in a dream. (II Chronicles 36:22-23)

Daniel imposed a fast upon himself, refusing to eat fresh bread or consume any meat or wine. He did not adorn himself with oils or follow any of his normal grooming habits. It is possible that Daniel is mourning his choice not to return home or has great concerns for those who did return who are facing adversity and scorn in their attempt to rebuild the Temple City.

On the 24th day of the first month, Daniel sat by the Great Hiddekel River, a geo-marker in creation. The once young member of the chosen elite was an elderly man at age 84 who lifted his eyes to see an Angelic messenger clothed in linen girded with the gold of Uphaz. His body was made of beryl, like the ninth foundation layer of precious stone featured in the eternal city. (Revelation 21:20) His face had the appearance of lightning with eyes like lamps of fire. His arms and feet were like polished brass. When he spoke, it sounded like a multitude of voices speaking in harmony.

Daniel was the only person who could see the Angelic, but the others were impacted by its presence. The Angel's presence shook those who could not see him and hid themselves from the unseen power. The Angel's voice was heard only by Daniel and when he spoke the sound of its voice caused him to fall face-forward to the ground. He was cautioned not to fear, as the Angel explained that Daniel's words were heard as he spoke them at the beginning of his fast.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

(Daniel 10:13)

The Angel was detained for twenty-one days by the supernatural principalities in the Persian region. Another Angelic, Michael, joined his fight through the powerful obstructions brought against them. He assures Daniel that he has come to help him understand the fate of his people.

Although the Angel was present with Daniel, the conflict in the heavenlies was not resolved. The warrior/messenger Angel had to return and rejoin the battle alongside Michael before he could deliver the vision and message he was instructed to bring to Daniel.

*Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. **21** But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. (Daniel 10:20-21)*

After assuring Daniel of its intention, the Angel makes it clear he will reveal the truth he seeks to know when he returns. He must return to the fight that will also include the principalities of the powerful demonic forces that existed in the days of the Greeks, that will join with the Persian adversaries to prevent God's messengers from their assignments. The only thing that has priority to his messenger assignment to Daniel is the allegiance to join Micheal in the warfare against interfering principalities.



In chapter eleven, the Angelic returns to deliver the vision and revelation intended for Daniel to receive. This message is focused on the relative future of the Hebrews returning to their homeland, specifically the impact that the Seleucid kingdom (Antiochus Epiphanes IV) would have on them leading up to the time of Messiah and also how the message could be used as a foreshadow for the believers in the Messiah in the future.

The prophetic forecast the Angelic gave Daniel is so accurate that some critics believe this segment of scripture was annotated well after the time of Daniel, suggesting the text is a reference to history as opposed to a prophetic forecast of future events.

The Angelic outlines the truth about four future kings. Three kings with similar power and strength will rise to power in Persia in succession. The fourth future Persian ruler will be stronger and wealthier than his predecessors. The fourth king, notably Ahasuerus/Xerxes I, will push against the realm of Greece, and oppose the great expansion to establish Greece as a world empire. The only ruler not accounted for in the vision is Cyrus. It is likely that King Cyrus is not accounted for in the succession timeline because he was the sitting King at the time of the prophecy.

The prophecy is relative to providing evidence of how God is aware of all outcomes before they come to fruition, including major worldwide events and the succession of secular rulers. The secular rulers would also fulfill their role, like King Cyrus, to execute God's over-all plan. Knowingly or without knowledge many people that do not worship God are participants in His overarching plan.

And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. (Daniel 11:3-4)

The centerpiece of the prophecy projects the future rise and reign of Alexander the Great, ruler of the Greeks. With all his great accomplishments, after his demise at age 32, his posterity is scattered to the four winds and sub-divided among four indifferent leaders waiting to advance their own agendas. [Casander (Greece), Lysimachus (Asia), Seleucus (Syria), and Ptolemy (Egypt)]



Three writers capture the aftermath period that followed the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. *Nehemiah/Ezra* – The historical log found in the book of Nehemiah references the decree made by Cyrus the Great (Achaemenid - First Persian Empire 550-530), who had a dream inspired by God, which provoked him to release the Hebrews still held captive after taking control of the Babylonian kingdom. The decree was reviewed during the tenure of Darius the Great (3rd Median-Persian Empire 522-486 BC) to execute the original mandate that was not yet executed. Nehemiah's writing annotates the challenges of convincing captives to return and the opposition they faced when they began to rebuild the altar and the walls of a burned and broken city. Ezra's writings highlight the inaugural celebration after the altar is completed and the first offerings are presented. Ezra stands upon a wooden pulpit made for the occasion to read from the Torah until sunset, rehearsing words that had not been heard or spoken for nearly 100 years.

Esther is an advocate for the Hebrew people who have not yet returned to their homeland to embrace their freedom decreed by Cyrus the Great. While Hebrews remain in the custody of the 4th Median-Persian ruler since Cyrus, their survival is still threatened. Esther has an opportunity to intervene for her Hebrew tribal family after she becomes the wife of King Ahasuerus/Xerxes I (4th Median-Persian Empire 486-465 BC). She risked her life to enter the King's throne room without an invitation to advocate for mercy upon her native family.

