

The Scriptures Summarized / Major Division – Prophets

Hebrew Bibles, known as the Tanakh, have 3 major divisions, which do not correlate to English Bibles. Hebrew Bibles are also divided into 24 books instead of our 39.

Their first section is the (teaching) Torah. These 5 books compose the Jewish Law of Moses and are also known as the Pentateuch. This is identical to English versions.

Next comes the 8 volume Nevi'im section. This division contains what the Jews called 4 former and 4 latter prophets. English Bibles place all 4 of the former prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) in its historical section. The 4 latter prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, a single book referred to as the 12. (Minor Prophets)

Their final division, Ketuvim (meaning writings) has their 11 remaining books. It begins with Psalms and ends with Chronicles.

English Bibles, however, end the OT with 17 prophetic books. Prophecy is a different literary genre than historical or poetic books. Thus they are grouped together. These books are not arranged chronologically and have no continuity from book to book. (Except Lamentations) Thus each prophet should be understood by the time he ministered and to which Jewish nation he is addressing. Often there are multiple fulfillments of a single prediction.

Heb. 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

God's message to His people came with divisions. He did not fully reveal His plans to any one prophet or at any one time. Scholars call this progressive revelation.

God's Word to and through the prophets also came with diversity.

Numbers 12:6 he said, "Listen to my words: "When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams.

7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.

8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Prophets were mostly despised. People did not like their announcements of God's warnings of impending judgement.

II Chron. 36:15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.

Delivering God's message normally brought difficulty and persecution to the prophet.

Luke 11:47 "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. 48 So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. 49 Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'

Matt. 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.