

Old Testament Figures

The majority of the stained glass windows in St Mary's Church, Dedham and in Christian Churches in general depict scenes from the New Testament and the life of Jesus. However, in the side windows of the chancel, above the New Testament scenes, we see representations of twelve of the important figures of the Old Testament. Each of them is labelled with their name at the bottom of the window and although they have elaborate clothes and head-dresses they do not have halos as they are not Saints.



Abraham

"Abraham patriarch" Abraham was called Patriarch because, as was promised by God, he became the father of the Tribes of Israel and, we read in Genesis 15, his descendants would become as numerous as the visible stars in heaven. Abraham is tested by God and told to sacrifice his son Isaac. At the last minute God reprieves Isaac because Abraham has shown true obedience and provides a ram for the sacrifice instead. (Genesis 22). The window shows Abraham carrying the knife to sacrifice Isaac, and the fire with which to burn the sacrifice.



Moses

"Moses homo Dei" Moses man of God led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and parted the Red Sea so that they could escape. He is, however, most famous for receiving the "Ten Commandments" on the two tablets of

stone from God on Mount Sinai. (Exodus: 31: 18 for the first set which Moses broke in anger when the Israelites worshipped the golden calf and Exodus 34: 1 for the second pair of stones replaced by God). Here Moses is shown carrying the two tablets marked with ten Roman numerals .



David

"David Rex" David was the second King of Israel after Saul. He is shown carrying a harp as among other achievements he was the author of nearly half the Psalms and can also be credited with making music and singing a fundamental element of worship. (1 Chronicles 16: 4-7)

"Solomon Rex" Solomon succeeded David as King of Israel he is shown holding in his right hand a jewelled sceptre, a symbol of absolute power. In his left hand is a book titled "Sapientia Salomon" (The Wisdom of Solomon) on the cover. Solomon's wisdom is proverbial and we read in 1 Kings 4: 29 "God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore".



Solomon

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The other eight figures are all “Prophets” and have their own books in the Old Testament. Often in Latin inscriptions in church a form of shorthand was used to condense the writing and here p’pheta stands for propheta or prophet.

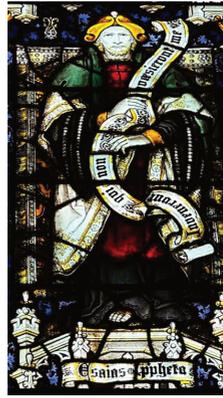
They are Amos, Elias (Elijah), Esaias (Isaiah), Esdras (Ezra), Ezechiel (Ezekiel), Ieremias (Jeremiah), Malachias (Malachi) and Samuel.



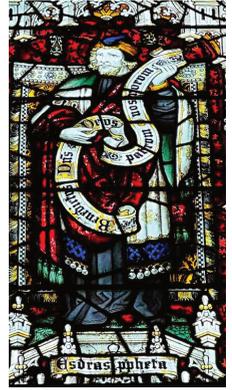
Amos



Elijah



Isaiah



Ezra



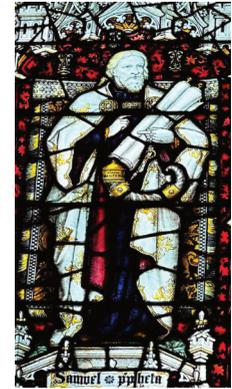
Ezekiel



Jeremiah



Malachi



Samuel

Mostly these figures carry text banners with quotes from their book in the Bible. However there are a couple of other biblical allusions depicted which are worth noting. Samuel carries, as well as the scrolls of his book, an elaborately decorated and gold mounted horn in which was kept Holy Oil used for anointing Kings. He used this oil to anoint David (1 Samuel 16: 13) and it was also used to anoint Solomon (1 Kings 1: 39). It is also easy to miss at the feet of the figure of Elijah, a beautifully depicted “Raven” with a wafer of bread in his mouth. In 1 Kings 17: 2-6 we read that the Lord instructed Elijah to take refuge in a ravine where he would drink from the brook and ravens would bring him bread and meat twice a day to feed him.

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