



# The Illustrated Guide to the Authors of the Bible



# About this book

While God is the ultimate Author of Scripture, he used many people to put pen to paper (or papyrus, or stone tablets, etc.).

*No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man,  
but men spoke from God as they were carried along  
by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)*

God spoke through musicians, priests, kings, poets, farmers, shepherds, fishermen, scholars—it's a long list. This ebook introduces you to the human writers of Scripture one by one.

This book is for:

- People who want to know the authors of the Bible better
- Teachers who want to introduce more people to these authors
- Awesome people who just love collecting ebooks

You're welcome to print this ebook and share it with your friends and Bible study group. You're also free to quote excerpts from this ebook: but please link to [OverviewBible.com](https://OverviewBible.com) when you do. Thanks for reading!

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# About the authors

(That's us in Iceland, the only place on earth as weird as we are. Yes, the Blue Lagoon water actually looks like that.)

## Jeffrey Kranz

I founded the Overview Bible Project, where I blog about how interesting the Bible is. You'll also find my infographics in *Bible Study Magazine*. I take God, coffee, and little else seriously.

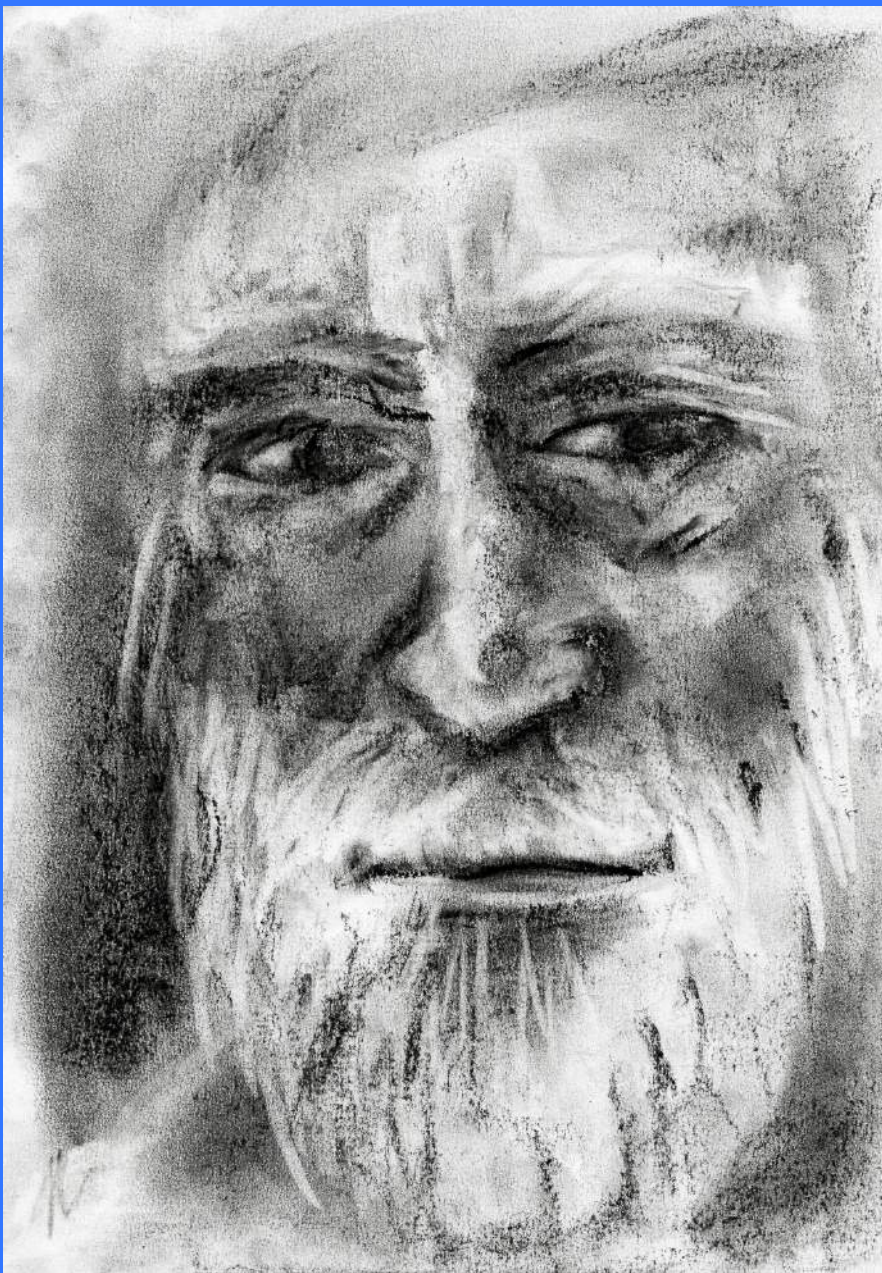
## Laura Kranz

Laura's an artist and worship leader. Her primary inspirations: the Bible, philosophy, science, and her own wacky imagination.



Old Testament authors





# Moses

Moses is the prophet and psalmist who leads Israel from slavery in Egypt to the edge of the promised land. He also wrote about 20% of your Bible.

*Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. (Dt 34:10)*

Moses is a Hebrew born in Egypt and raised in Pharaoh's house (all the other Hebrews in Egypt are slaves at the time). After killing an abusive Egyptian slave driver, Moses escapes the death penalty by running to the wilderness. Forty years go by, and God meets Moses in the wilderness (there's a burning bush involved).

God rescues the Israelite slaves from Egypt through Moses, and then makes a special agreement with Israel: from now on, Israel is God's nation, and God is Israel's deity. Moses writes out the details of what that relationship looks like. This agreement, or covenant, is called the "Law."

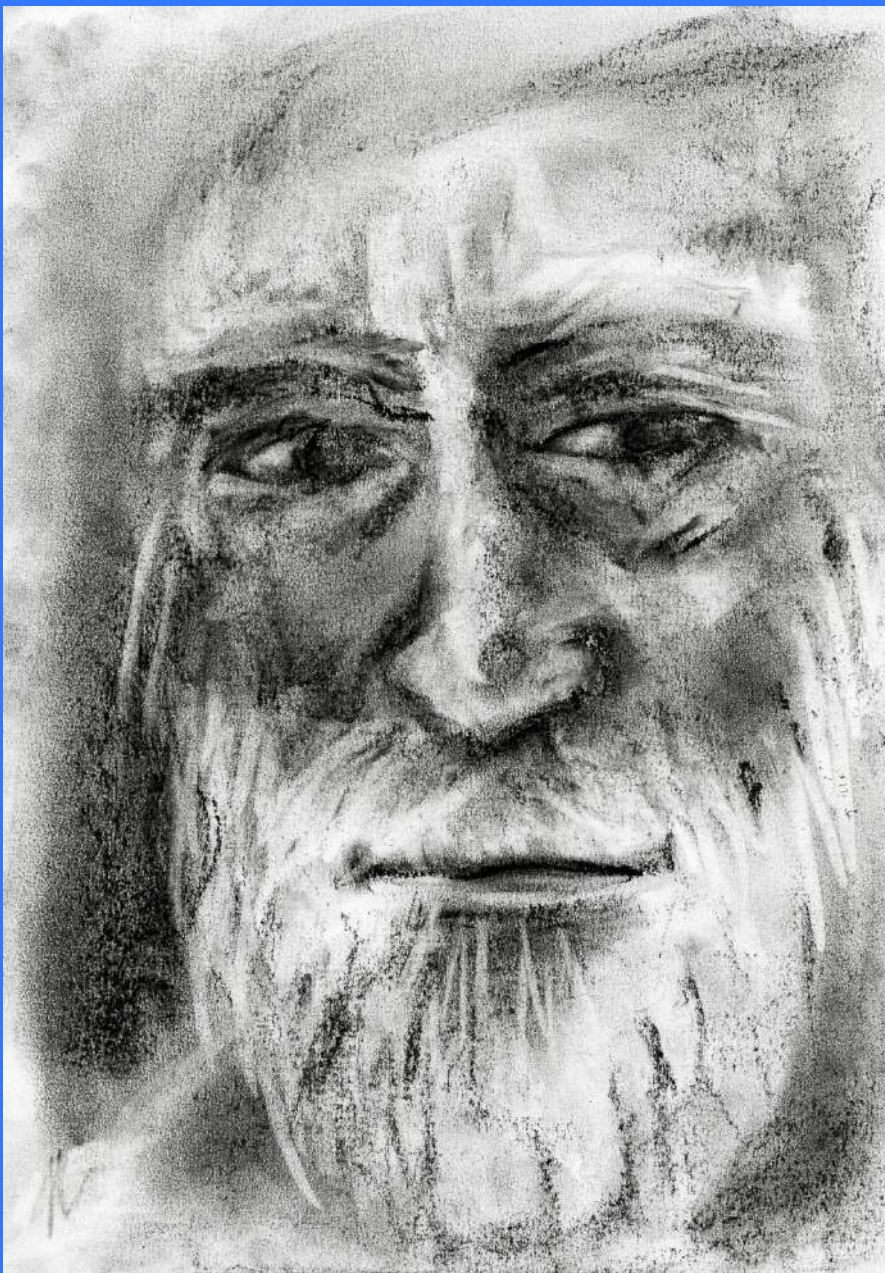
Wrote: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalm 90*

Ministry: *1566–1406 BC or 1270–1230 BC*

Occupation: *Shepherd, prophet*

Tribe: *Levi*



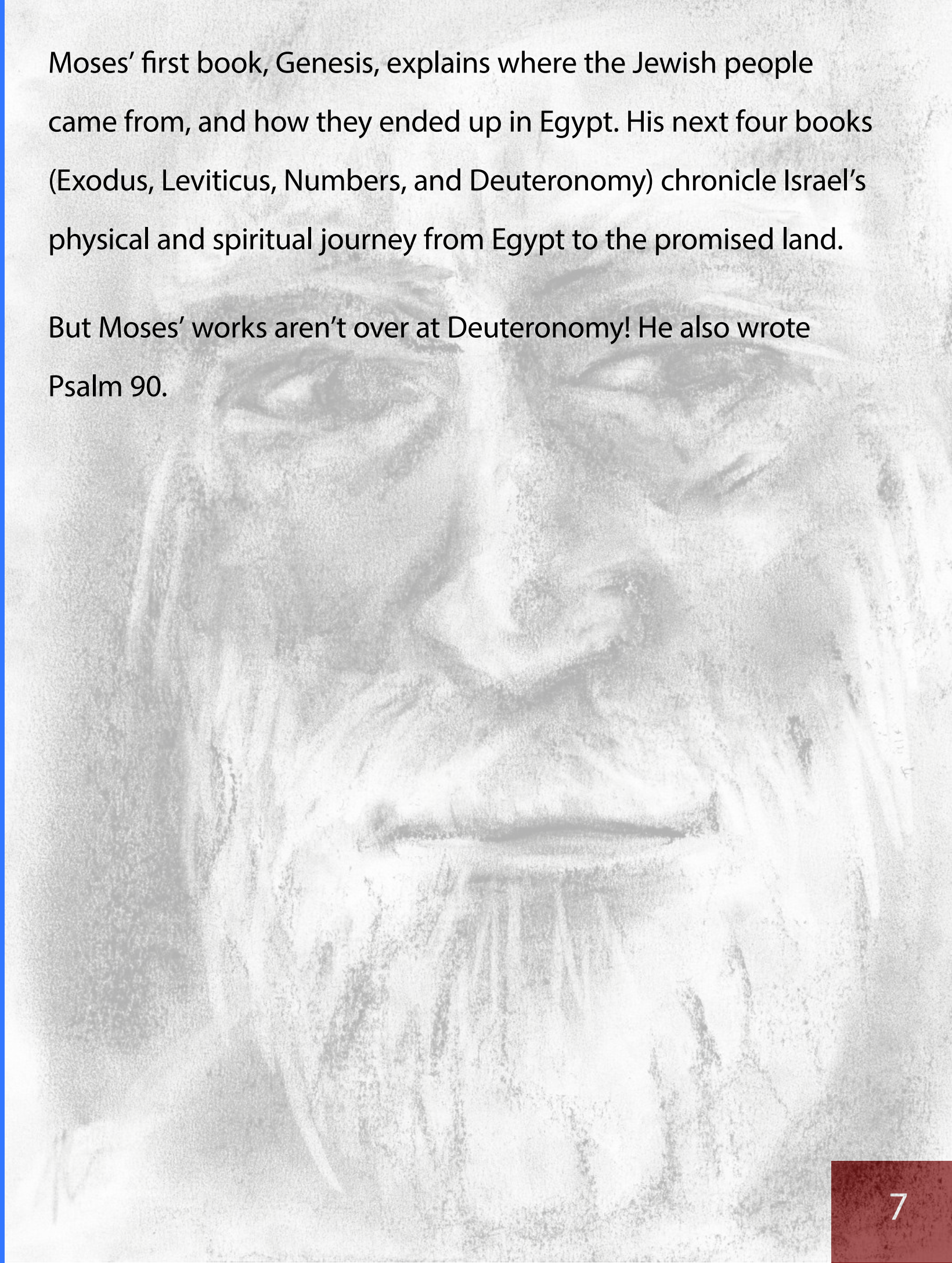


# Moses

(Continued)

Moses' first book, Genesis, explains where the Jewish people came from, and how they ended up in Egypt. His next four books (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) chronicle Israel's physical and spiritual journey from Egypt to the promised land.

But Moses' works aren't over at Deuteronomy! He also wrote Psalm 90.







Wrote: *1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra*

Ministry: *458–432 BC*

Occupation: *Scribe*

Tribe: *Levi*

# Ezra

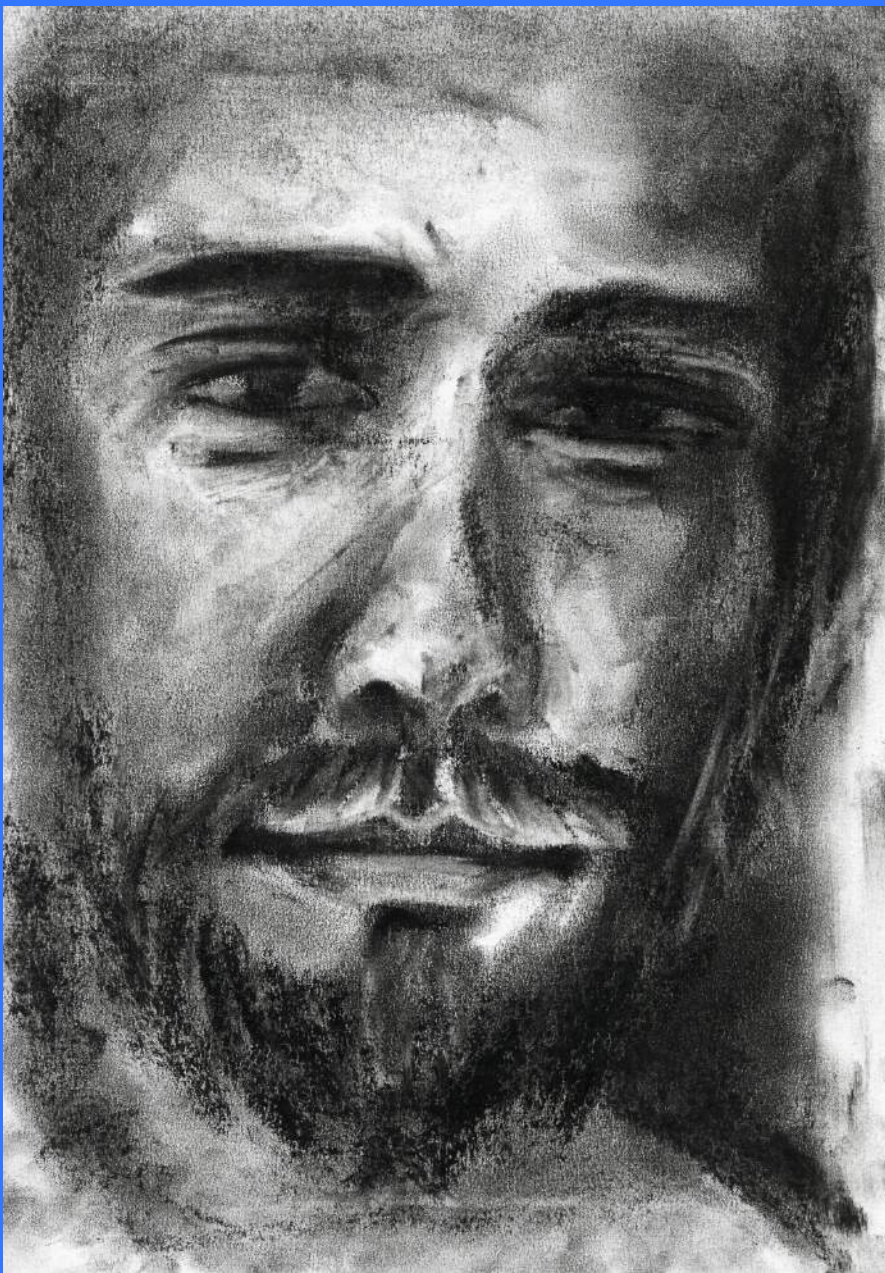
Ezra is born long, long after Moses. Like Moses, Ezra leads a group of Israelites from exile in another nation back to the promised land.

*For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezr 7:10)*

Ezra is a scribe: someone who reads, writes, and interprets documents. He's especially well-versed in the Law of Moses (Ezra 7:6). He's actually related to Moses: Ezra is a great-great-great(...)-grandson of Moses' brother Aaron, which means he's also got some priest blood in him (7:1–5). Ezra grows up in Babylon, but he is determined to move to become a missionary to his homeland (7:10), so he takes a group of Jews back to Jerusalem and begins teaching the people God's ways.

Ezra is a key player in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. He's a religious leader in Jerusalem who calls the people around him to holiness.





Wrote: *Nehemiah*

Ministry: 445–432 BC

Occupation: *Cupbearer, governor*

Tribe: *Unknown*

# Nehemiah

When Nehemiah hears that Jerusalem is in shambles (Neh 1:3), he gets the go-ahead from King Artaxerxes to rebuild the city walls and gates. And get this: he gets the wall rebuilt in just 52 days (6:15).

*Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people. (Ne 5:19)*

Nehemiah's more than a wallbuilder, though. Artaxerxes makes him the governor of Judah (Neh 5:14), and Nehemiah uses this position to point the people to God. He's the one stationing soldiers, commissioning singers in the temple, and making sure the temple stays clean. Plus, he teams up with Ezra to rededicate the people to God (10:28–39) and hold them to their promises (13:4–31).

Nehemiah wrote the book that bears his name—and he wrote it in first person. Nehemiah has a very transparent writing style, often breaking from his story to record a prayer he made to God (4:4; 13:22).





Wrote: *Psalms 3–9, 11–41, 51–65, 68–70, 86, 101, 103, 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145*

Reign: *1000–960 BC*

Occupation: *Shepherd, musician, warrior, king*

Tribe: *Judah*

# David

You've heard of this guy. He's the shepherd boy who killed Goliath the giant. He's the war-hero king who delivered Israel from her enemies and established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He's the jerk who killed off Uriah so he could have Uriah's wife. And maybe most importantly, he's a messiah: someone anointed by God to rule the people in wisdom and justice.

*The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people. (1 Sa 13:14)*

David is the focal character in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles, and the books of Ruth and Kings tell us all about his family. David's one of the Bible's most important characters, but that doesn't have all that much to do with David. He's important because God makes a special promise to him: from David will come an everlasting kingdom with an everlasting king. Spoiler alert: that's Jesus.

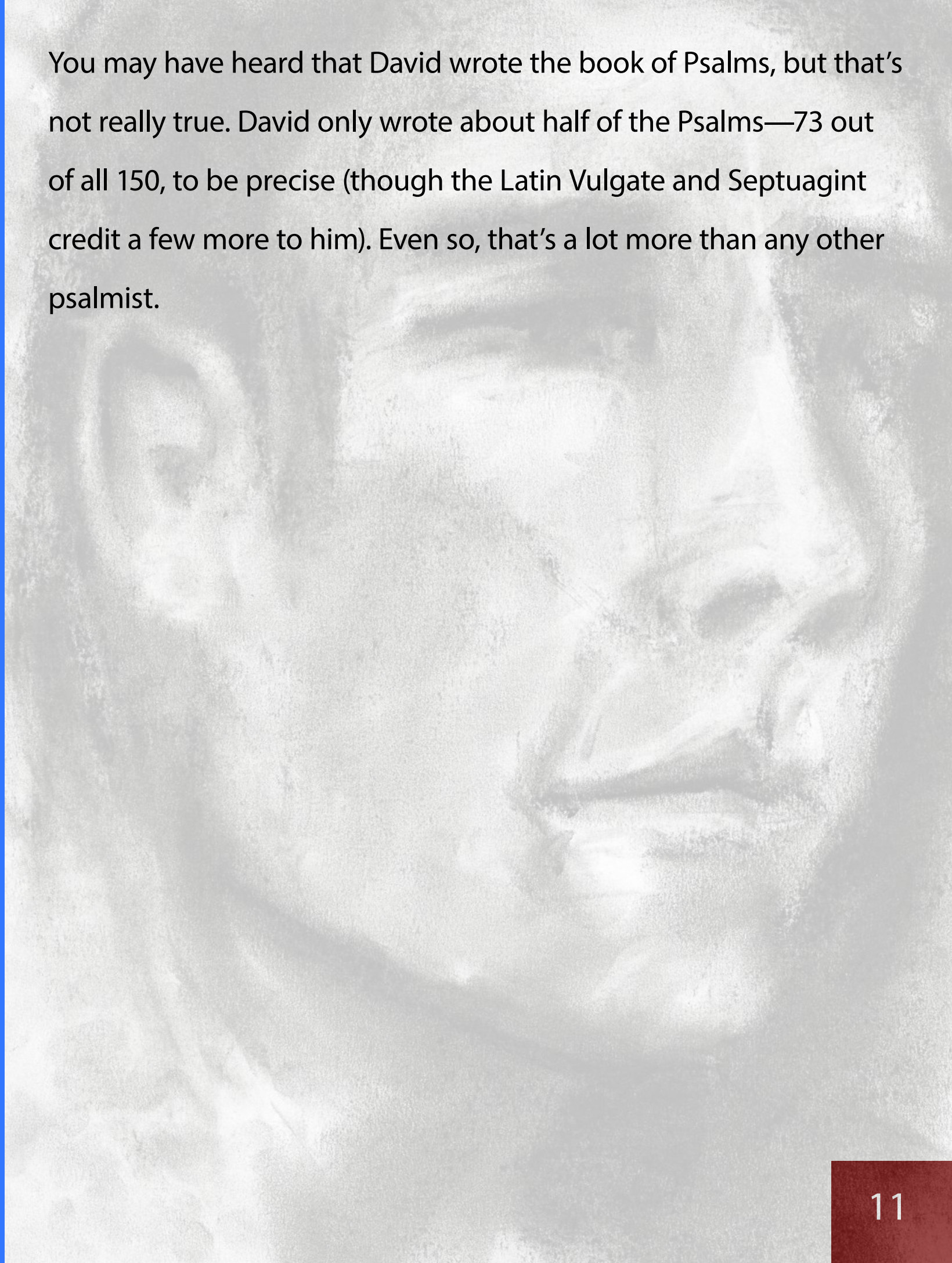




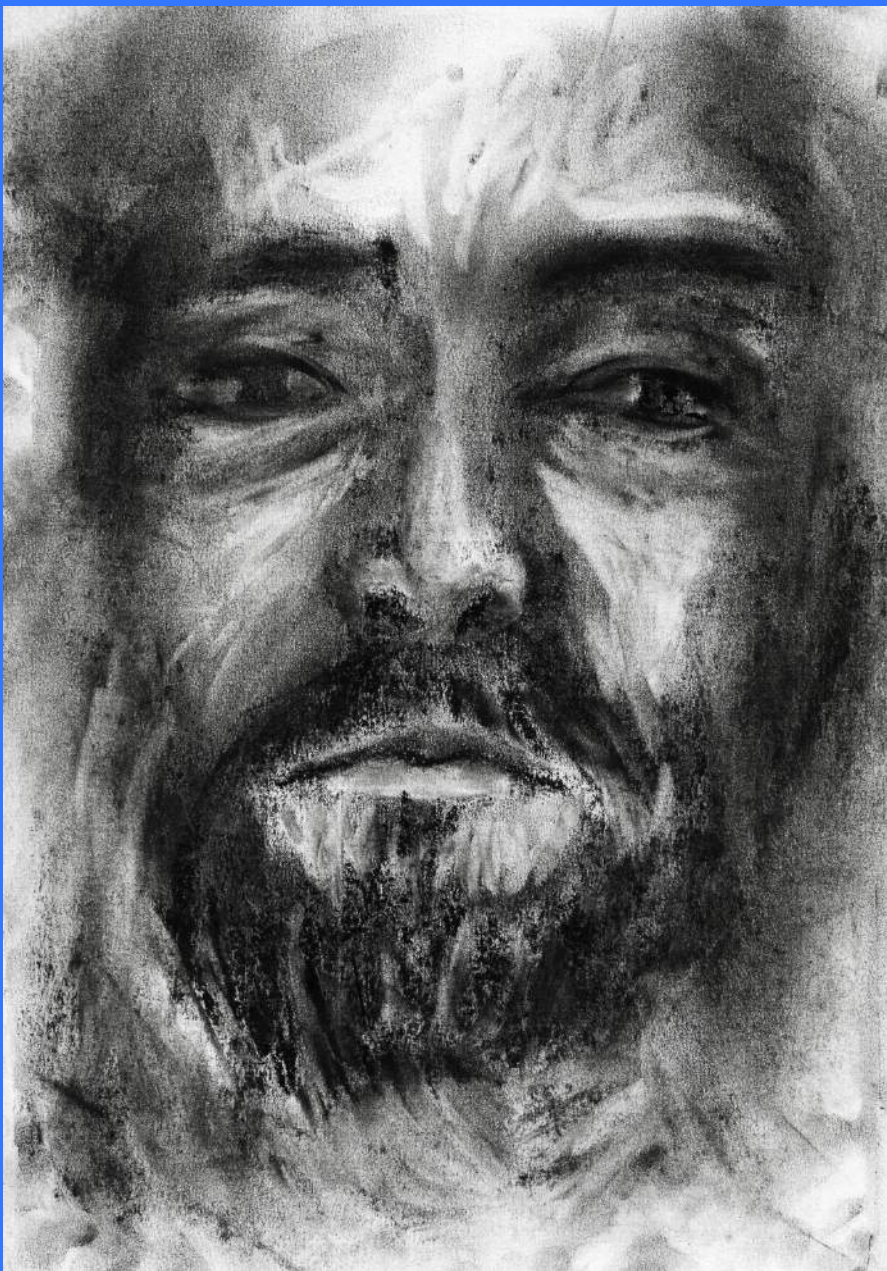
# David

(Continued)

You may have heard that David wrote the book of Psalms, but that's not really true. David only wrote about half of the Psalms—73 out of all 150, to be precise (though the Latin Vulgate and Septuagint credit a few more to him). Even so, that's a lot more than any other psalmist.







Wrote: *Psalms 72, 127; Proverbs 1–29; Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*

Reign: *961–922 BC*

Occupation: *King*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Solomon

When Solomon succeeds his father David as king of all Israel, the Lord appears to him in a dream. He gives Solomon the ultimate “blank check”: Solomon names anything he wants, and God will give it to him. Instead of asking for cash or the heads of his enemies, Solomon just asks God for wisdom. And boy, does God deliver:

*Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. [. . .] He was wiser than all men.*  
*(1 Ki 29, 31)*

Solomon writes 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Ki 4:32). Lucky for us, a lot of that wisdom is part of our Bibles. Solomon is the main editor of Proverbs, a book of principles for making wise decisions. He’s also traditionally credited the books of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. In the first, he asks, “What’s the point of even existing?” In the second, he celebrates love, marriage, and all kinds of sexual privileges that come with that. Two of the Psalms (72 and 127) are Solomon’s, too.





Wrote: *Psalms 50, 73–83*

Ministry began: *c1005 BC*

Occupation: *Worship leader, music director, seer*

Tribe: *Levi*

## Asaph (and family)

*He appointed some of the Levites as ministers [. . .]  
to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God  
of Israel: Asaph the chief. (1 Ch 16:4–5)*

When David brings the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, he appoints Asaph and his family to lead the people in a psalm of thanksgiving (1 Ch 16:5).

Asaph is a musician and a prophet (2 Ch 29:30; Mt 13:35). David puts Asaph and his sons in charge of prophesying through musical instruments in the temple (1 Ch 25:1–2). As far as Asaph's musical skill, he's a singer, a songwriter, and apparently has a taste for loud cymbals (1 Ch 16:5; 2 Ch 5:12).

Twelve of the Psalms are credited to Asaph (Ps 50; 73–83). However, his sons carry on the worship ministry for centuries (Ezr 2:41; Ne 7:44), so it's possible that some of these were written by his descendants.





Wrote: *Psalms 42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–88*

Tribe: *Levi*

# Sons of Korah

When Moses leads Israel through the wilderness, a Levite named Korah challenges Moses' leadership. That doesn't end well—the earth swallows up Korah and his followers.

But Korah's sons survive, and they have quite a legacy in the Bible through their music. The descendants of Korah wrote 11 psalms (Ps 42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–88).





Wrote: *Psalms 88*

Occupation: *Sage*

Tribe: *Possibly Judah*

# Heman

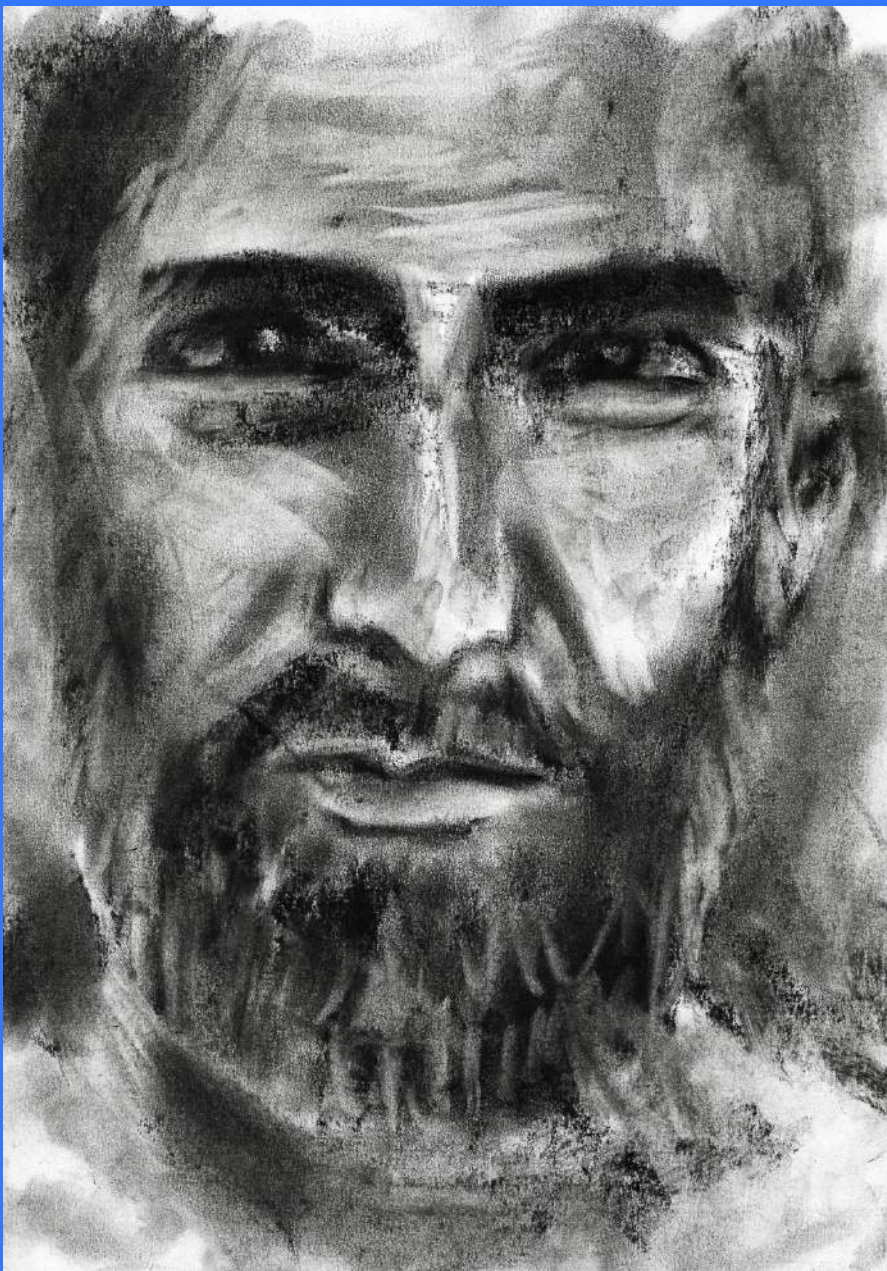
Before anyone gets overly excited, no, a Masters of the Universe character did not author part of the Bible (as far as I can tell). But the similarity in name is pretty funny.

Heman is a wise man who co-authored the eighty-eighth psalm with the sons of Korah. He's wise enough to compare to Solomon, but not wiser (1 Ki 4:31).

Heman is called an Ezrahite. We're not entirely sure what that means, but it may mean that he's a descendant of Zerah, a patriarch in the tribe of Judah (1 Ch 2:3–4). Ezra writes that Zerah had a son named Heman, but unless this genealogy is skipping many generations, this is not the same Heman.

Fun fact: of all its authors the Bible names, Heman makes the smallest contribution: only 233 Hebrew words.





Wrote: *Psalms 89*

Occupation: *Sage*

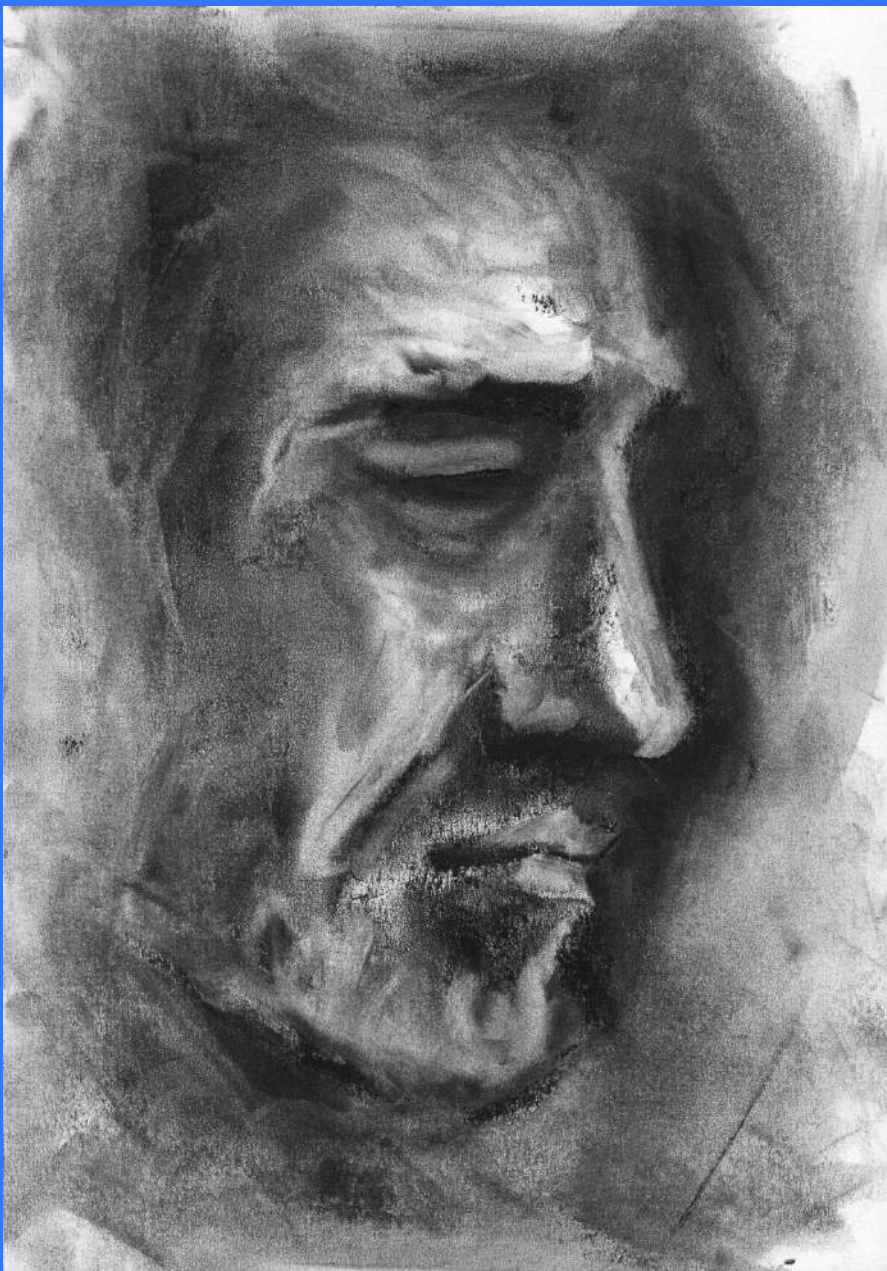
Tribe: *Possibly Judah*

# Ethan

Oh, look, another psalmist! Like his relative Heman, Ethan is called an Ezrahite (Ps 89). Also like Heman, Ethan is one of the wisest men in the world. He wrote Psalm 89.

We don't know much about Ethan, except that he was a famous wise man. So famously wise, in fact, that the Bible makes a point to tell us Solomon was even wiser (1 Ki 4:31). Sorry, Ethan—but hey, somebody needs to get the silver medals.





Wrote: *Proverbs 30*

Occupation: *Sage*

Tribe: *Unknown*

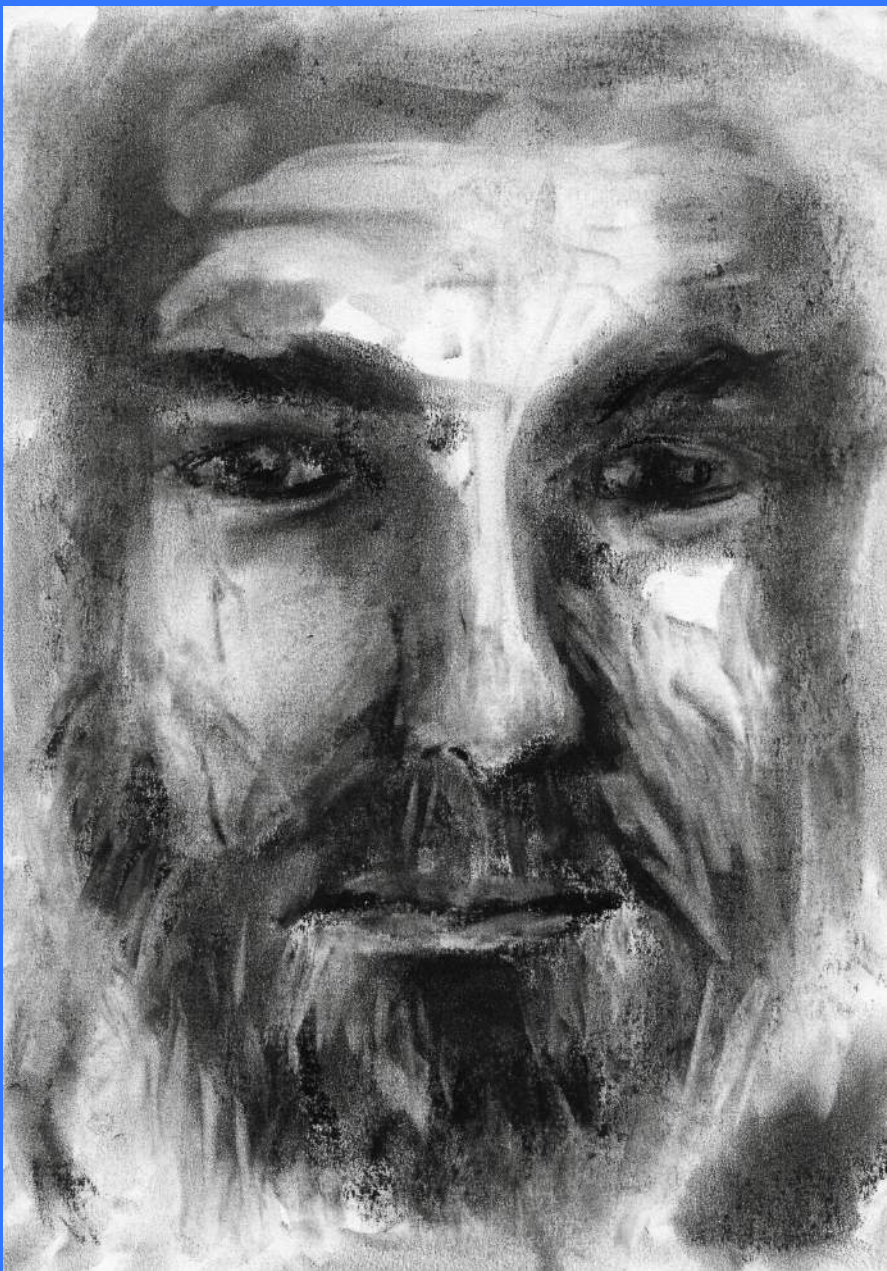
# Agur

We don't know much about the author of Proverbs 30. He must have been wise enough for the Jews to include in their book of wisdom, but he doesn't think too highly of his smarts compared to the wisdom of God:

*Surely I am more stupid than any man,  
And I do not have the understanding of a man.  
Neither have I learned wisdom,  
Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.  
(Pr 30:2–3)*

Kind of a downer, this guy.





Wrote: *Proverbs 31*

Occupation: *King, sage*

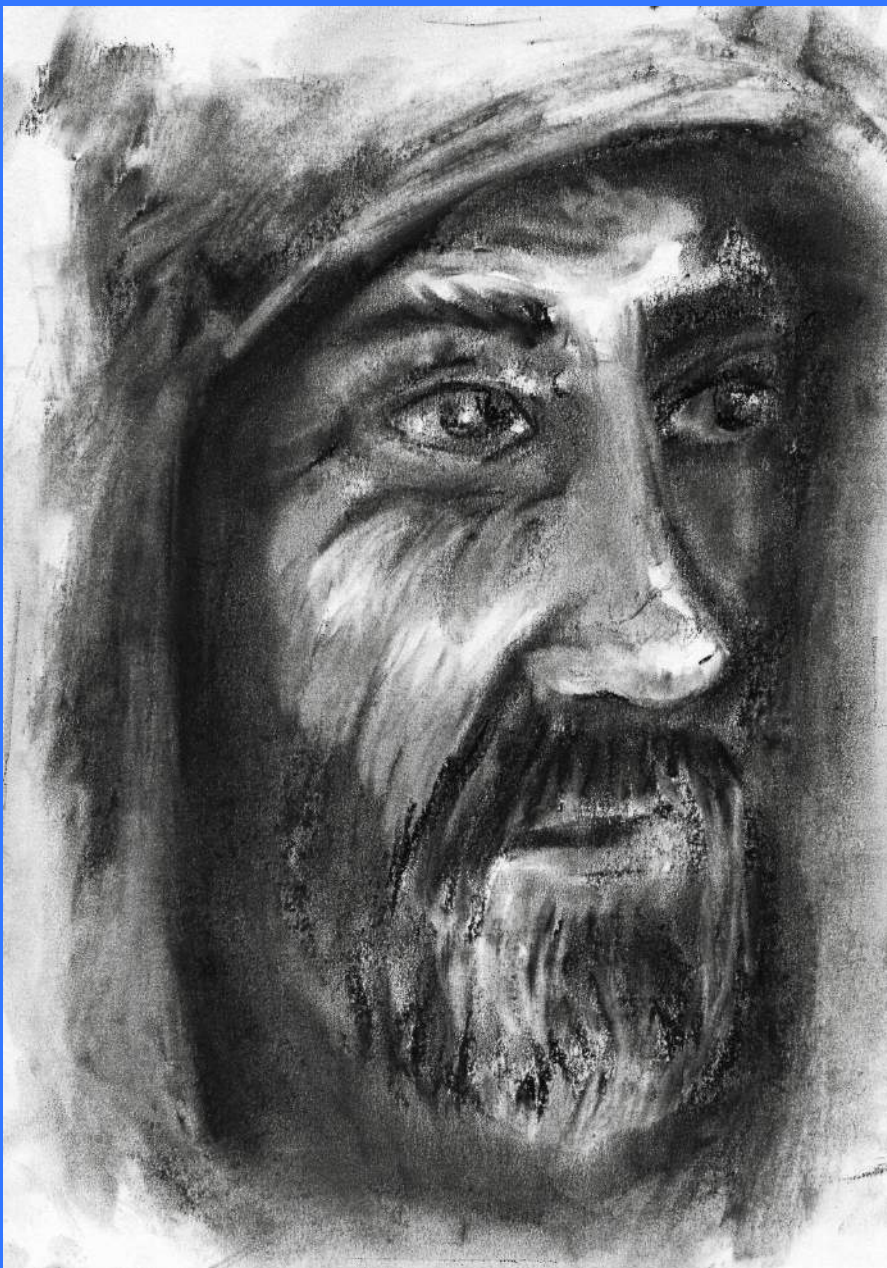
Tribe: *Unknown*

# Lemuel

Again, the Bible tells us very little about this author. Lemuel was a king, possibly of a place called Massa (31:1). Some Bibles translate his intro to call him the “king of Massa,” but we’re not sure where that would be.

Here’s something cool about Lemuel: his contribution to the Bible is pretty much a tribute to his mom. She taught her son well, and now he’s passing on her wisdom to his readers.





Wrote: *Isaiah*

Ministry: *742–701 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Isaiah

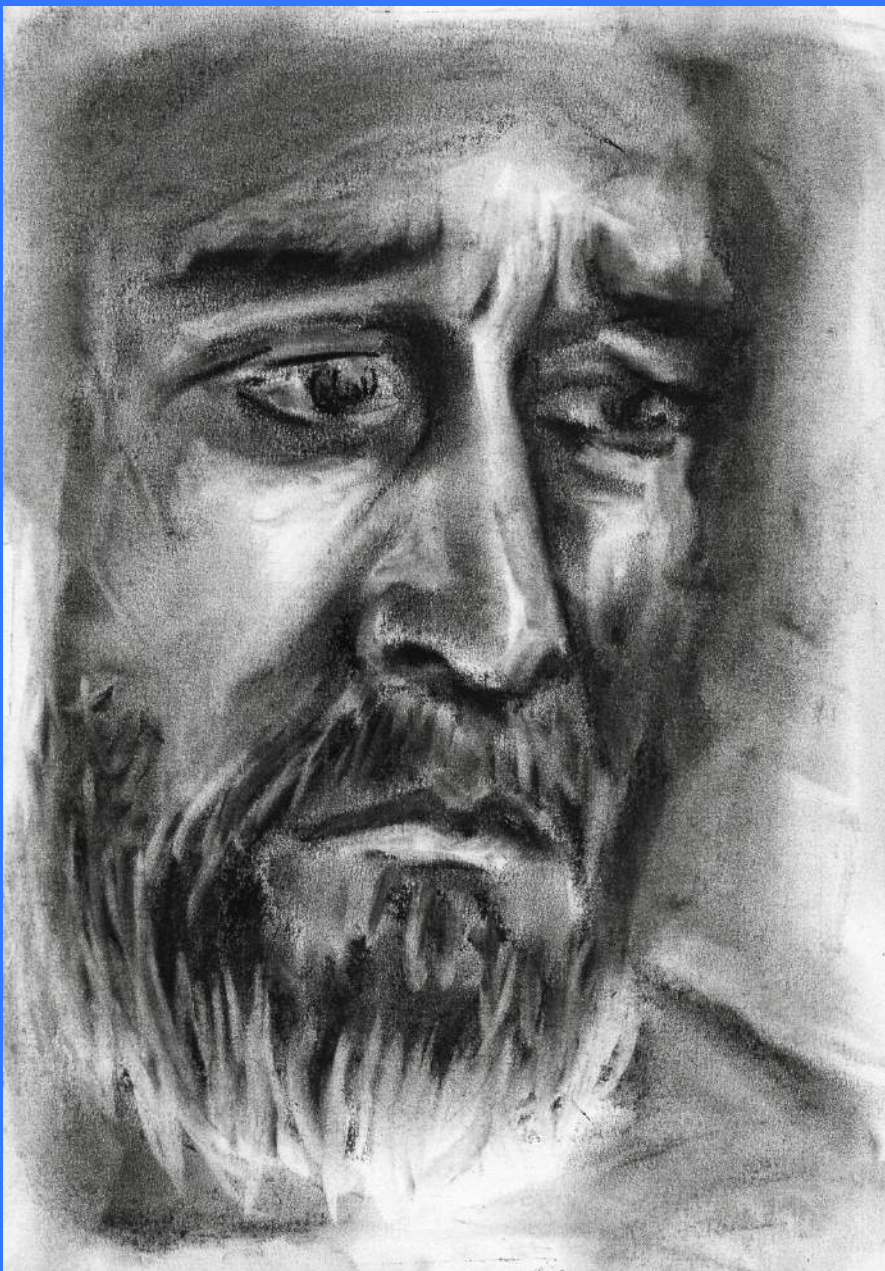
*“Here am I. Send me!” (Is 6:8)*

Isaiah is the earliest, and arguably the most preeminent of the Major Prophets. His ministry spans the reign of four kings, and he seems to be responsible for some of the royal records (Is 1:1; 2 Ch 26:22; 32:32). Isaiah marries a prophetess (Is 8:3) and has two sons.

Isaiah gives personal advice to the kings of Judah. He comforts King Ahaz when the kingdom of Israel and Aram make war against Jerusalem (Is 7:3–4). He reassures King Hezekiah that the Lord will protect Judah from Assyrian armies (Is 37:1–7), but warns him that Jerusalem will one day be sacked by the Babylonians (Is 39:5–7).

And of course, the book of Isaiah is traditionally credited to him (though my critical brothers and sisters argue it was written by multiple disciples of Isaiah). His prophecies cover the rise of Persian emperor Cyrus, the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the coming kingdom of God.





Wrote: *Jeremiah, Lamentations*

Ministry: 626–586 BC

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Levi (in Benjamin's territory)*

# Jeremiah

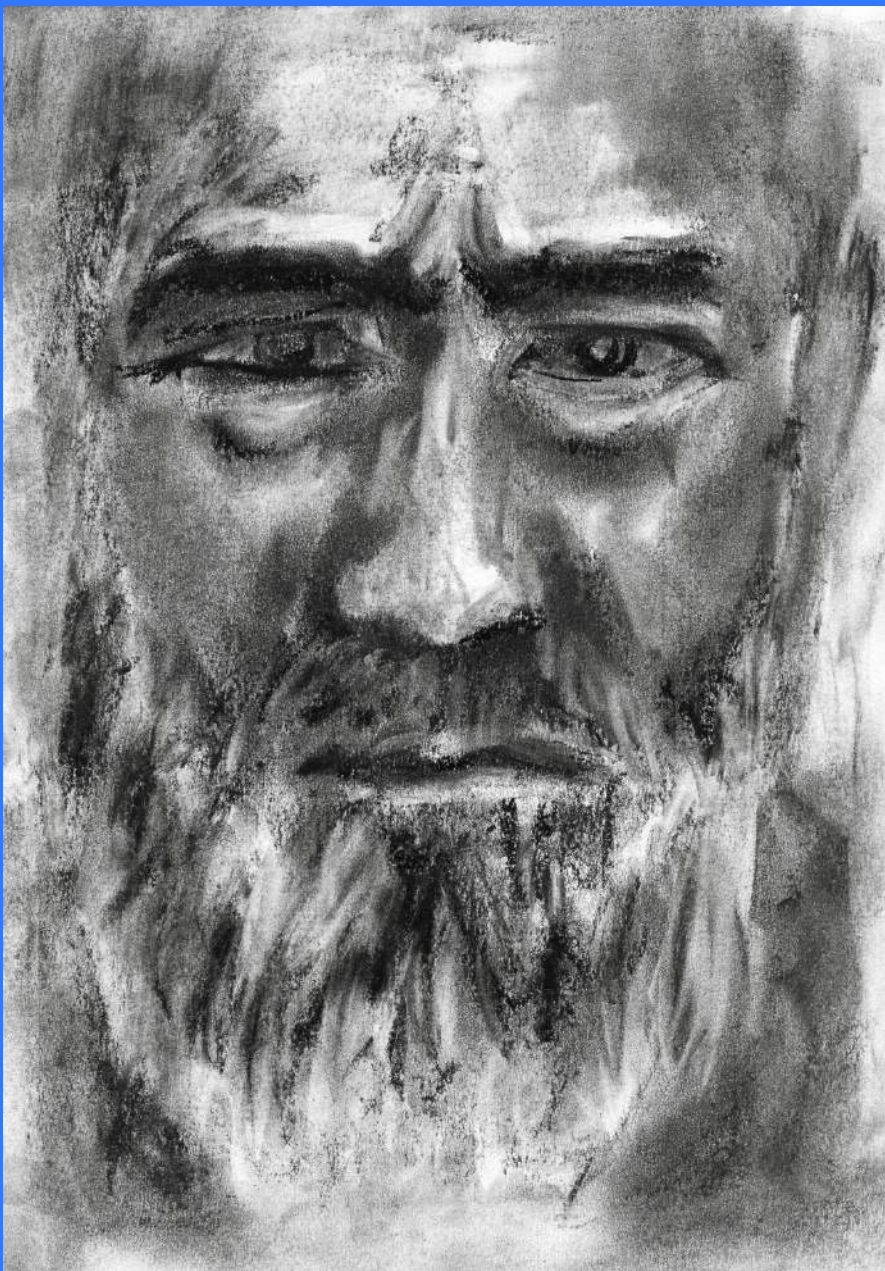
*“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you [. . .] to pluck up and to break down, [. . .] to build and to plant.” (Je 1:10)*

He’s the famous “weeping prophet” from the priests in the land of Benjamin (Jer 1:1). Jeremiah begins his prophetic ministry at a young age (Jer 1:6), and spends most of his time warning the nation of Judah that judgment is coming. The kings of Judah just won’t hear it. Jeremiah outlasts all the kings, though, and counsels the refugees of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. But even they don’t listen.

Jeremiah is the Peter Parker of the Bible: he just can’t catch a break.

Also, forget what you’ve been told about Psalms: Jeremiah is actually the longest book of the Bible. And that’s not all of Jeremiah’s writings. According to tradition, Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations, too. This book is a group of five acrostic poems that mourn the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah also wrote a few more dirges when the good king Josiah died in battle (2 Ch 35:25).





# Ezekiel

*“Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel.” (Eze 3:17)*

Ezekiel is one of the many Jews taken captive to Babylon (Ezek 1:1). He’s a priest from the tribe of Levi (1:3), but the Lord chooses him to do much more than make sacrifices. God sets up Ezekiel as the “watchman” for the Jews, because as bad as it is now, they’re about to get themselves into a lot more trouble.

Ezekiel makes a lot of sacrifices in his ministry. He eats cakes cooked over poop (4:12–15). He lies on his side for 430 days (4:4–6). His wife dies, but he doesn’t get a chance to mourn (24:15–24). He doesn’t have it easy.

But his prophecies are phenomenal. He sees the Lord enthroned above the cherubim (10:1–2). He sees the temple of God destroyed and rebuilt. He sees dry bones growing ligaments and flesh. He’s the watchman, and he watches some crazy things.

Wrote: *Ezekiel*

Ministry: *597–568 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Levi*





Wrote: *Daniel*

Ministry: 605–520 BC

Occupation: *Chief of advisors, commissioners*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Daniel

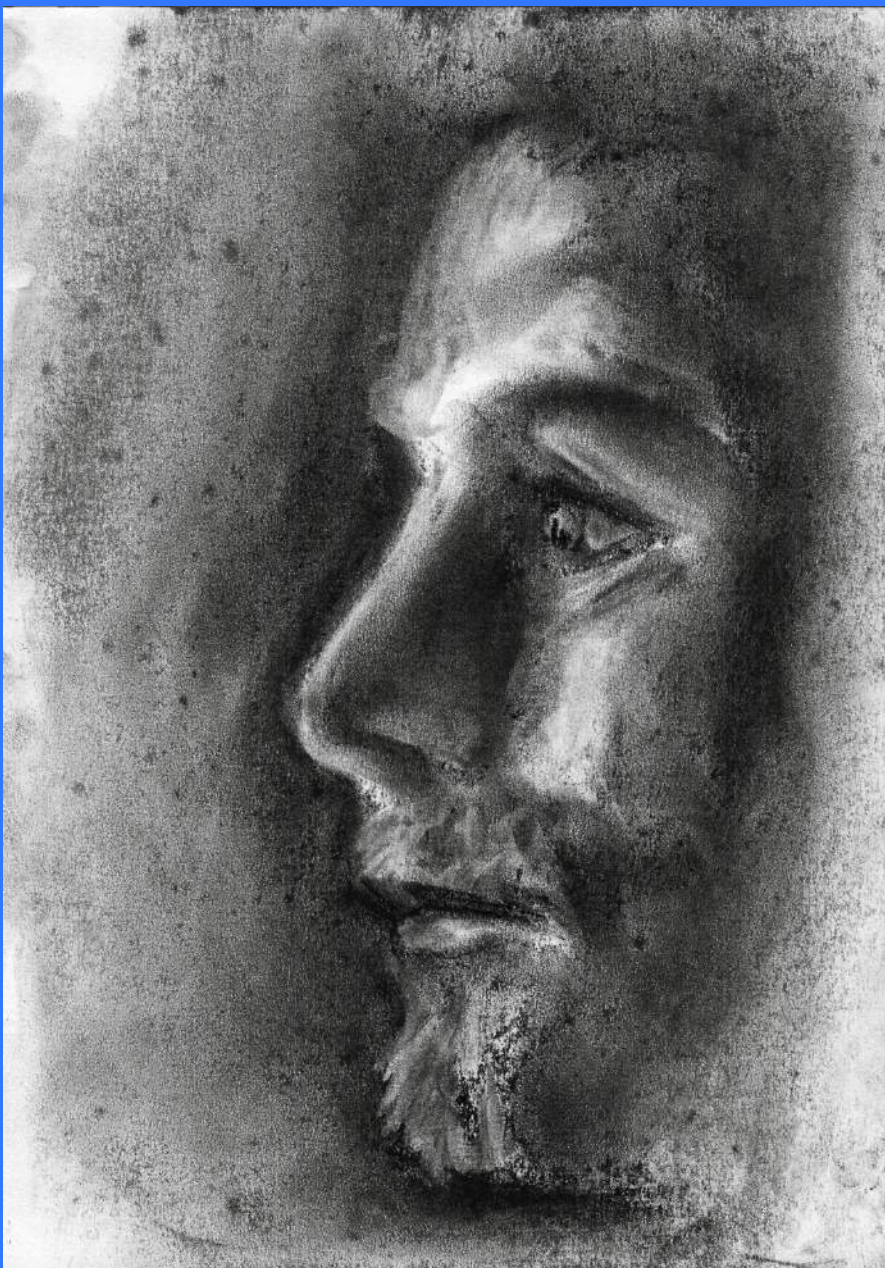
*“[. . .] An extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel.” (Da 5:12)*

Daniel is taken to Babylon as a young nobleman (Da 1:3, 6). He’s one of the few characters in the Bible that reliably interprets other people’s dreams (2:28). This, plus his wisdom, propels him into leadership in both the Babylonian and Persian empires (2:48; 5:29; 6:1–3).

And he also has some pretty intense visions. His prophecies tend to concern two major themes: the future of the world’s kingdoms, and the future of God’s people.

Daniel is a legend in his time. Contemporary prophet Ezekiel (speaking for God) ranks Daniel with Noah and Job—who, in their times, were the most righteous men in the world (Eze 14:14, 20).





Wrote: *Hosea*

Ministry: *750–715 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Unknown, one of the northern tribes*

# Hosea

*Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel.” (Ho 3:1)*

Hosea ministered to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel and Judah during the same time as Isaiah. Hosea’s claim to fame: God told him to enter a really unhealthy marriage.

Seriously, God has Hosea marry a prostitute and have a few kids (Hos 1:2). And Hosea does. When his wife takes up her old trade and starts sleeping with other men, God tells him to go bring her back home as his wife again.

Why? Because Israel has turned away from her relationship to God and chased idols instead. Israel is going to deal with the consequences of her actions, but the Lord plans to bring her back to him, just like Hosea brings back his wife (3:5).





Wrote: *Joel*

Ministry: *c597–587 BC*

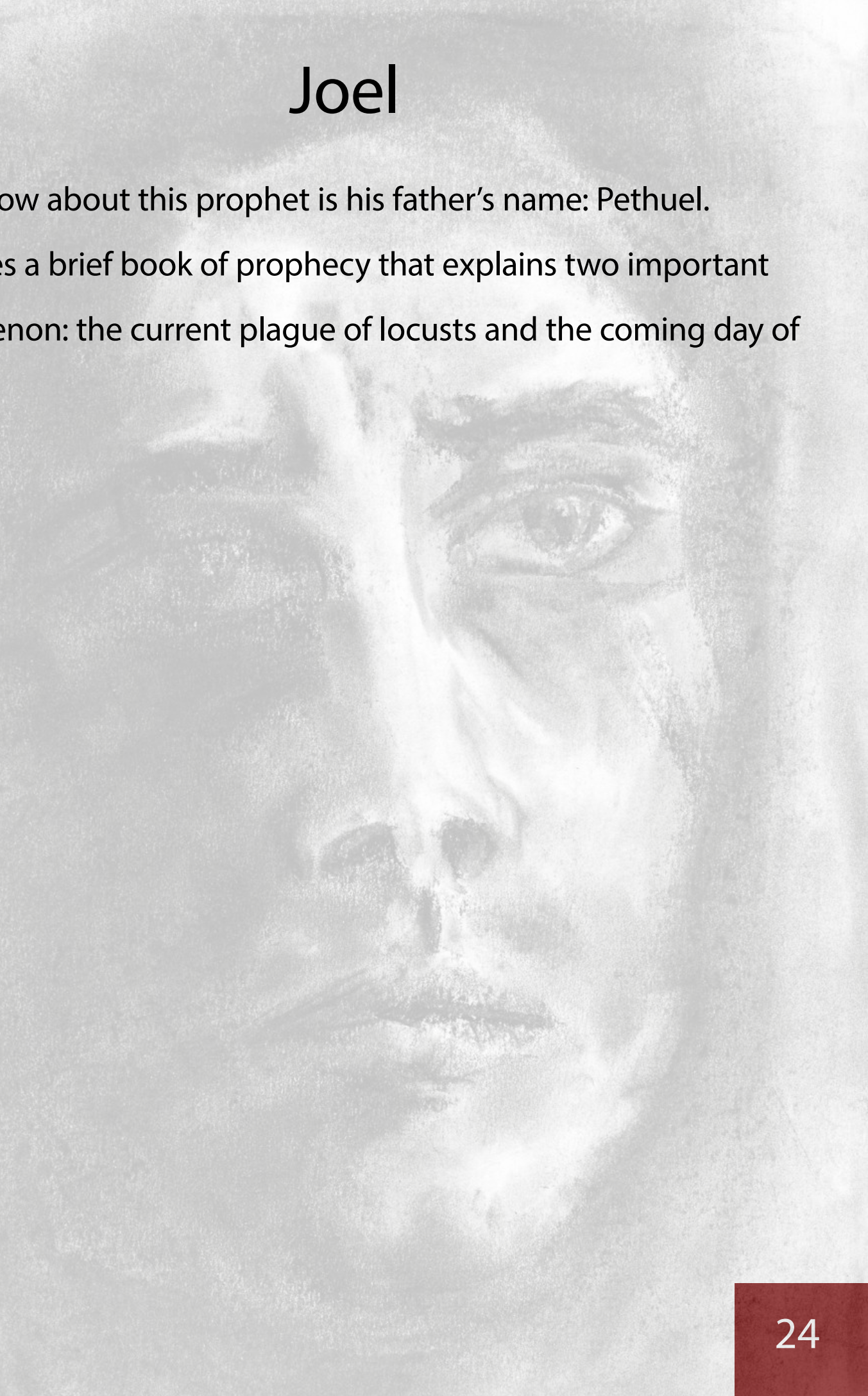
Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Unknown*

# Joel

All we know about this prophet is his father's name: Pethuel.

Joel writes a brief book of prophecy that explains two important phenomenon: the current plague of locusts and the coming day of the Lord.







Wrote: *Amos*

Ministry: 760–754 BC

Occupation: *Shepherd, herdsman*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Amos

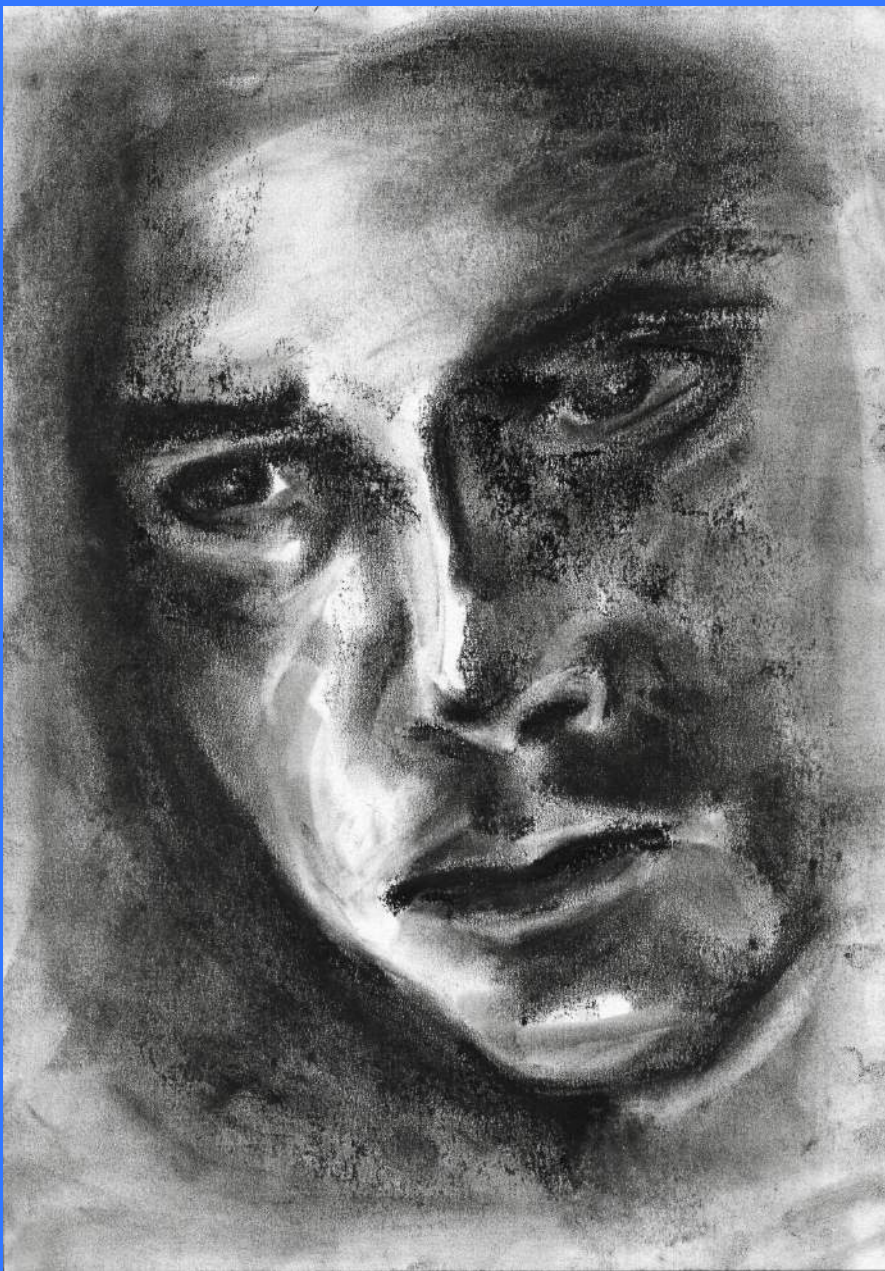
*“I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet.”*

*(Am 7:14)*

Amos is a shepherd from Tekoa, a little town in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The Lord gives him visions and calls him to journey north to prophesy against the king of Israel. As you can imagine, the false priests in Israel want to shut this Southerner down (Am 7:12–13).

Amos is an interesting character in that it seems he has no background in public ministry. When the false priest Amaziah tells Amos to go prophesy somewhere else, Amos responds: “I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs (Am 7:14).”





Wrote: *Obadiah*

Ministry: *c400 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Probably Judah*

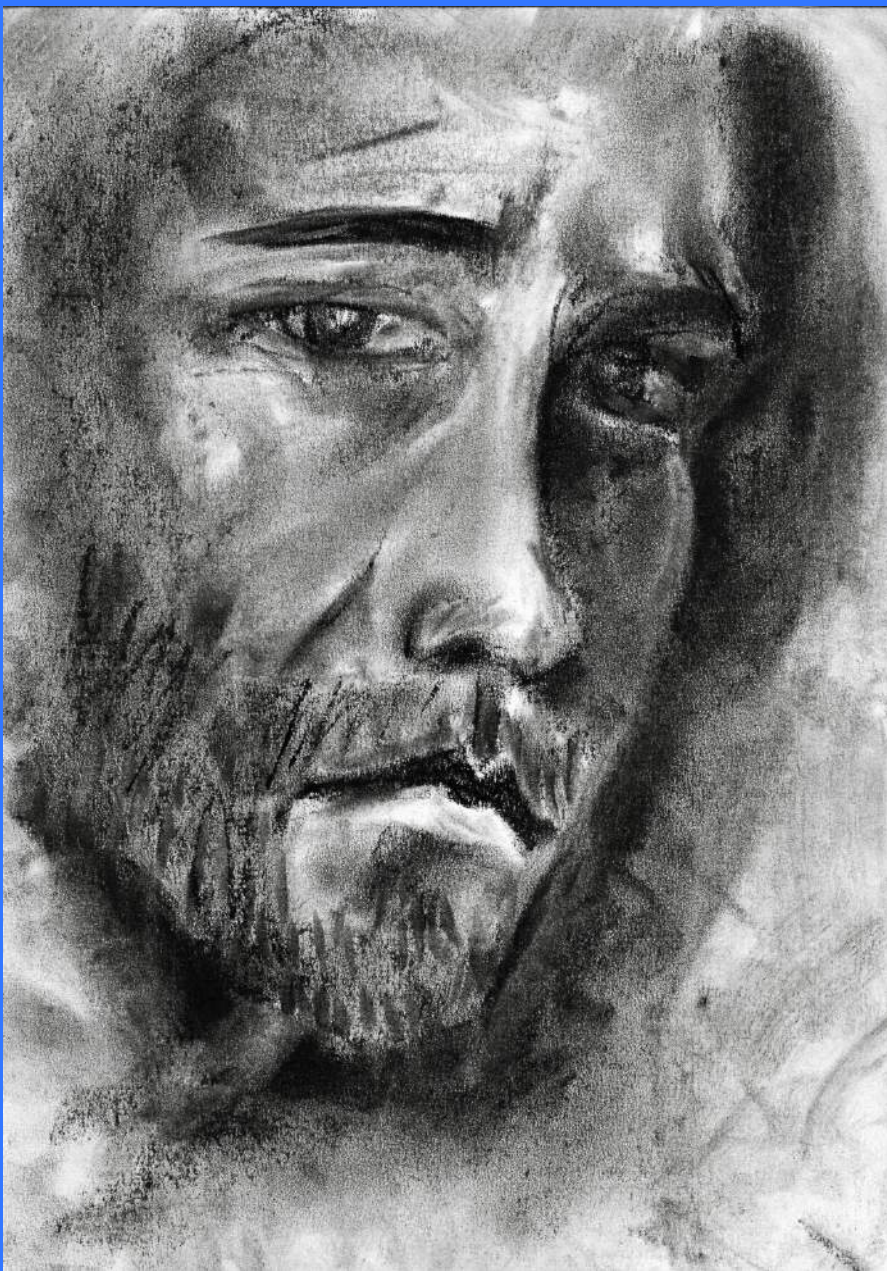
# Obadiah

We don't know much about this guy, except that he made a short prophecy against Edom. We don't even get an "Obadiah, son of X" intro to his book, either, so we really don't have much to go on.

Obadiah is likely from the tribe of Judah, since his prophecy concerns Edom's treatment of Judah and Jerusalem (Ob 11–12).

But hey, if you love underdogs, you should check out his book. It's the least-read book of the Bible!





Wrote: *Jonah*

Ministry: 786–747 BC

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Probably Zebulun*

# Jonah

You've heard of Jonah. He is a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel from Gath-hepher, a town in the territory of Zebulun (2 Ki 14:25; Jos 19:13). The Lord sends him to Nineveh to warn the Assyrians of God's coming judgment. Jonah sails in the other direction instead, gets thrown overboard, and spends three days in the belly of a big fish.

The fish spits him up, and Jonah is again called to preach in Nineveh. This time, Jonah obeys. But when the Ninevites repent, God spares them—and Jonah isn't too pleased about that.

He is traditionally credited as the author of *Jonah*. If that's the case, he must have had a moment of clarity after the events took place—because his story doesn't paint him as the hero.





Wrote: *Micah*

Ministry: *735–700 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

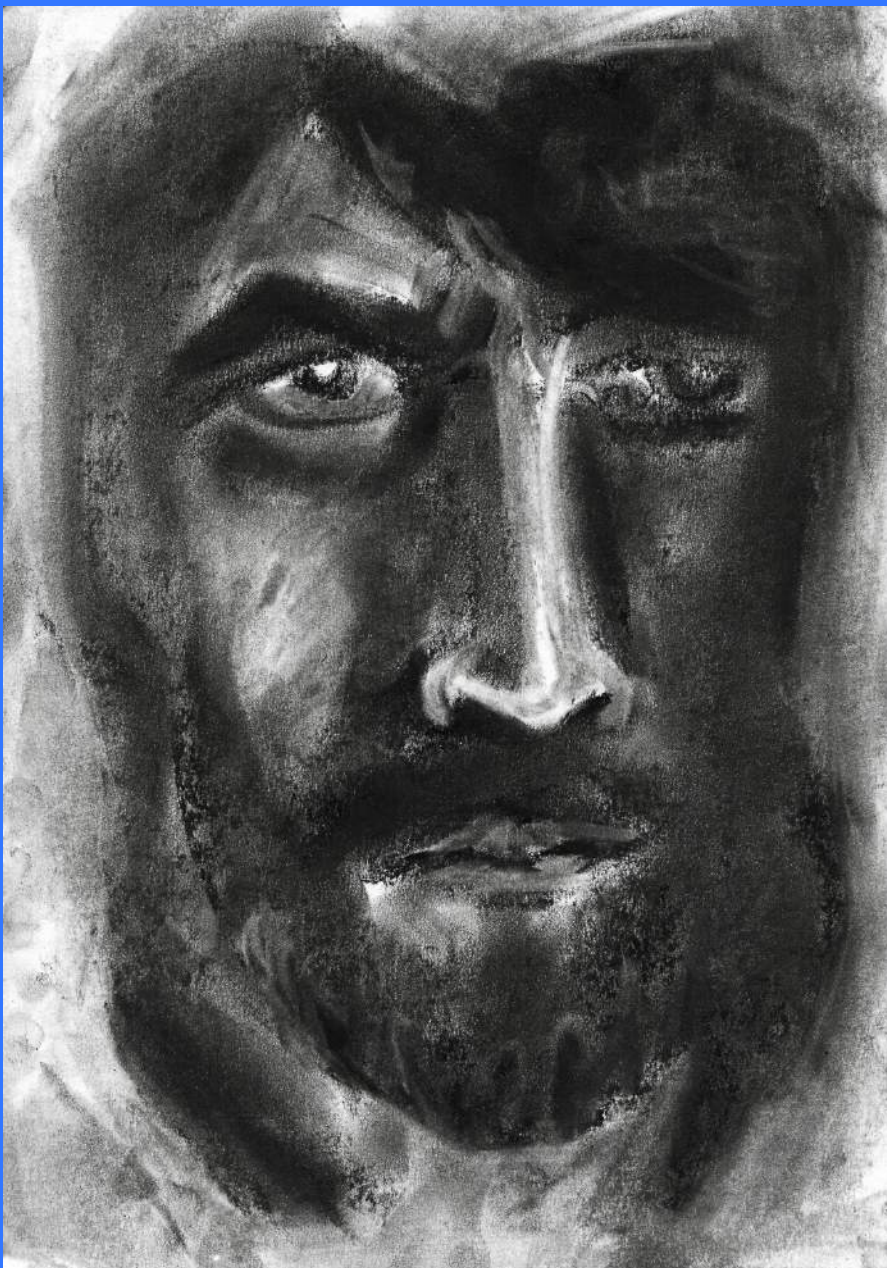
Tribe: *Judah*

# Micah

Micah is a prophet from Moresheth in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but he preaches to both the people in both the North and the South (Mic 1:1). We don't know much more about Micah, but we do know that by the time of Jeremiah (around a century later), the elders in Judah considered him to be a true prophet.

In fact, the people quote Micah to save Jeremiah from the death sentence. When Jeremiah prophesies that Jerusalem and the temple will be sacked, the priests and false prophets try to get him killed (Jer 26:8, 11). But the officials and the people of the city remember Micah's prophecies against Jerusalem, and stop the priests from murdering Jeremiah (26:17–19).





Wrote: *Nahum*

Ministry: *650–612 BC*

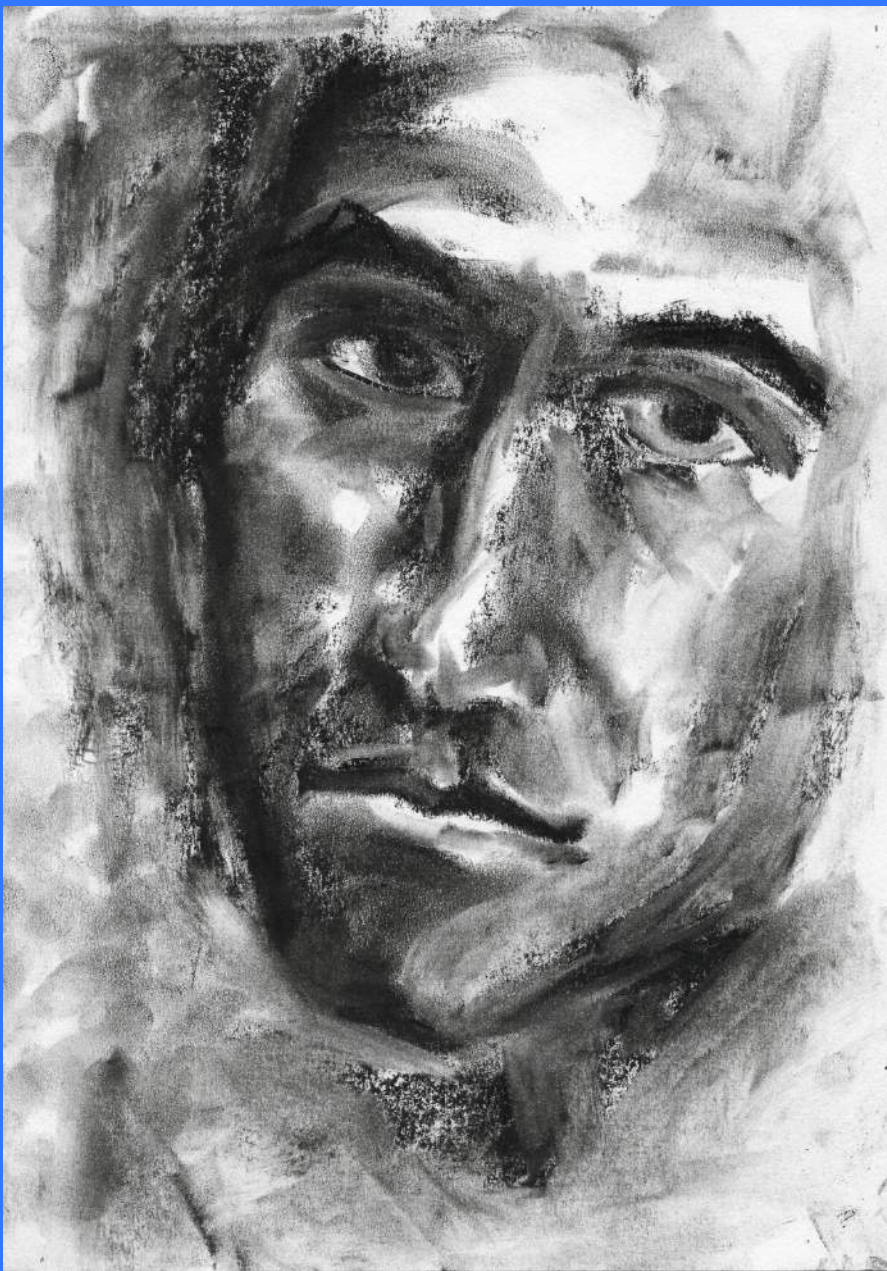
Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Unknown*

# Nahum

Nahum is a prophet, and calls himself an “Elkoshite” in his oracle against Nineveh (Na 1:1). We’re really not sure where Elkosh is, and so we don’t know much more about Nahum.





Wrote: *Habakkuk*

Ministry: *612–589 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Habakkuk

*How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? (Hab 1:2)*

Habakkuk's book records a conversation between a prophet and God. It begins with Habakkuk calling out to God for justice in the land of Judah, and then God answers: justice is coming, and it's coming through Babylon. Habakkuk isn't too pleased with that solution.

We don't know much about this minor prophet, aside from his songwriting ability. The third chapter of his book is a prayer-psalm, one of the only examples of a *shiggaion* in the Bible ( Hab 3:1).





# Zephaniah

Zephaniah has some royal blood in him. He opens his tiny book of the Bible with his genealogy—which traces back to Hezekiah, the righteous king (Zep 1:1). Zephaniah ministers during the reign of his distant cousin, Josiah.

Aside from this, we don't know anything about Zephaniah.

Wrote: *Zephaniah*

Ministry: *During Josiah's reign (639–609 BC)*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Judah*





Wrote: *Haggai, possibly Psalms 147–148*

Ministry: *520 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet*

Tribe: *Unknown*

# Haggai

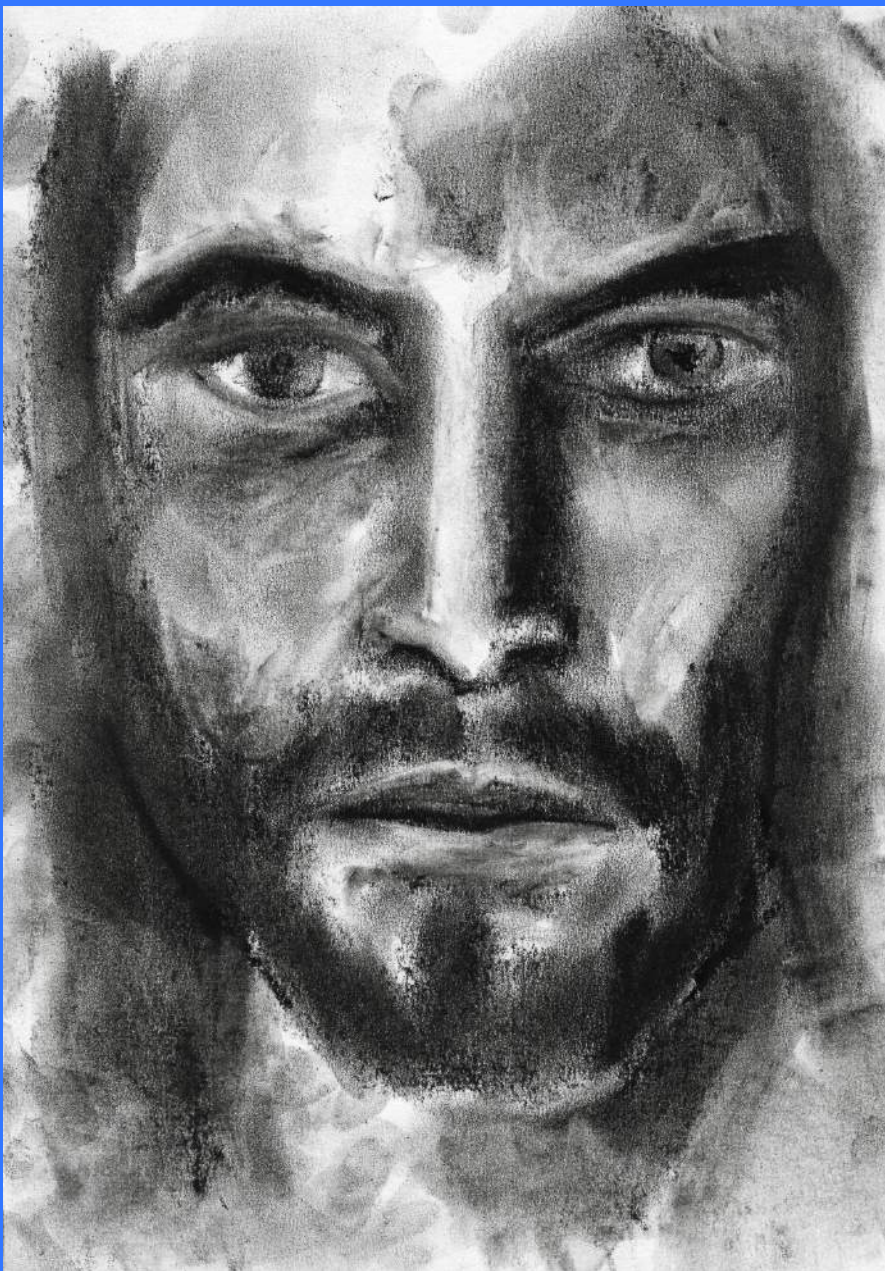
*Consider your ways! (Hag 1:5, 7)*

Haggai writes a very brief account of his ministry in the Bible. He encourages the Jews to finish rebuilding the temple of God, and his ministry is noteworthy enough for the scribe Ezra to give him a nod (Ezr 5:1–2). His recorded ministry spans about three months and 24 days (Hag 1:1; 2:10).

Haggai is the most specific of the Minor Prophets when it comes to dates: he gives the month and day of every message God sends him. Way to clock in your hours, Haggai!

According to the Septuagint (that's the Greek translation of the Old Testament), Haggai also co-writes three of the Psalms. We'll look at his possible co-songwriter next.





Wrote: *Zechariah, possibly Psalms 147–148*

Ministry: *520–515 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet, priest*

Tribe: *Levi*

# Zechariah

*Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold . . .*

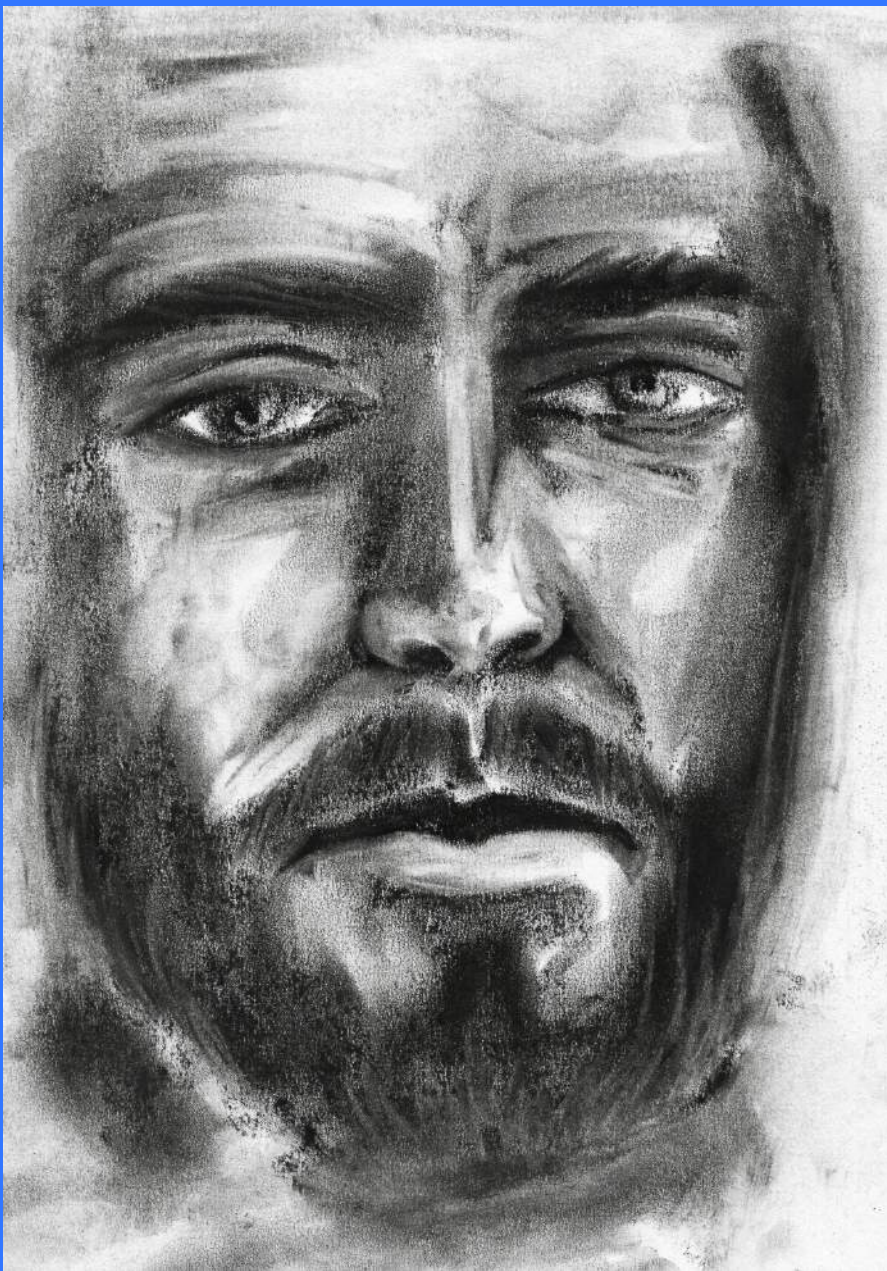
*(Zec 2:1)*

Zechariah's ministry gears up about halfway through Haggai's (Zec 1:1), and he too encourages the people to get off their duffs and complete the temple (Ezr 5:1–2). Like Jeremiah, Zechariah begins delivering messages from God as a young man (Zec 2:4). He wrote down his visions and messages, giving us the book of Zechariah in the Bible.

The Septuagint attributes three of the Psalms to Zechariah and Haggai. Our modern Bibles lump the first two into one, and so you'll find these pieces in Psalms 147–148. These poems call the Jews and then the rest of the universe to praise the Lord.

In addition to being a prophet, Zechariah seems to be among the priests (Zec 7:2–5; Neh 12:16), which would mean he's from the tribe of Levi.





Wrote: *Malachi*

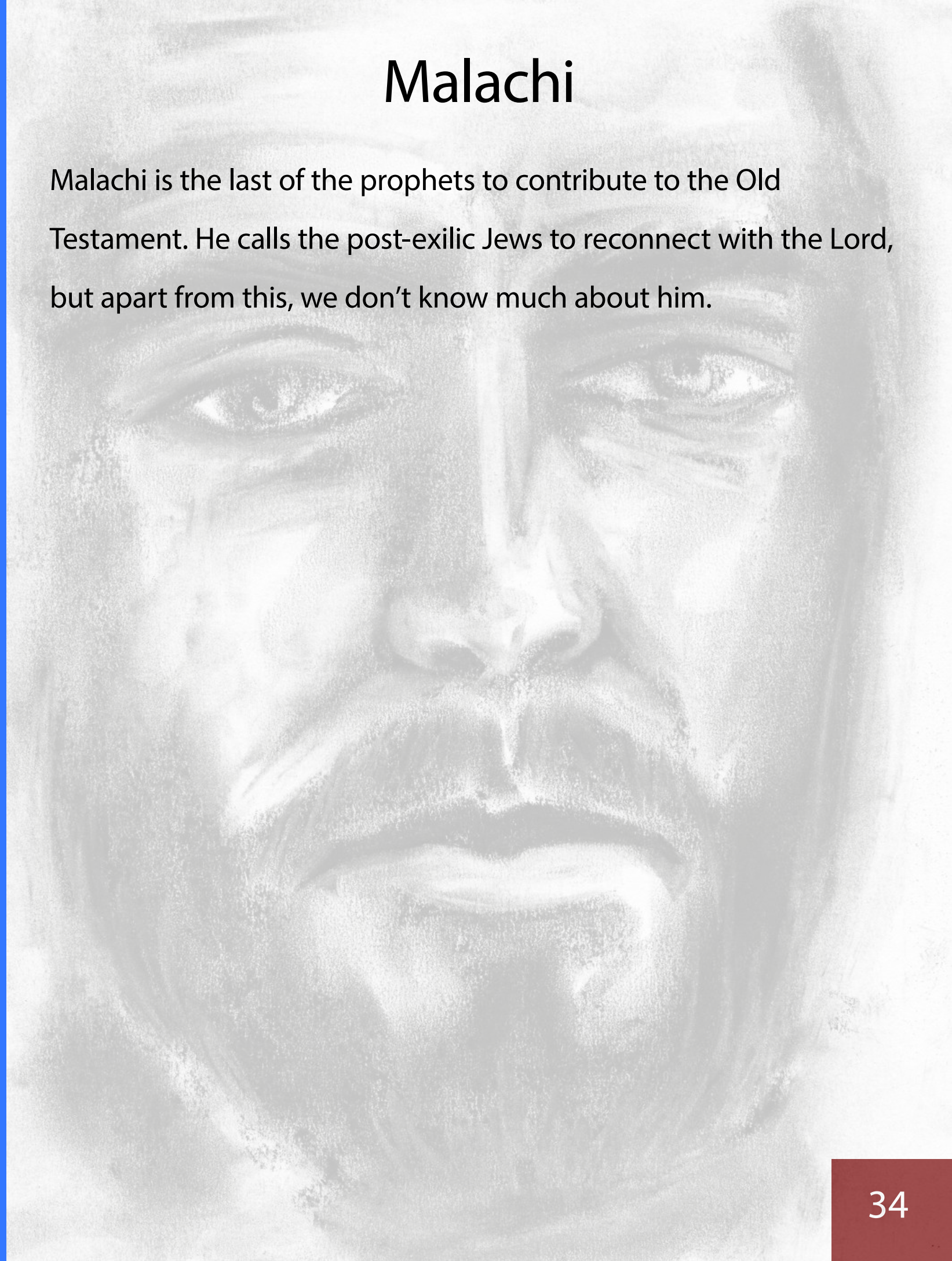
Ministry: *520–515 BC*

Occupation: *Prophet, priest*

Tribe: *Levi*

# Malachi

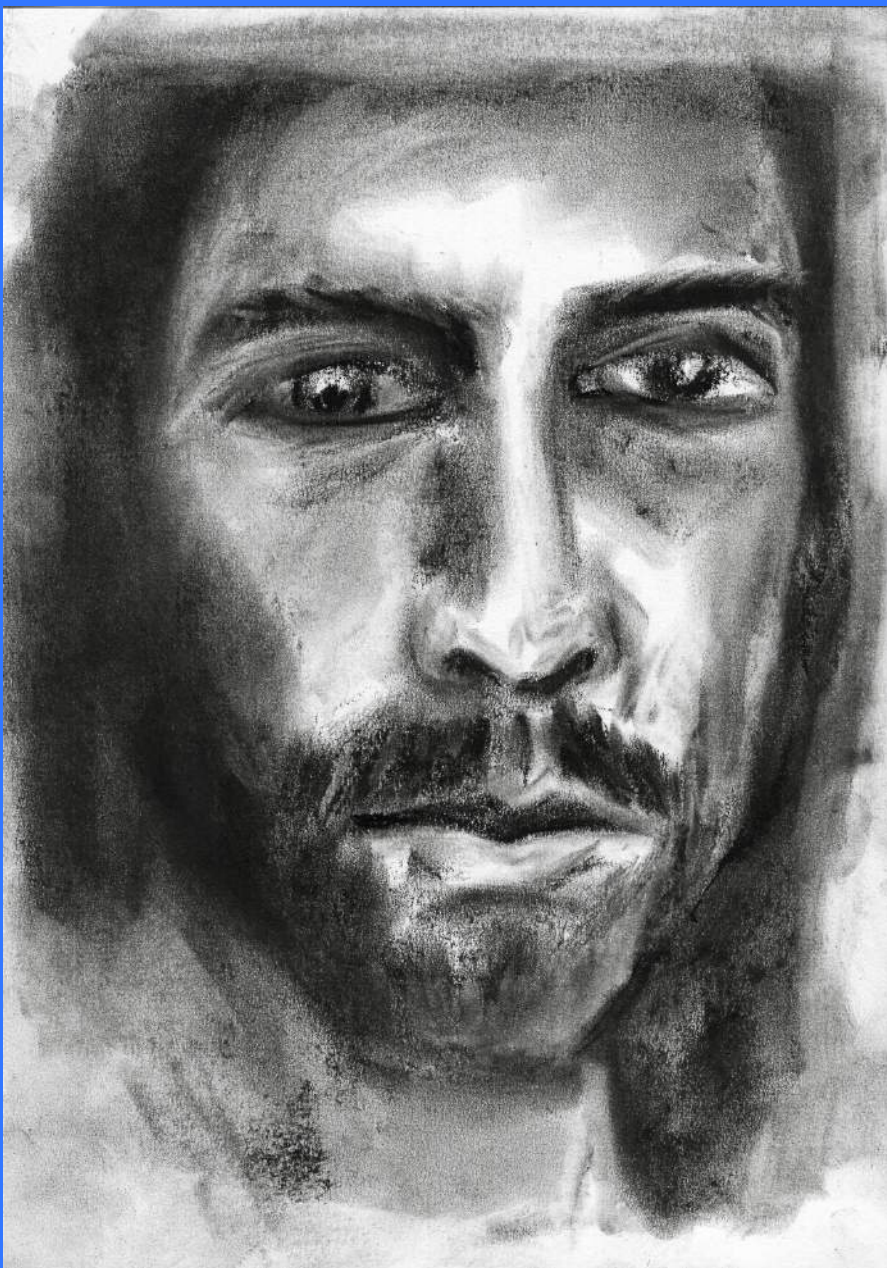
Malachi is the last of the prophets to contribute to the Old Testament. He calls the post-exilic Jews to reconnect with the Lord, but apart from this, we don't know much about him.





New Testament authors





# Matthew

Matthew is one of the 12 apostles of Jesus, and one of the four evangelists who wrote down Jesus's story. When we meet Matthew, he's a tax collector for Rome. Tax collectors weren't very popular in Israel, because they collected money from fellow Jews to pay a heathen king. But when Jesus calls Matthew to follow him, Matthew closes his booth down to serve the true King of the Jews. Then he brings Jesus over for dinner (Mt 9:9–10).

Matthew is called Levi in the other gospels, which may indicate that he's from the tribe of Levi—we're not sure (Mk 2:14–15; Lk 5:27–29).

Wrote: *The Gospel According to Matthew*

Ministry began: *c30 AD*

Occupation: *Apostle, tax collector*

Tribe: *Possibly Levi*





Wrote: *The Gospel According to Mark*

Ministry began: 46 AD

Occupation: *Missionary, apostle's aid*

Tribe: *Levi*

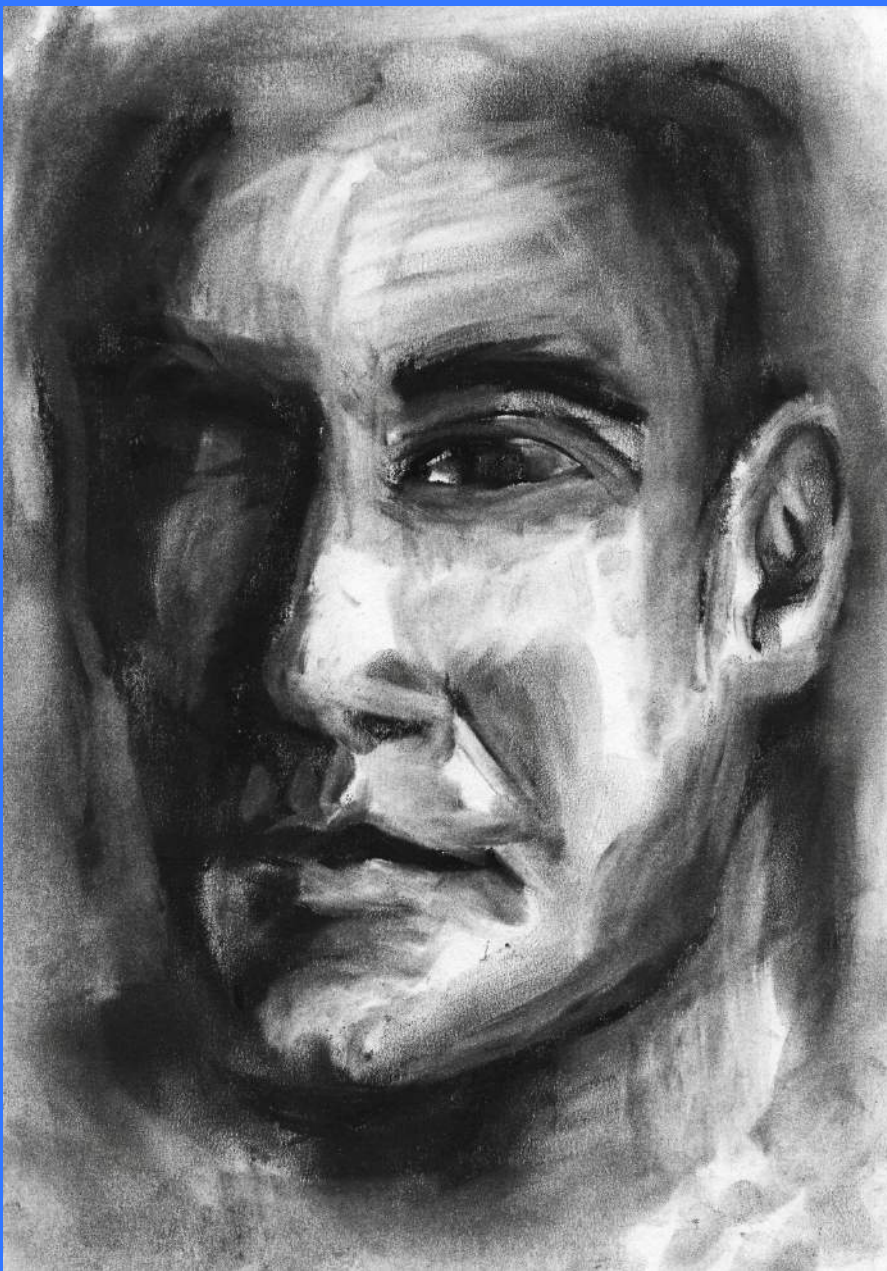
# Mark

We first meet Mark in the book of Acts. When Peter miraculously escapes from prison, he goes to Mark's mother's house (Ac 12:12). Later, Paul and Barnabas bring Mark along on their missionary journey as a helper, but he leaves them and goes back to Jerusalem (13:5, 13). When Paul and Barnabas prepare for their second journey, Barnabas suggests bringing John Mark again, but Paul won't hear it (15:37–38). Paul and Barnabas disagree so sharply that they split up: Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus, and Paul starts a new missionary team (15:39–40).

Why did Barnabas stick with Mark? It could have been that Barnabas, the “son of encouragement” (ac 4:36), just couldn't write a young believer off. It could also be that Barnabas just liked working with his cousin (Co 4:10).

Mark matures, though. Decades later, Mark is considered useful to Paul (2 Ti 4:11) and a son to Peter (1 Pe 5:13). According to tradition, Mark is the one who writes down Peter's stories of Jesus—which is how we get the Gospel of Mark.





Wrote: *The Gospel According to Luke, Acts*

Ministry began: 49 AD

Occupation: *Physician, missionary, historian*

Tribe: *N/A, Gentile*

# Luke

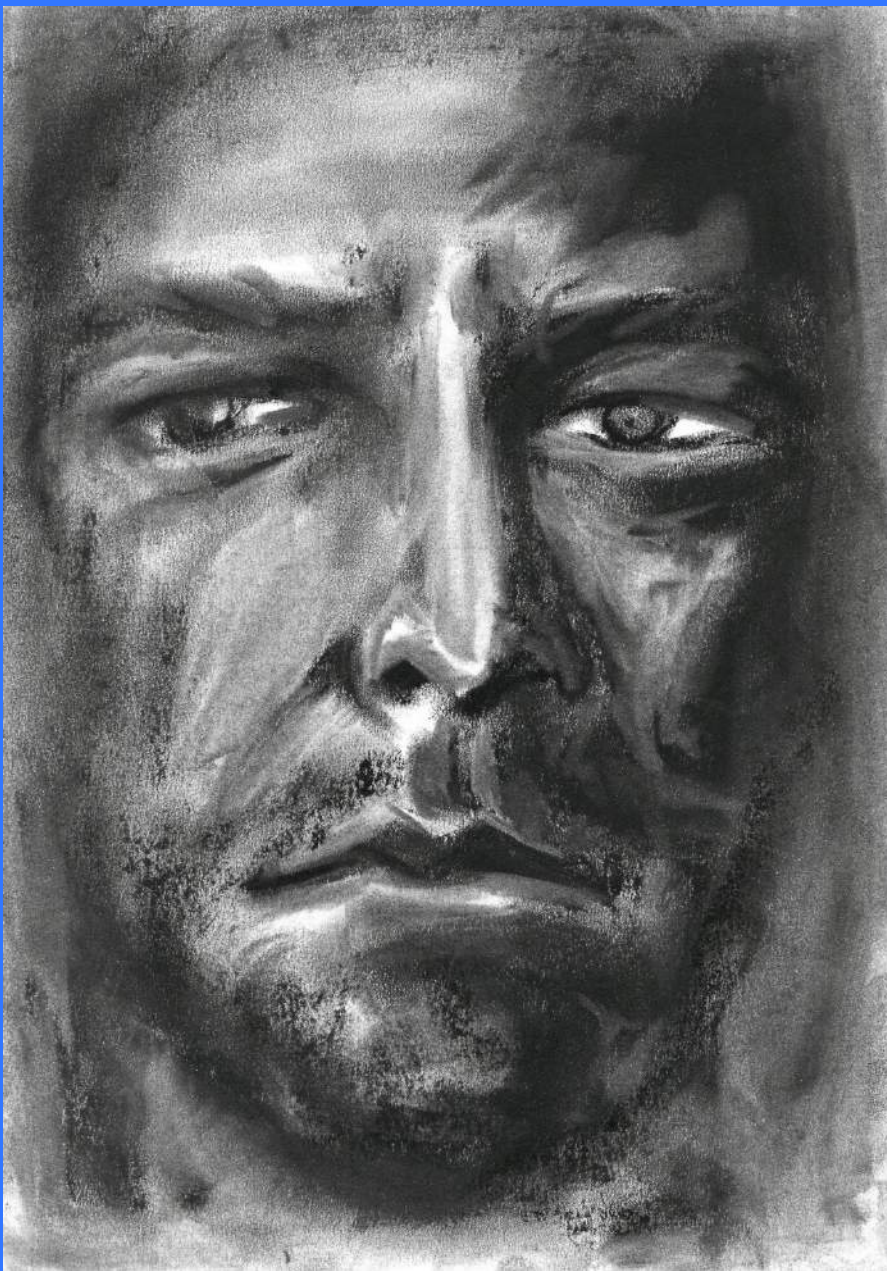
*It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order (Lk 1:3)*

Luke is a physician who accompanies Paul through thick and thin (Co 4:14; 2 Ti 4:11). His skills probably come in handy, because Paul takes a lot of damage (2 Co 11:24ff).

But Luke's greatest legacy is his contribution to the New Testament. Luke writes more of the NT than anyone else (yes, even more than Paul). His gospel is the longest book of the New Testament, and his word count is only surpassed by Moses and Ezra. Luke records the life and ministry of Jesus in consecutive order (Lk 1:1–4), and later the history of the early church (Ac 1:1–2) on behalf of a Christian named Theophilus, who wants to learn more about the faith.

Paul doesn't consider Luke to be "from the circumcision" (Co 4:11, 14), which makes Luke the Bible's only non-Jewish author (that we know of).





# John

*Beloved, let us love one another. (1 Jn 4:7)*

He's another member of the 12 apostles, a former fisherman from Galilee who follows Jesus (Mk 1:19–20). The Lord gives John and his brother James the nickname "Sons of Thunder" (Mk 3:17). The Bible doesn't say how he earned this nickname, but John does seem to have a stormy personality at times (Lk 9:51–56).

After the resurrection, John becomes a pillar of the early church (Ga 2:9). He writes a persuasive account of Jesus' earthly ministry, death, and resurrection, and then writes four letters (the last one, Revelation, includes many apocalyptic visions). According to tradition, John becomes an elder at the church at Ephesus. He is eventually exiled to the Isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9).

Fun fact: of all the epistles in the New Testament, John writes the longest (Revelation) and the shortest (3 John). In fact, 3 John is the shortest book of the Bible.

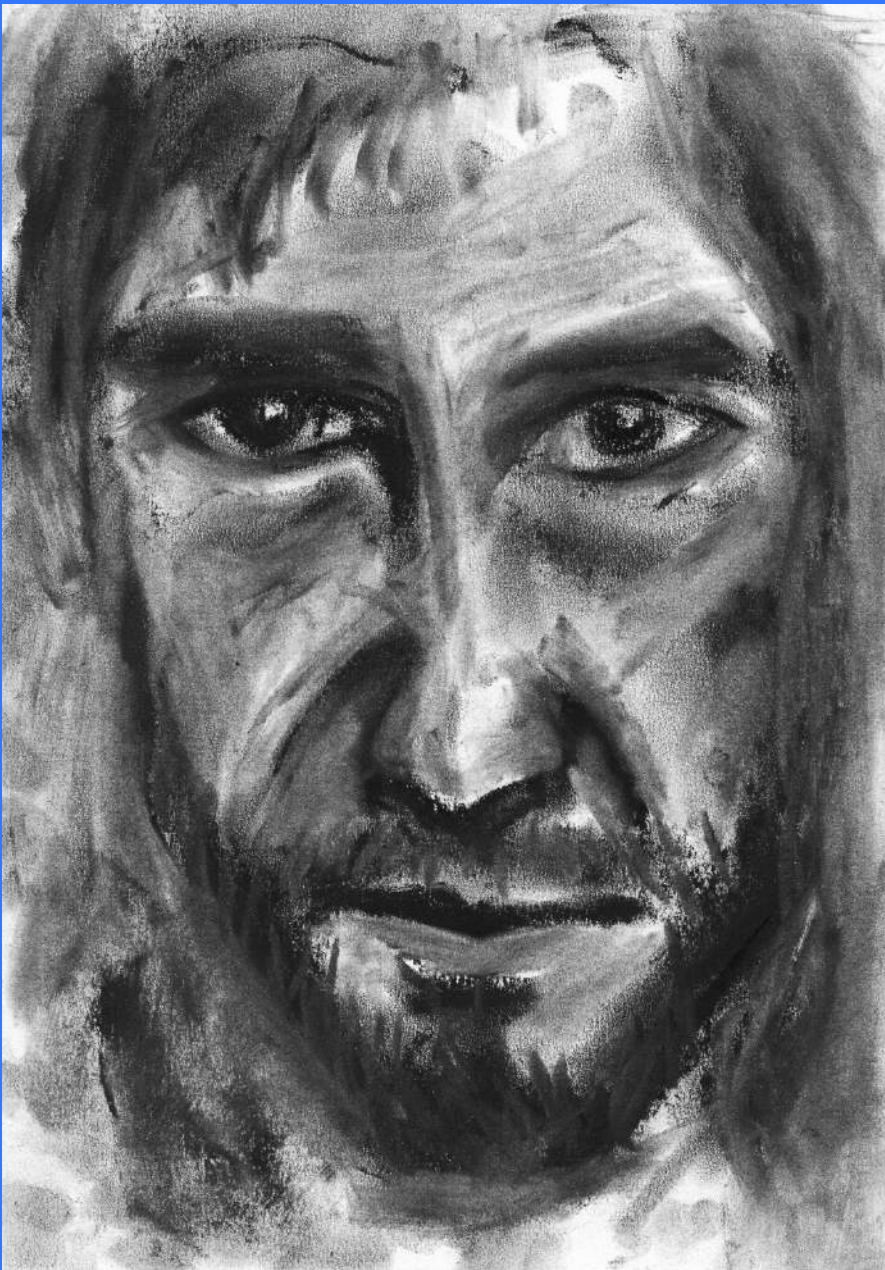
*Wrote: The Gospel According to John,  
1–3 John, Revelation*

*Ministry began: c30 AD*

*Occupation: Apostle, fisherman*

*Tribe: Unknown*





Wrote: *Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*

Ministry: *c33–67 AD*

Occupation: *Apostle, tentmaker, missionary*

Tribe: *Benjamin*

# Paul

Paul may not have the word count that Moses has, but he writes more individual documents than any other biblical author—13, to be exact.

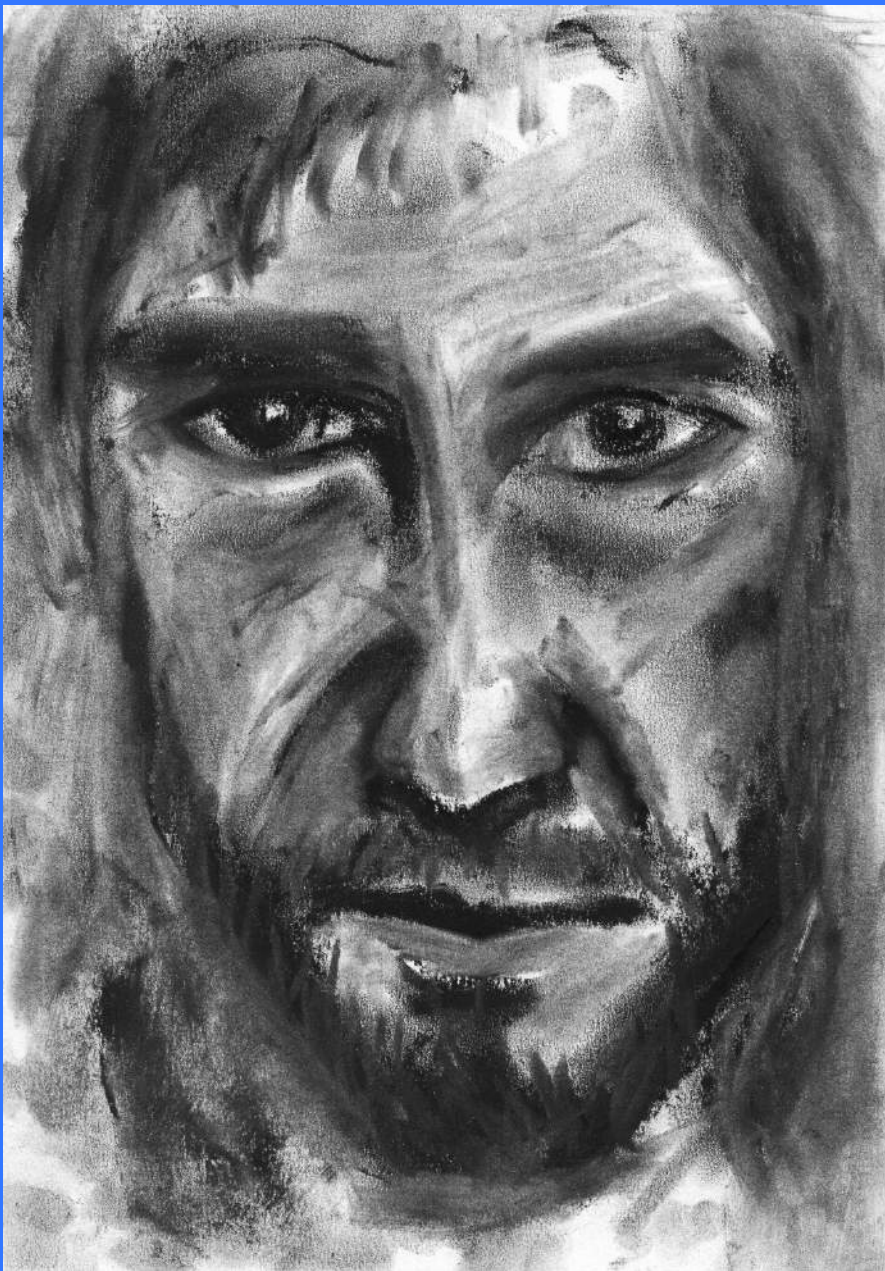
Paul is an anti-Christian terrorist when we first meet him. Paul (also called Saul) kidnaps Christians from the regions around Judea and brings them to Jerusalem to suffer the punishment for blasphemy. That punishment was often prison or death (Ac 8:3; 9:1–2).

He's the ideal Jew of his time:

*Circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. (Php 3:5–6)*

He studied under one of the leading Jewish theologians, Gamaliel (Ac 22:3). Plus, he has mad tent-making skills (Ac 18:3).





# Paul

(Continued)

But when Jesus stops Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul is forever changed. He becomes an apostle, the face of the church to the non-Jews around the Roman empire (Ep 3:1, 8). He travels across the world planting churches and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul's letters to the Christians spread across the world make up his contribution to the Bible. Some of these letters were written to churches he had planted, others were to churches he hoped to visit someday. Paul also wrote to specific leaders in the local churches, like Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.





Wrote: *James*

Ministry: *c33–62 AD*

Occupation: *Apostle*

Tribe: *Judah*

# James

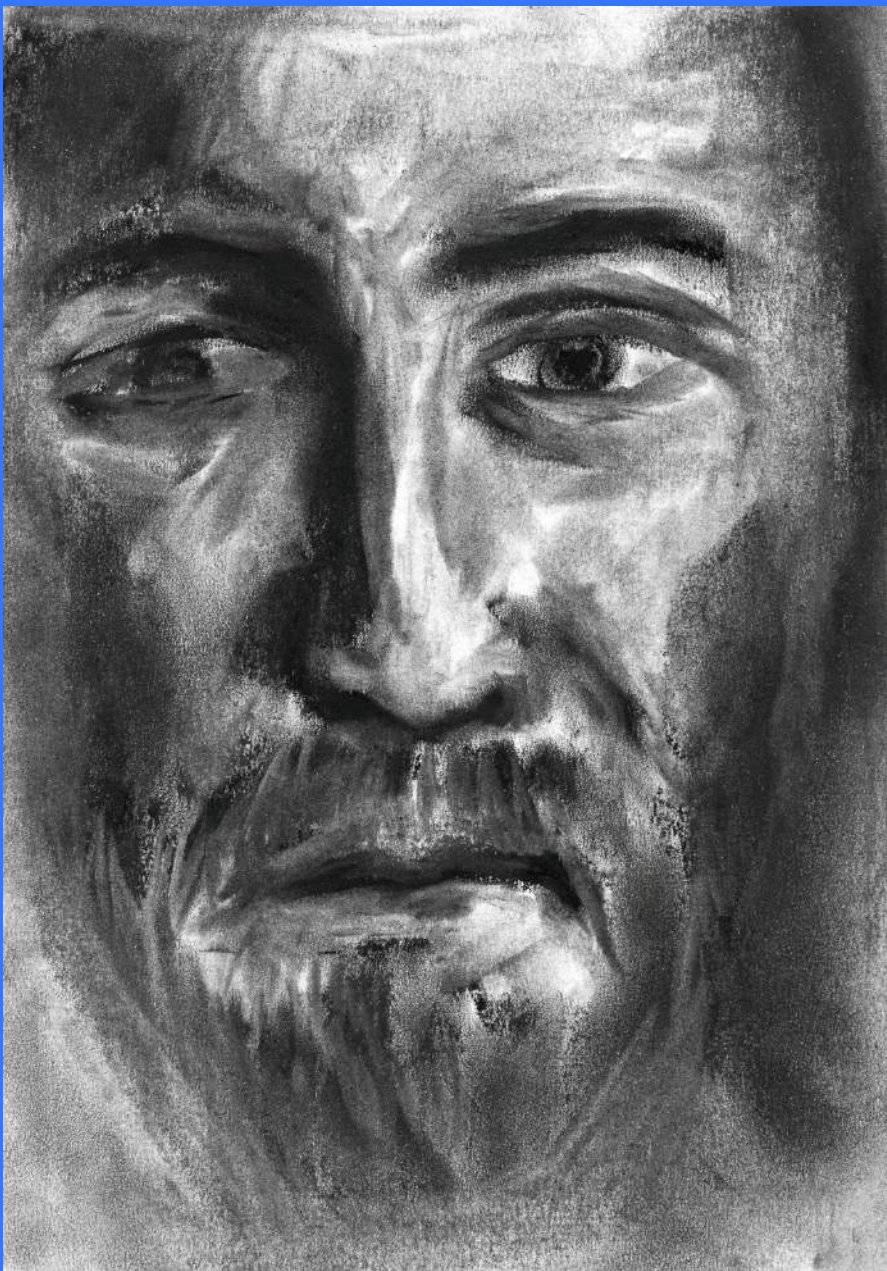
*Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (Jas 2:17)*

James the Just is the younger brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3), the son of Mary and Joseph. James doesn't believe in Jesus while the Lord is going about his earthly ministry (Jn 7:5). But that all changes after Jesus rises from the dead. Jesus specifically appears to James (1 Co 15:7), and afterward James becomes one of the main leaders in the early church.

James is especially savvy when it comes to balancing freedom in Christ with respect for God's holiness. When the church is undecided on how Gentiles should treat the Law of Moses, James settles the matter with a few pointers (Ac 15:13–21).

Later, James writes a letter to the Christian Jews scattered across the world, encouraging them to keep working out their faith. We call this letter the book of James.





Wrote: *1 & 2 Peter*

Ministry: *c30–64 AD*

Occupation: *Apostle, fisherman*

Tribe: *Unknown*

# Peter

*You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. (Mt 16:18)*

Everyone knows Peter. He's the leader of the 12 apostles (Mt 10:2) and a pillar in the early church (Ga 2:9). Peter is the face of the gospel to the Jews (Ga 2:7).

Peter is pretty hardcore. He walks on water (Mt 14:29), cuts off some guy's ear to protect Jesus (Mk 14:29, 31; Jn 18:10), and boldly declares that Jesus is the Christ (Mt 16:16). Yes, he's also the one who denies Jesus three times at the Lord's trial (Jn 18:15–16), but the resurrection totally transforms him. When the Holy Spirit comes to the church, Peter openly preaches the gospel of Jesus in the city.

Peter wrote two letters in the Bible, and both are named after him. The first explains how Christians should live as aliens in this world: even though we'll suffer, it's nothing compared to the glory to come. The second letter urges Christians to remember what Peter has taught them even after he dies (2 Pe 1:13–14).





Wrote: *Jude*

Ministry began: *c30 AD*

Occupation: *Apostle*

Tribe: *Judah*

# Jude

Jude is Jesus' and James' younger brother (Jude 1). Like James, he didn't believe in Jesus during Jesus' ministry on earth (Jn 7:5), but after the resurrection, he became a Christian. Jude writes one book of the Bible: a letter urging believers to "contend for the faith" (Jude 3–4).



# Mystery authors

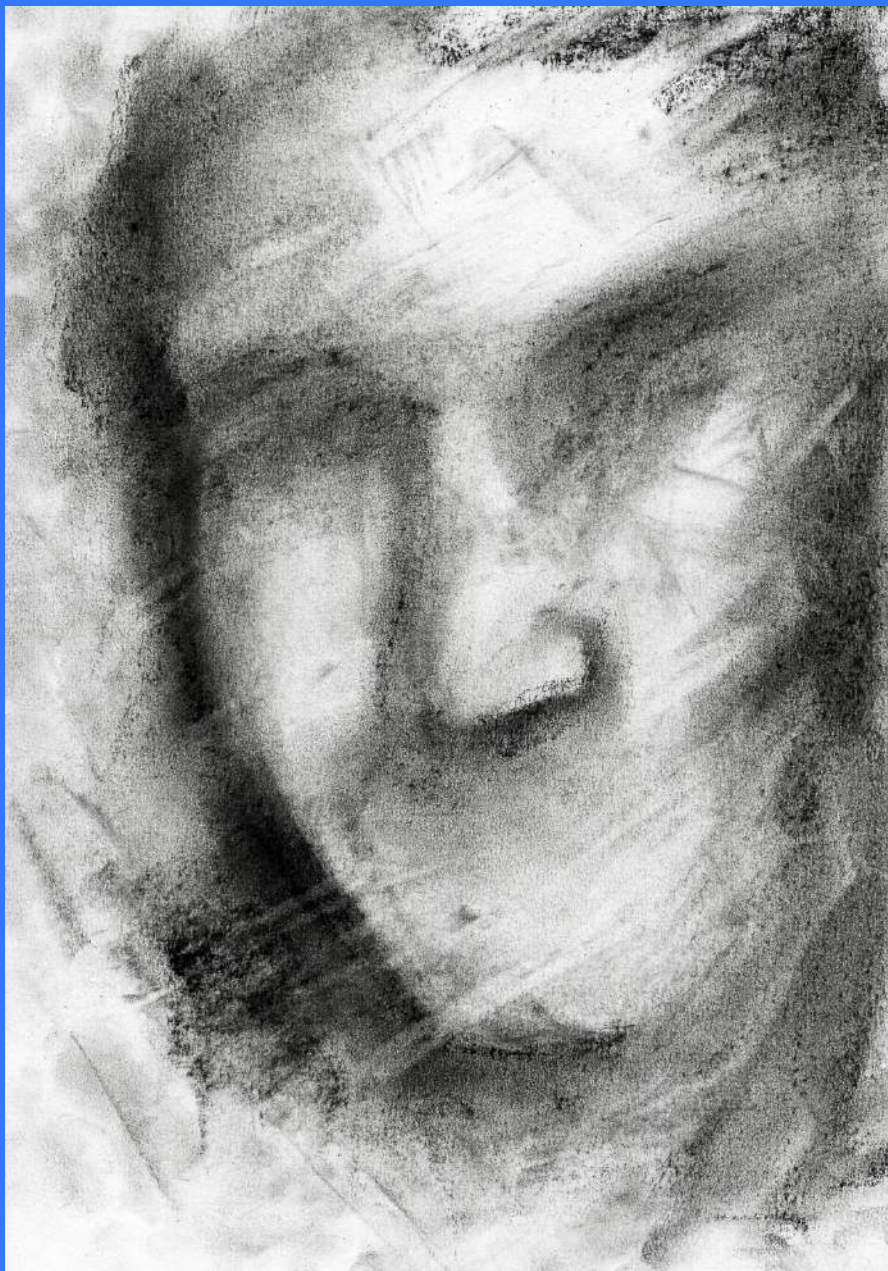
The Bible names 35 of its contributors, but still leaves several authors shrouded in mystery. In fact, about 23% of the Bible was written and edited by unidentified people.

Most of that anonymously written content is in the Old Testament history category. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings take down the history of the Jews in the promised land: from conquest to exile. The Talmud says Joshua wrote Joshua, but if he did write the bulk of it, there were some edits made by someone else afterward—the book references events that happen long, long after Joshua dies. As to Judges and Ruth, one of the various prophets who ministered during David's reign may have written them. The books of Samuel may have been written by the seers Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (1 Ch 29:29)—or by a later historian who compiled notes from the three prophets and other sources.

We also don't know who wrote Esther, but we do know that Mordecai recorded the events that take place in the book (Es 9:20).







## Unknown authors

(Continued)

As for the book of Job, that's a mystery, too. It's a really, really old story, so Moses may have been the author. It's a work of poetic wisdom, so Solomon is a candidate. And if we want an eyewitness account, Job's young whipper-snapper friend Elihu may be an option (Job 32:1–5). But we really have no idea.

About a third of the book of Psalms is anonymous, too. With the long history of musical Levites ministering in the Temple, these could have been written by any number of unnamed worship leaders.

The only New Testament book that doesn't have a traditionally-assigned author is Hebrews. I have no idea who wrote this book, and it's kind of amazing that the Church at large hasn't had consensus on it, either. Was it Paul? Luke? Apollos? Priscilla? Barnabas? Name any New Testament character, and there's probably some paper floating about the Internet claiming that that character wrote Hebrews.

Ah, well. At least we know most of the authors, right?



# Thanks for reading!

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