



TYNDALE
BIBLE
DICTIONARY

EDITORS

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Tyndale Bible Dictionary

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Some of the articles in this dictionary have been adapted from other works published by Tyndale House Publishers, particularly *The Origin of the Bible* and *Who's Who in Christian History*. In preparing several other articles, the editor, Philip Comfort, made some adaptations from his own previously published works, now no longer in print. These works are as follows: *New Commentary on the Whole Bible* (New Testament volume); *I Am the Way*; *Opening the Gospel of John* (with W. Hawley); *The Complete Guide to Bible Versions*; *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament*; *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament*; and *The Inspired Word*.

INTRODUCTION

TYNDALE BIBLE DICTIONARY

Our primary aim throughout the writing and editing process of this volume has been to provide our readers with a comprehensive Bible dictionary. We believe we have reached that goal. The *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* includes all the significant people, places, and terms in the Bible. The dictionary also has comprehensive articles on all the books of the Bible, significant words in the Bible, translations of the Bible, manuscripts of the Bible, and the canon of Scripture (including articles on apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books). Furthermore, you will find informative articles on the life and times of various nations that existed during Bible times as well as comprehensive articles on plants, animals, musical instruments, clothing, and other everyday objects. Key Bible themes and concepts such as redemption, justification, holiness, and righteousness are explained in depth. Difficult-to-understand subjects such as the “sin unto death” are also covered.

BIBLE VERSIONS

This dictionary can be used with any of the major Bible translations, including the New Living Translation, King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, New English Bible, New Jerusalem Bible, Revised English Bible, Today’s English Version, American Standard Version, and the English Revised Version. Special effort has been made to list terms (usually with unique spellings) found only in the King James Version and then to refer the reader to the modern term.

ASTERISKS

One of our foremost goals in the creation of the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* was to include as many terms and topics as possible while being careful to ensure the relevance of every entry. Part of this goal included presenting terms from a variety of Bible versions. Though the New Living Translation is the primary Bible version used, hundreds of terms appear in the dictionary that do not appear in the NLT. All dictionary entries marked with an asterisk (*) are words that are not found in the New Living Translation but do appear in other versions such as the King James Version and Revised Standard Version.

CROSS-REFERENCES

Two types of cross-references are utilized in this dictionary:

- ◆ **“See” references** point to one or more articles that contain information considered necessary for a complete understanding of the topic in question.
- ◆ **“See also” references** point to one or more articles that contain information considered interesting but not essential.

Both "See" and "See also" references refer to articles by topic name. When a topic name appears in a cross-reference in quotes and refers to a specific page number, the reference is to a text box that occurs on that page.

PHOTOGRAPHS

One of the features that sets the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* apart from other Bible dictionaries is the inclusion of over one hundred new photographs of the Holy Lands, supplied by Barry Beitzel, a well-known geographer of the Holy Lands. These unique aerial-view photos provide a visual perspective to the topics presented in the dictionary. Also included are nearly one hundred photographs of ancient biblical manuscripts and artifacts as well as dozens of hand-drawn illustrations of Bible life and times.

MAPS

Over fifty maps of the Holy Lands are included in the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* in an attempt to better acquaint you with the layout of the land about which you are reading. In addition, sixteen full-color pages of detailed maps and diagrams appear in the back of the dictionary.

ABBREVIATIONS

Apocryphal Books

Add Est	Additions to Esther	Jdt	Judith
Bar	Baruch	1 Macc	1 Maccabees
1 Esd	1 Esdras	2 Macc	2 Maccabees
2 Esd	2 Esdras	Pss of Sol	Psalms of Solomon
4 Ezr	4 Ezra	Tb	Tobit
Ecclus	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)	Wisd of Sol	Wisdom of Solomon

Dead Sea Scrolls (Non-Canonical)

CD	Cairo Damascus Document	2QS	Manual of Discipline
1QM	War Scroll	1QSa	Rule of the Congregation

Other Writings

<i>Antiquities</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>	<i>Prol Gal</i>	Jerome, <i>Prologue to Galatians</i>
<i>Apion</i>	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>	Strabo	Strabo, <i>Biography</i>
Dio Cassius	Dio Cassius, <i>Roman History</i>	Tacitus	Tacitus, <i>Histories</i>
Eusebius	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>	<i>War</i>	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i>

Books of the Bible

Gn	Genesis	Est	Esther	Mi	Micah
Ex	Exodus	Jb	Job	Na	Nahum
Lv	Leviticus	Ps(s)	Psalms	Hb	Habbakkuk
Nm	Numbers	Prv	Proverbs	Zep	Zephaniah
Dt	Deuteronomy	Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Hg	Haggai
Jos	Joshua	Sg	Song of Songs	Zec	Zechariah
Jgs	Judges	Is	Isaiah	Mal	Malachi
Ru	Ruth	Jer	Jeremiah	Mt	Matthew
1 Sm	1 Samuel	Lam	Lamentations	Mk	Mark
2 Sm	2 Samuel	Ez	Ezekiel	Lk	Luke
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Dn	Daniel	Jn	John
2 Kgs	2 Kings	Hos	Hosea	Acts	Acts
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Jl	Joel	Rom	Romans
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Am	Amos	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Ezr	Ezra	Ob	Obadiah	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Neh	Nehemiah	Jon	Jonah	Gal	Galatians

Eph	Ephesians	2 Tm	2 Timothy	2 Pt	2 Peter
Phil	Philippians	Ti	Titus	1 Jn	1 John
Col	Colossians	Phlm	Philemon	2 Jn	2 John
1 Thes	1 Thessalonians	Heb	Hebrews	3 Jn	3 John
2 Thes	2 Thessalonians	Jas	James	Jude	Jude
1 Tm	1 Timothy	1 Pt	1 Peter	Rv	Revelation

Bible Versions

ASV	American Standard Version	NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
ERV	English Revised Version	NLT	New Living Translation
JB	Jerusalem Bible	NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
KJV	King James Version	RSV	Revised Standard Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible	REB	Revised English Bible
NEB	New English Bible	TEV	Today's English Version
NIV	New International Version	TLB	The Living Bible

Other Abbreviations

approx.	approximately	MS, MSS	manuscript, manuscripts
c.	circa—approximately	Mt	Mountain, Mount
cf.	compare	MT	Masoretic Text
ch, chs	chapter, chapters	NT	New Testament
d.	died	OT	Old Testament
ed	edition, editions; editor, editors	p, pp	page, pages
e.g.,	for example,	St	Saint
et al.	and others	TR	Textus Receptus
etc.	and so forth	v, vv	verse, verses
i.e.,	that is,	vid	Latin for "it appears [to read as such]"
lit.	literal, literally	vol, vols	volume, volumes
LXX	Septuagint	yr., yrs.	year, years
mg	a variant reading noted in the margin or footnote of a translation		

AUTHORSHIP OF ARTICLES

Many writers contributed to this volume, either by writing articles or editing and rewriting articles substantially. Because so many articles were worked on by so many different hands in the editorial process, it is impossible to assign authorship to each article. Furthermore, if we noted authorship for some articles while excluding others, our acknowledgments would be uneven and therefore unfair. Consequently, we have listed all of the contributors beginning on page xi.

We pray that this volume will help you, the reader, in your study of God's Word, and that such study will enrich your appreciation for the inspired Scriptures.

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A

AARON Moses' brother and Israel's first high priest. In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, Aaron was Moses' spokesman and assistant during the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. Aaron was three years older than Moses and was 83 when they first confronted the pharaoh (Ex 7:7). Their sister, Miriam (Nm 26:59), must have been the eldest child, old enough to carry messages when the infant Moses was found by the pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:1-9). Aaron's mother was Jochebed and his father was Amram, a descendant of the Kohath family of Levi's tribe (Ex 6:18-20).

Aaron and his wife, Elisheba, had four sons (Ex 6:23), who were to follow him in the priesthood (Lv 1:5). Two of them, Nadab and Abihu, violated God's instructions by performing a sacrilegious act while burning incense and were burned to death as a result (Lv 10:1-5). The priesthood was then passed on through the other two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, who also sometimes failed to carry out God's instructions precisely (10:6-20).

Aaron's prominence in the events of the exodus arose partly from the fact that he was Moses' brother. When Moses tried to avoid becoming Israel's leader on the grounds of having a speech impediment, Aaron's ability as a speaker was recognized and used by God (Ex 4:10-16).

Events of Aaron's Life The Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt at the beginning of Aaron's life. Raised as an Egyptian by one of the pharaoh's daughters, Moses had fled into the Midian Desert after killing a cruel Egyptian taskmaster (Ex 1-2). When God sent Moses back as a liberator (chs 3-4), he also sent Aaron out to meet Moses in the desert (4:27). Moses was a stranger to his people after so many years of exile, so Aaron made contact with Israel's elders for him (4:29-31). When Moses and Aaron went to see the pharaoh, God told the Egyptian monarch through the two of them to let the Israelites go (Ex 5:1). When the pharaoh made life even more miserable for the Hebrew slaves, God began to show his power to the Egyptian ruler through a series of miracles (chs 5-12). God performed the first three miracles through Aaron, using a rod (probably a shepherd's staff). The pharaoh had his palace sorcerers do similar tricks. After God brought a plague of gnats (KJV "lice") over all Egypt, the Egyptian magicians admitted defeat and said, "This is the finger of God!" (Ex 8:19, NLT). Then God brought on more plagues through Moses, culminating in the deaths of all the Egyptians' firstborn sons. Aaron was with Moses (12:1-28) when God revealed how he would "pass over" the properly marked homes of the Israelites, sparing their children on the night the Egyptian children died. That event was the origin of the Passover feast still observed by Jews today (13:1-16).

After God led the Israelites to safety and destroyed the pursuing Egyptians, Aaron participated with Moses in governing the people on their long wilderness journey to the Promised Land (Ex 16:1-6). Later, battling against

Amalek's army, Aaron helped hold up Moses' weary arms in prayer to maintain God's blessing (17:8-16). Although always subordinate to Moses, Aaron seems to have been recognized as an important leader (18:12). God summoned him to be with Moses when God gave the law on Mt Sinai (19:24). Aaron was among the representatives of the people who ratified God's statutes in the Book of the Covenant (24:1-8). Aaron went with those leaders partway up the holy mountain and saw the vision of the God of Israel (24:9-10). With Hur, he was left in charge when Moses was with God on the mountaintop (vv 13-14).

AARON THE PRIEST

Because it marked the beginning of the priesthood in Israel, the consecration of Aaron to his office was both instructive and solemn. Nothing was left to human ingenuity; all was precisely commanded of God. There were three ceremonies: washing, clothing, and anointing. When the tabernacle was finished, Aaron and his sons were set apart to the priesthood by washing (to signify purification), clothing with official garments (for beauty and glory), and anointing with oil (to picture the need of empowering by the Spirit; cf. Ex 28; 40:12-15; Lv 8). Aaron thus became the first high priest, serving nearly 40 years. The character of his office was hereditary; this is attested to by his sons' wearing his garments when they succeeded to the office of high priest (Ex 29:29-30; Nm 20:25-28). Although all priests were anointed with oil, the anointing of Aaron and his successors was distinct from that of the ordinary priests (Ex 29:7; 40:12-15; Lv 8:12). Because the priesthood was inherited, all subsequent priests had to trace their ancestry back to Aaron (Ezr 7:1-5; Lk 1:5). Also, a sharp distinction was always drawn between the family of Aaron and the rest of the Levites (cf. Nm 3:5). Thus, the high priest was designated as the anointed priest in a special sense (Lv 4:3-4; 6:20-22; 21:10).

Because of Aaron's priestly role, the NT looks upon him as prefiguring the Messiah of Israel. Jesus Christ was appointed High Priest (Heb 3:1-2) in the same way God chose Aaron (Heb 5:1-5), but he was described as a greater high priest than Aaron (Heb 7:11-28).

Moses was gone for over a month, and in a moment of weakness, Aaron gave in to the people's request for an idol to worship. He melted down their gold ornaments to make a golden image of a calf (Ex 32:1-4). (The Israelites had probably been influenced in Egypt by the cult of Apis, a fertility god in the form of a bull.) At first, Aaron seemed to think he might be doing something acceptable to God (v 5), but things got out of hand and a drunken sex orgy took place around the idol (v 6). God was angry enough to destroy the people, but Moses

interceded, reminding God of his promise to multiply Abraham's descendants (Ex 32:7-14). Moses furiously confronted Aaron about the immorality and idolatry, which Aaron blamed on the people without admitting any guilt of his own (vv 21-24). Although the idolators were punished by death (Ex 32:25-28) and the whole camp by a plague (v 35), Moses was evidently not punished. In a retelling of the events, Moses said that Aaron was in great danger but was spared because he had prayed for him (Dt 9:20).

In their second year of nomadic wilderness life, Aaron helped Moses carry out a census (Nm 1:1-3, 17-18). Eventually, Aaron may have become jealous of Moses' position of leadership, for Miriam and Aaron began to slander their brother, even though the elderly Moses was by then more humble than any man on earth (Nm 12:1-4). God's anger toward the two was averted by Moses' prayer, although Miriam did suffer for her sin (12:5-15). Aaron again seems to have escaped punishment entirely. With Moses, Aaron opposed a rebellion at Kadesh (14:1-5). He stood with Moses against a later revolt (ch 16). After a final incident at Meribah, where the Israelites almost revolted again, God accused Moses and Aaron of having failed to take him at his word and denied them entry into the Promised Land (20:1-12). Aaron died at the age of 123 on Mt Hor, after Moses had removed his elaborate priestly garments and put them on Aaron's son Eleazar (Nm 20:23-29; 33:38-39).

See also Israel, History of; Exodus, The; Wilderness Wanderings; Priests and Levites; Levi, Tribe of; Aaron's Rod.

AARONITES* Collective name for the priests who descended from Aaron through his sons Eleazar and Ithamar. The term is used twice in the *KJV* to refer to the 3,700 men who supported David against Saul (1 Chr 12:27) and of whom Zadok later became leader (1 Chr 27:17). Both "house of Aaron" (Pss 115:10, 12; 118:3; 135:19) and "Aaron" (1 Chr 27:17, *RSV*) are used to refer to the Aaronites.

See also Aaron.

AARON'S ROD* Staff belonging to Moses' brother, Aaron, symbolizing the two brothers' authority in Israel. When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, a threat against Moses and Aaron's leadership was led by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Nm 16:1-40). In spite of the Lord's destruction of those rebels and their followers, the rest of the people of Israel turned against Moses and Aaron, saying that they had killed the people of the Lord (16:41). In order to restore respect for the divinely appointed leadership, the Lord told Moses to collect a rod from each tribe and have the leader of the tribe write his name on it. Aaron was told to write his name on the rod of Levi. The rods were placed in the inner room of the tabernacle, in front of the ark (of the covenant). In the morning, Aaron's rod had sprouted blossoms and had produced ripe almonds. The rod was then kept there as a continual sign to Israel that the Lord had established the authority of Moses and Aaron (Nm 17:1-11; cf. Heb 9:4).

Following that incident the people of Israel entered the wilderness of Zin, but there was no water for them and their flocks. Again the people argued with Moses and Aaron. The Lord instructed Moses to get the rod and, in the presence of Aaron and the rest of the people, command a particular rock to bring forth water. Taking the rod, Moses asked dramatically, "Must we bring you water from this rock?" (Nm 20:10, *NLT*) and struck the rock twice. Water gushed out and the people drank. Yet Moses

and Aaron were forbidden to enter the Promised Land because they did not sanctify the Lord in the people's eyes (Nm 20:12-13). An earlier event had provided evidence that the Lord was able to provide needed water in that manner (Ex 17:1-7).

See also Aaron.

AB* Month in the Hebrew calendar, about mid-July to mid-August. *See* Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

ABADDON Hebrew word that means "place of destruction." The word occurs six times in the OT, generally referring to the place of the dead (Jb 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:11; Prv 15:11; 27:20). It serves as a synonym for Sheol and is variously translated "hell," "death," "the grave," or "destruction." The same Hebrew word occurs once in the NT in its Greek equivalent, *Apollyon* (Rv 9:11). Here the idea of destruction is personified as the "angel from the bottomless pit," so the word is often translated "destroyer." Abaddon (or Apollyon) was the angel reigning over the realm of the dead, who appeared after the fifth trumpet in John's vision (Rv 9:1).

See also Sheol.

ABAGTHA One of the seven eunuchs commanded by King Ahasuerus to bring Queen Vashti to his drunken party (Est 1:10).

ABANA Syrian river (modern Barada) running through the city of Damascus. Although Naaman thought the Abana would be more effective than the Jordan River in curing leprosy, he obeyed the prophet Elisha, washed in the Jordan, and was cured (2 Kgs 5:9-14; "Amana" is an alternate textual reading in 5:12).

See also Amana.

ABARIM* Mountainous area located east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, and extending northward from the plains of Moab. From the highest point on Mt Nebo, called Pisgah, located in Abarim (2,643 feet; 805 meters), Moses looked into the Promised Land shortly before he died (Dt 32:48-50; 34:1-6).

ABBA Aramaic word for "father," which is applied to God in Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; and Galatians 4:6. The name expresses a very intimate and inseparable relationship between Christ and the Father and between believers (children) and God (Father).

ABDA

1. Adoniram's father. Adoniram was superintendent of public works under King Solomon (1 Kgs 4:6).
2. Shammua's son, who was a Levite leader in Jerusalem after the exile (Neh 11:17). The same father and son are elsewhere identified as Shemaiah and Obadiah (1 Chr 9:16).

ABDEEL Shelemiah's father. Shelemiah was an officer sent by King Jehoiakim of Judah to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch after the king had read and burned their prophetic scroll (Jer 36:26).

ABDI

1. Member of the Merari clan of Levites. Abdi's grandson Ethan was a musician in David's time (1 Chr 6:44; 15:17).
2. Levite whose son Kish served in Hezekiah's time (2 Chr 29:12). This Abdi has sometimes been confused with Abdi #1.

3. Member of the Elam clan in Ezra's time. This Abdi is listed as one of the Israelites who married a foreign wife after the exile (Ezr 10:26).

ABDIEL Guni's son and father of Ahi (1 Chr 5:15). Ahi was a clan leader in Gad's tribe during the reigns of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam II of Israel (1 Chr 5:15-17).

ABDON (Person)

1. Hillel's son who judged Israel for eight years (Jgs 12:13-15). Abdon was a very wealthy man, as indicated by reference to the 70 donkeys he owned.
2. Shashak's son from Benjamin's tribe who lived in Jerusalem (1 Chr 8:23, 28).
3. Jiel's oldest son from Benjamin's tribe who lived in Gibeon. This Abdon is mentioned in Saul's genealogy (1 Chr 8:30; 9:36).
4. Micah's son (2 Chr 34:20), also called Achbor, son of Micaiah. *See* Achbor #2.

ABDON (Place) One of four cities in Asher's territory given to the Levites after the conquest of Canaan, the Promised Land (Jos 21:30; 1 Chr 6:74). Abdon is probably the same as Ebron (Jos 19:28). Today Abdon is called Khirbet 'Abdeh.

ABEDNEGO One of Daniel's three friends who was sentenced to death by Nebuchadnezzar but was protected in the fiery furnace by an angel (Dn 1:7; 3:12-30). *See* Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Daniel, Additions to (Prayer of Azariah).

ABEL (Person) Second male child of Adam and Eve (Gn 4:2). The name is probably related to Sumerian and Akkadian words meaning "son" and was thus used as a generic term for the human race.

Abel's older brother, Cain, was engaged in agriculture, but Abel himself was a shepherd. When both brothers brought offerings, God accepted Abel's animal sacrifice but rejected Cain's vegetable offering. As a result, Cain became jealous of Abel and killed him.

The narrative indicates that Abel's character was more worthy of God's blessing; hence his offering was accepted and Cain's was not (Gn 4:7). There is no scriptural evidence that cereal or vegetable offerings were less effective as either sin offerings or fellowship meals than offerings involving the shedding of blood, since in later Mosaic law both were prescribed. In the NT Abel is regarded as the first martyr (Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; Heb 11:4).

ABEL (Place) Fortified border city in upper Galilee to which King David's general Joab pursued the rebel Sheba. After a wise woman of the city negotiated with Joab, the citizens executed Sheba and threw his head over the wall. Joab then called off the siege (2 Sm 20:13-22). The city was later conquered by the Syrian Ben-hadad during a continuing war between King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel. When Asa persuaded Ben-hadad to break a treaty with Baasha, Ben-hadad took a large amount of territory, including Abel, or Abel-beth-maacah, as it was also called (1 Kgs 15:16-20). Still later, Abel-beth-maacah (sometimes called simply Abel of Beth-maacah, or Abel of Beth-maacah) was conquered by Tiglath-pileser III, and its inhabitants were taken captive to Assyria (2 Kgs 15:29). The same city is called Abel-maim ("meadow of water"), emphasizing the productivity of the region (2 Chr 16:4). The town has been identified with modern Tell Abil-el-Qamh.

ABEL-BETH-MAACAH (MAACHAH*) Alternate name for Abel, a fortified city in upper Galilee in 1 Kings 15:20 and 2 Kings 15:29. It was also called Abel of Beth-Maacah (Maachah) in 2 Sm 20:14-15. *See* Abel (Place).

ABEL-KERAMIM City taken by Jephthah the Israelite judge when he conquered the Ammonites (Jgs 11:33). It was located south of the Jabbok River.

ABEL-MAIM* Alternate name for Abel, a fortified city in upper Galilee, in 2 Chronicles 16:4. *See* Abel (Place).

ABEL-MEHOLAH Birthplace of the prophet Elisha (1 Kgs 19:16). Here Elijah found Elisha plowing and threw his coat over Elisha's shoulders, symbolizing God's call to Elisha to become a prophet (1 Kgs 19:19-21). The town is earlier mentioned as one place to which the Midianites fled from Gideon's 300 warriors (Jgs 7:22). It is also mentioned in a list of administrative districts set up by King Solomon (1 Kgs 4:12). The most likely modern identification is Khirbet Tell el-Hilu.

ABEL-MIZRAIM Alternate name for Atad, a place in Canaan, in Genesis 50:11. *See* Atad.

ABEL-SHITTIM Alternate name for Shittim, a place on the plains of Moab, in Numbers 33:49. *See* Shittim (Place).

ABEZ* KJV form of Ebez, a place in Issachar's territory, in Joshua 19:20. *See* Ebez.

ABI* Shortened form of Abijah, the name of the mother of Judah's King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:2). *See* Abijah #4.

ABIA*

1. KJV rendering of Abijam, Rehoboam's son and king of Judah, in 1 Chronicles 3:10 and Matthew 1:7. *See* Abijam.
2. KJV rendering of Abijah in Luke 1:5. *See* Abijah #6.

ABIAH*

1. KJV translation for Abijah, Samuel's son, in 1 Samuel 8:2 and 1 Chronicles 6:28. *See* Abijah #1.
2. KJV translation of a Hebrew word in 1 Chronicles 2:24, which renders it as a proper name referring to the wife of Hezron. Most modern translations render it "his father": "Caleb went in to Ephrathah, the wife of Hezron his father" (RSV). The Hebrew is difficult, with different textual families evidently preserving variant readings and thus accounting for the divergences between the versions.
3. KJV translation for Abijah, Becher's son, in 1 Chronicles 7:8. *See* Abijah #5.

ABI-ALBON Alternate name of Abiel in 2 Samuel 23:31. *See* Abiel #2.

ABIASAPH Alternate form of Ebiasaph, a descendant of Korah, in Exodus 6:24. *See* Ebiasaph.

ABIATHAR One of two high priests during the reign of King David. The other high priest was Zadok, who evidently was appointed by David after his conquest of Jerusalem.

Only Abiathar escaped when the priestly families at Nob were massacred at the instigation of King Saul. The priests of Nob had given food and Goliath's sword to David during his escape from the wrath of Saul, thus earning Saul's hatred (1 Sm 21-22). When Abiathar joined David he brought the ephod, which David then

used in determining the will of God (1 Sm 23:6, 9-11; 30:7-8). Abiathar was one of the first persons from Saul's administration to support David. His support was formidable because he represented the priesthood of the old tribal league of the line of Eli.

During the last days of David's kingship, his sons struggled for the throne. The two major rivals were Adonijah and Solomon. Abiathar the high priest supported Adonijah's claim to the throne, probably because Adonijah was David's oldest living heir and because David's general Joab, one of the strongest men in the kingdom, supported Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:5-7). Zadok supported Solomon, who actually succeeded David on the throne. Having fallen out of favor with the new king, Abiathar was banished to his estate in Anathoth (1 Kgs 2:26-27), a village about four miles (6.4 kilometers) northeast of Jerusalem.

The relationship of Abiathar to Ahimelech is confusing. Ahimelech could have been the name of both Abiathar's father (1 Sm 22:20; 23:6) and son (2 Sm 8:17; 1 Chr 18:16; 24:6). If each of the references was to the same Ahimelech, then the names were reversed in the later passages. In the NT, Abiathar is mentioned as the high priest when David came to Nob needing food and weapons (Mk 2:26). The OT account says that Ahimelech was the priest at that time (1 Sm 21:1-2). The apparent discrepancy may have resulted from a copyist's error or from the fact that Abiathar as high priest was more prominent than Ahimelech.

ABIB* Canaanite name of the Hebrew month Nisan, about mid-March to mid-April. *See* Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

ABIDA One of Midian's sons. Midian was Abraham's son by his concubine Keturah (Gn 25:2, 4; 1 Chr 1:33).

ABIDAN Gideon's son and leader of Benjamin's tribe when the Israelites were wandering in the Sinai wilderness after their escape from Egypt (Nm 1:11; 2:22). As leader, he presented his tribe's offering at the consecration of the tabernacle (Nm 7:60-65).

ABIEL

1. Father of Kish and Ner and grandfather of King Saul, according to 1 Samuel 9:1 and 14:51. Other genealogies in 1 Chronicles list Ner, instead of Abiel, as Kish's father and Saul's grandfather (1 Chr 8:33; 9:39). This confusion is due either to a copyist's error or to the possibility that Saul had two relatives named Ner, a great-grandfather and an uncle.
2. Warrior among David's mighty men who were known as "the thirty" (1 Chr 11:32), also called Abi-albon the Arbathite (2 Sm 23:31).

ABIEZER

1. Descendant of Manasseh (Jos 17:1-2). Although Abiezer's father is not named, Abiezer is listed with the descendants of his mother's brother, Gilead (1 Chr 7:18). In Numbers 26:30, Abiezer's name is shortened to Iezer (KJV "Jeezer"), and the family is called Iezerites (KJV "Jeezerites"). Abiezer's family, to which Gideon belonged, was the first clan to respond to Gideon's call to fight the Midianites (Jgs 6:34). Abiezer's descendants were referred to as Abiezrites (Jgs 6:11, 24, 34; 8:32).
2. Member of Benjamin's tribe from Anathoth and warrior among David's mighty men, known as "the thirty" (2 Sm 23:27; 1 Chr 11:28). This Abiezer was commander of the ninth division of the army in the rotation system established by David (1 Chr 27:12).

ABIEZRITE* Member of Abiezer's family (Jgs 6:11, 24, 34; 8:32). *See* Abiezer #1.

ABIGAIL

1. Nabal's wife, who later became the wife of David (1 Sm 25:2-42). Nabal was a wealthy sheep owner whose holdings had been protected by David's men. When David requested provisions in return for that protection, Nabal refused. Enraged, David set out with 400 armed men to destroy Nabal and his house. Abigail had been informed of her husband's behavior and met David with many provisions, taking the blame for her foolish husband. David thanked God for using Abigail to restrain his anger.

When Nabal woke from a drunken stupor the next morning and learned what had happened, he had a stroke from which he died 10 days later. Abigail then married David and shared his adventurous life among the Philistines (1 Sm 27:3). She was captured by the Amalekites and rescued by David (1 Sm 30:1-19). Abigail went with David to Hebron when he became king of Judah (2 Sm 2:2), and she bore his second son, Chileab (2 Sm 3:3), also called Daniel (1 Chr 3:1).

2. David's sister, who married Jether and gave birth to Amasa (1 Chr 2:16-17). There appears to be confusion as to the ancestry of this Abigail. In 1 Chronicles 2:13-17 she is listed as a daughter of Jesse. However, in 2 Samuel 17:25, her father is identified as Nahash. The discrepancy could be due to scribal error, or Nahash may be another name for Jesse, or the widow of Nahash could have married Jesse.

ABIGAL* RSV rendering of Abigail, David's sister, in 2 Samuel 17:25. *See* Abigail #2.

ABIHAIL Name used for both men and women in the OT.

1. Zuriel's father and a leader of the Merari family of Levites in Israel's wilderness community (Nm 3:35).
2. Abishur's wife, and mother of Ahban and Molid (1 Chr 2:29).
3. Huri's son, a descendant of Gad, living in Gilead and Bashan (1 Chr 5:14).
4. Woman named in 2 Chronicles 11:18 whose relationship to King Rehoboam is not clear from the Hebrew text. In some translations, Abihail seems to be the second wife of Rehoboam. However, only one wife is mentioned at first, so Abihail was probably the mother of Rehoboam's first wife, Mahalath. This Abihail was thus a daughter of Eliab, David's eldest brother. She married her cousin Jerimoth, one of David's sons.
5. Esther's father, and uncle of Mordecai (Est 2:15; 9:29).

ABIHU Second son of Aaron and Elisheba (Ex 6:23; Nm 26:60; 1 Chr 6:3). Abihu and his brother Nadab joined Moses, Aaron, and the 70 elders of Israel in worshipping the glory of God on Mt Sinai (Ex 24:1-11). The four sons of Aaron were made priests along with their father (Ex 28:1), but later Abihu and Nadab were burned to death for offering "a different kind of fire" before the Lord (Lv 10:1, NLT; *see also* Nm 3:2-4; 26:61; 1 Chr 24:1-2).

ABIHUD One of Bela's nine sons (1 Chr 8:3). Abihud should not be confused with the Abiud of Matthew's genealogy of Christ in the NT.

ABIJAH

1. Samuel's second son who, with his older brother, Joel, was a corrupt judge in Beersheba. Because of the corruption, Israel's leaders demanded to be ruled instead by a king (1 Sm 8:2; 1 Chr 6:28).
2. Son of Jeroboam I of the northern kingdom of Israel. The boy's illness impelled his family to seek guidance from the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh (1 Kgs 14:1-2).
3. Alternate name for Abijam, king of Judah, in 2 Chronicles 12:16-14:1 and Matthew 1:7. *See* Abijam.
4. Ahaz's wife, and mother of King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:2, short form "Abi"; 2 Chr 29:1). This Abijah was Zechariah's daughter.
5. Becher's son from Benjamin's tribe (1 Chr 7:8).
6. Levite who headed the eighth of 24 priestly divisions established in David's time (1 Chr 24:10; Lk 1:5).
7. Head of a priestly family who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile (Neh 10:7).
8. Head of a priestly family who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile (Neh 12:4). Perhaps of the same family as #7.

ABIJAM Rehoboam's son and successor as king of Judah, 913-910 BC (1 Chr 3:10; alternately called "Abijah" in 2 Chr 11:18-22; 12:16; 13:1-22; 14:1). A major focus of Abijam's reign was his war with King Jeroboam I of Israel (2 Chr 13:1-3). Before a decisive battle, Abijam stood on Mt Zemaraim and shouted condemnation of Jeroboam's political divisiveness and religious idolatry (2 Chr 13:4-12). Abijam and his army then prayed for God's help in their precarious military position. Against two-to-one odds, they fought their way out of an ambush and won a stunning victory over Jeroboam (2 Chr 13:13-19). Abijam's reign in the southern kingdom of Judah was summed up rather unfavorably in 1 Kings 15:1-8: "He committed the same sins as his father before him, and his heart was not right with the LORD his God, as the heart of his ancestor David had been" (v 3, NLT). But God had promised to keep David's descendants on the throne in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 11:36), so Abijam's son Asa succeeded him. Being of David's line, Abijam was an ancestor of Jesus, the Christ (Mt 1:7, "Abijah"). *See also* Israel, History of; Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

ABILENE Region on the east side of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains in Syria. The district took its name from the capital city of Abila, located about 18 miles (29 kilometers) from Damascus. At the time of John the Baptist, Abilene was governed by the tetrarch Lysanias (Lk 3:1).

ABIMAEEL One of the many sons or descendants of Joktan, and thus a descendant of Shem (Gn 10:28; 1 Chr 1:22).

ABIMELECH Royal title for Philistine rulers, similar to the designation "pharaoh" among the Egyptians and "agag" among the Amalekites.

1. King of Gerar in Abraham's time. At Gerar, a city a few miles south of Gaza, Abraham presented his wife as his sister out of fear for his life (Gn 20:1-18), as he had once done in Egypt (Gn 12:10-20). Because of this, Sarah was taken into Abimelech's harem. But Abimelech was warned by God in a dream not to come near her on pain of death because she was a married woman, so she was restored to her husband. The same Abimelech and Abraham later entered into a

2. treaty to clarify water rights in the Negev Desert at Beersheba (Gn 21:22-34).
2. King of Gerar in Isaac's time. Isaac, too, passed off his wife, Rebekah, as his sister at Gerar. Abimelech, perhaps remembering the near judgment on his predecessor, acted decisively to protect Rebekah's integrity. He proclaimed a death penalty on any who touched her or her husband (Gn 26:1-11). Abimelech asked Isaac to leave Philistine territory because of overcrowding and continuing dispute over water (Gn 26:12-22). Eventually, at Beersheba, Isaac and Abimelech ended their hostility by renewing the treaty made by Abraham and the earlier Abimelech (Gn 26:26-33).
3. Gideon's son by a concubine in Shechem (Jgs 8:31). After his father's death, Abimelech conspired with his mother's family to assassinate his 70 half brothers. Only one of them, Jotham, escaped (Jgs 9:1-5). In Abimelech's third year of rule, he cruelly suppressed a rebellion (Jgs 9:22-49). Eventually his skull was crushed by a millstone thrown down by a woman on a tower. Abimelech ordered his armor bearer to kill him with a sword so that no one could say he had been killed by a woman (Jgs 9:53-57).
4. Achish, king of the Philistine city of Gath (1 Sm 21:10-15).
5. Abiathar's son, a priest associated with Zadok in David's time (1 Chr 18:16).

ABINADAB

1. Resident of Kiriath-jearim to whose home the ark of God was brought on its return by the Philistines (1 Sm 6:21-7:2).
2. Jesse's second son, and brother of David (1 Sm 16:8; 17:13; 1 Chr 2:13). This Abinadab served in Saul's army for part of the Philistine war.
3. KJV form of Ben-abinadab, one of King Solomon's administrative officers in 1 Kings 4:11. *See* Ben-abinadab.
4. One of Saul's sons (1 Chr 8:33; 10:2).

ABINOAM Barak's father. Barak was the companion of Deborah, an Israelite judge, in the war against the Canaanites (Jgs 4:6, 12; 5:1, 12).

ABIRAM

1. One of Eliab's two sons. Abiram and his brother Dathan joined in an uprising against Moses and Aaron. At Moses' word, the ground split open beneath the two rebellious brothers and everything associated with them was swallowed up in a massive earthquake (Nm 16:1-33).
2. Hiel's oldest son, who died prematurely when his father presumptuously rebuilt Jericho (1 Kgs 16:34). Joshua's prophetic curse was thereby fulfilled (Jos 6:26).

ABISHAG Beautiful young woman from Shunem who was appointed to care for David during his last days (1 Kgs 1:1-4). After David's death, Adonijah asked permission from his half brother King Solomon to marry Abishag. In the ancient Near East, to claim the concubine of a deceased king was to claim the throne. Enraged, Solomon ordered Adonijah to be killed (1 Kgs 2:13-25).

ABISHAI David's nephew, son of Zeruiah (by an unnamed father) and brother of Joab and Asahel (1 Chr 2:16). Abishai volunteered to accompany David to Saul's camp one night and would have killed the sleeping Saul if David had not restrained him (1 Sm 26:6-12). He also helped Joab kill Abner, Saul's general, in revenge for the

death of another brother (2 Sm 3:30). Later Abishai won a victory over the Edomites (1 Chr 18:12-13) and was second in command in a decisive battle against the Ammonites (1 Chr 19:10-15). Often vengeful and cruel, Abishai wanted to behead the spiteful Shimei during Absalom's rebellion, but again David intervened (2 Sm 16:5-12; 19:21-23). When King David fled beyond the Jordan, Abishai was given command of one of David's three divisions that crushed the rebellion (2 Sm 18:1-15).

In a later battle with the Philistines, Abishai saved David's life by killing the giant Ishbi-benob (2 Sm 21:15-17). He ranked among David's bravest warriors (2 Sm 23:18-19; 1 Chr 11:20-21).

ABISHALOM* Alternate name for Absalom, King David's son, in 1 Kings 15:2, 10. *See* Absalom.

ABISHUA

1. Aaron's great-grandson, son of Phinehas and ancestor of Ezra (1 Chr 6:4-5, 50; Ezr 7:5). Abishua's name also appears in the apocryphal genealogy of Ezra (1 Esd 8:2; 2 Esd 1:2).
2. Bela's son, and grandson of Benjamin (1 Chr 8:4).

ABISHUR Shammai's son and the father of Ahban and Molid from Judah's tribe. Abishur's wife was Abihail (1 Chr 2:28-29).

ABITAL Mother of King David's fifth son, Shephatiah (2 Sm 3:4; 1 Chr 3:3).

ABITUB Son of Shahraraim and Hushim from Benjamin's tribe (1 Chr 8:11).

ABIUD Individual listed in Matthew's genealogy of Christ in the NT as Eliakim's father (Mt 1:13). *See* Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

ABNER Ner's son and Saul's cousin. Abner was commander of Saul's army (1 Sm 14:50; 17:55). Highly respected by Saul, he even ate at the king's table together with David and Jonathan (1 Sm 20:25).

Five years after Saul's death, Abner made Ishbosheth, Saul's son, king over Israel (2 Sm 2:8-9). War between Ishbosheth and David, who then was king over Judah, lasted for two years. Abner was in command of Ishbosheth's army, Joab of David's, in a series of skirmishes. David's position was generally stronger, but Abner became a powerful figure among Saul's followers.

Although only the king had a right to sexual relationships with the previous king's concubines, Abner slept with Saul's concubine Rizpah, perhaps planning to take over the kingdom himself at the first opportunity. When Ishbosheth rebuked him, Abner became so angry that he broke with Ishbosheth and came to terms with David. David showed him great respect, and in return, Abner promised to bring the whole of Israel over to David. Joab, however, feared Abner's influence with the king and killed him, claiming revenge for the death of his brother at Abner's hand in battle. Abner was honored with a public funeral and mourning, an honor given only to a ruler or great leader. King David wept aloud at the tomb, and even the people wept with him (2 Sm 3:7-34). David condemned Joab for murdering Abner.

See also David; Israel, History of.

ABOMINATION Repugnant or detestable act, person, or thing. The idea of abomination derives from the specific demands God's holiness makes upon his people.

Adjectives frequently used for abominations in the OT are "abhorrent," "loathsome," "unclean," and "rejected."

Of the four major Hebrew words translated "abomination," the one most frequently used indicates violation of an established custom or ritual that, in turn, brings the judgment of God. Examples range from defective sacrifices (Dt 17:1) to magic and divination (Dt 18:12) or idolatrous practices (2 Kgs 16:3). A second Hebrew word refers to the meat of certain kinds of animals that was ritually defiling, whether touched or eaten (Lv 11:10-13). A third word designates three-day-old sacrificial meat (Lv 7:18). A fourth word refers almost exclusively to idolatrous objects of pagan origin (Jer 4:1; 7:30). Apart from the specialized usage of "abomination of desolation," the Greek word for "abomination" is used infrequently in the NT (Lk 16:15; Rom 2:22; Ti 1:16; Rv 17:4-5; 21:8, 27) and is translated by many English words. The primary connotation is anything that is abhorrent to a holy God.

See also Cleanness and Uncleaness, Regulations Concerning; Dietary Laws (After Moses).

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Phrase used in Daniel, 1 Maccabees, Matthew, and Mark to designate a detestable object of pagan idolatry so loathsome to God that he would enact desolating judgment.

In Daniel's vision of coming abomination, a detestable object would be set up in the temple in Jerusalem (Dn 11:31) 1,290 days after the beginning of a period of sacrilege (Dn 12:11), thus destroying the temple's holiness and rendering it unclean by ceremonial and ethical standards. In 1 Maccabees it is recorded that the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Palestine (167 BC) and erected a desolating sacrilege, probably a statue of Zeus, upon the altar of burnt offering in the temple (1 Macc 1:54).

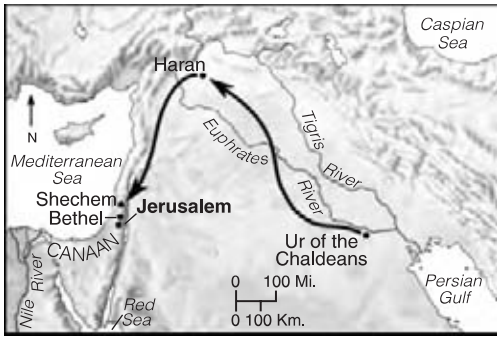
Jesus used the phrase "abomination of desolation" in answering the disciples' questions concerning the destruction of the temple and the general course of the age until his return (Mt 24:1-31; Mk 13:1-27; Lk 21:5-28). In alluding to the Daniel passages, Jesus predicted that something analogous to the destruction by Antiochus would occur. Jesus applied the prediction and fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in part to the coming Roman desecration, which did take place in AD 70. Jesus warned that the erection of the abomination of desolation ("desolating sacrilege," rsv) was a signal to flee the city of Jerusalem (Mt 24:15-16; Mk 13:14).

The Greek version of the book of Ezekiel sometimes used "lawlessness" in place of abomination, leading to the association of "man of lawlessness" (man of abomination) with the detestable sacrilege of the Antichrist (2 Thes 2:3). A similar theme is reflected in the book of Revelation, where the image of the creature or beast from the sea symbolizes the power of the forces of evil demanding obedience and submission (Rv 13:1-10).

See also Antichrist; Daniel, Book of; Abomination.

ABRAHAM One of the Bible's most significant personalities, whom God called from the city of Ur to become patriarch of God's own people.

Abraham's name was originally Abram, meaning "[the] father is exalted." When he was given that name by his parents, they were probably participants in the



Abram's Journey to Canaan Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan by way of Haran.

moon cult of Ur, so the father deity suggested in his old name could have been the moon god or another pagan deity. God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Gn 17:5), partly, no doubt, to indicate a clear-cut separation from pagan roots. The new name, interpreted by the biblical text as meaning "father of a multitude," was also a statement of God's promise to Abraham that he would have many descendants, as well as a significant test of his faith in God—since he was 99 years old at the time and his childless wife was 90 (Gn 11:30; 17:1-4, 17).

Abraham's Life The story of Abram begins in Genesis 11, where his family relationships are recorded (Gn 11:26-32). Terah, Abram's father, was named after the moon deity worshiped at Ur. Terah had three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran, the father of Lot, died before the family left Ur. Terah took Lot, Abram, and Abram's wife, Sarai, from Ur to go to Canaan but settled at the city of Haran (v 31). It is stated in Acts 7:2-4 that Abraham heard the call of God to leave for a new land while he was still in Ur.

A note of major importance to the course of Abram's life is found in Genesis 11:30: "Sarai was not able to have any children" (NLT). The problem of Sarai's barrenness provided the basis for great crises of faith, promise, and fulfillment in the lives of Abram and Sarai.

ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

Referred to as the "friend of God" (2 Chr 20:7; Jas 2:23, NLT), Abraham played an important role in Hebrew history. Through Abraham's life, God revealed a program of "election" and "covenant," which culminated in the work of Jesus Christ. God said to Abraham, "All the families of the earth will be blessed through you" (Gn 12:3, NLT). Centuries later, the apostle Paul explained that the full import of God's promise was seen in the preaching of faith in Christ, which signifies believers from all families of the earth as sons of Abraham (Gal 3:6-9).

After Terah's death, God told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you." This command was the basis of a "covenant," in which God promised to make Abram the founder of a new nation in that new land (Gn 12:1-3, NLT). Abram, trusting God's promise, left Haran at the age of 74. Entering Canaan, he went first to Shechem, an important Canaanite royal city between Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal. Near the oak of Moreh, a Canaanite shrine, God appeared to him (12:7). Abram built an altar at Shechem, then moved to the vicinity of Bethel and again built an altar to

the Lord (12:8). The expression "to call on the name of the LORD" (RSV) means more than just to pray. Rather, Abram made a proclamation, declaring the reality of God to the Canaanites in their centers of false worship. Later Abram moved to Hebron by the oaks of Mamre, where again he built an altar to worship God. Another blessing given in a vision (15:1) led Abram to exclaim that he was still childless and that Eliezer of Damascus was his heir (15:2). Discovery of the Nuzi documents has helped to clarify that otherwise obscure statement. According to Hurrian custom, a childless couple of station and substance would adopt an heir. Often a slave, the heir would be responsible for the burial and mourning of his adoptive parents. If a son should be born after the adoption of a slave-heir, the natural son would of course supplant him. Thus God's response to Abram's question is directly to the point: "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own to inherit everything I am giving you" (Gn 15:4, NLT). God then made a covenant with Abram insuring an heir, a nation, and the land.

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

Figure of speech probably derived from the Roman custom of reclining on one's left side at meals with the guest of honor at the bosom of his host (cf. Jn 13:23-25). It was used by Jesus in the story of Lazarus as a description of paradise (Lk 16:22-23). In rabbinical writings, as well as 4 Maccabees 13:17, righteous people were thought to be welcomed at death by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus, probably aware of this, was also alluding to the "messianic banquet," an image he used a number of times. Thus, in the world to come, the godly poor like Lazarus would not only be welcomed by Abraham but would occupy the place of honor next to him at the banquet.

See also Heaven; Paradise.

Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. When Abram was 99, the Lord appeared to the aged patriarch and again reaffirmed his covenant promise of a son and blessing (Gn 17). Circumcision was added as the seal of covenantal relationship (17:9-14), and at that point the names Abram and Sarai were changed to Abraham and Sarah (17:5, 15). Abraham's response to the promise of another son was to laugh: "Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. 'How could I become a father at the age of one hundred?' he wondered. 'Besides, Sarah is ninety; how could she have a baby?'" (Gn 17:17, NLT).

Genesis 18 and 19 recount the total destruction of two cities of the Jordan plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. Chapter 18 begins with three individuals seeking comfort in the heat of the day. Abraham offered refreshment and a meal to his guests. They turned out to be no ordinary travelers, however, but the Angel of the Lord along with two other angels (18:1-2; 19:1). There is reason to believe that the Angel of the Lord was God himself (18:17, 33). Another announcement of a promised son made Sarah laugh in unbelief and then deny having laughed (18:12-15).

Genesis 21 to 23 form the climax of the story of Abraham. At long last, when Abraham was 100 years old and his wife 90, "the LORD did exactly what he had promised" (Gn 21:1, NLT). The joy of the aged couple on the birth of their long-promised son could not be contained. Both Abraham and Sarah had laughed in unbelief in the days of promise; now they laughed in joy as God had "the last laugh." The baby, born at the time God promised, was named Isaac ("he laughs!"). Sarah said, "God

has brought me laughter! All who hear about this will laugh with me" (Gn 21:6, NLT).

The laughter over Isaac's birth subsided entirely in the test of Abraham's faith described in chapter 22. God's command to sacrifice Isaac. Only when one has experienced vicariously with Abraham the long 25 years of God's promise of a son can one imagine the trauma of such a supreme test. Just as the knife was about to fall, and only then, did the angel of God break the silence of heaven with the call, "Abraham!" (22:11). The name of promise, "father of a multitude," took on its most significant meaning when Abraham's son was spared and the test was explained: "I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me" (Gn 22:12, NLT).

Those words were coupled with a promise implicit in the discovery of a ram caught in the thicket. The Lord provided an alternative sacrifice, a substitute. The place was named "the Lord will provide." Christian believers generally see the whole episode as looking ahead to God's provision of his only Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

See also *Covenant; Patriarchs, Period of the; Israel, History of; "Abraham's Bosom"* on page 7; Sarah #1.

ABRAM Original name of Abraham (Gn 11:26). See Abraham.

ABRON Brook or wadi mentioned in the book of Judith, located on the route of attack of Nebuchadnezzar's general, Holofernes (2:24). Some early commentators identified it with the biblical Jabbok (Nm 21:24). Others called it the Cherbon, possibly through a misreading of Habor (2 Kgs 17:6).

ABRONAH Place near Elath where the Israelites camped on their journey from Egypt to Canaan (Nm 33:34-35). See *Wilderness Wanderings*.

ABSALOM Son of King David and his wife Maachah (2 Sm 3:3). The name is also spelled Abishalom (1 Kgs 15:2, 10). Absalom was a handsome young prince who was noted for his long, full hair (2 Sm 14:25-26). He had a beautiful sister, Tamar, who was raped by their half brother Amnon. After dishonoring Tamar, Amnon refused to marry her (2 Sm 13:1-20).

Absalom took his dejected sister into his own house, expecting his father, David, to punish Amnon for his incestuous act. After two years of suppressed rage and hatred, Absalom plotted his own revenge. He gave a feast for King David and his princes at his country estate. Although David did not attend, Amnon did and was murdered by Absalom's servants after Absalom got him drunk. Then, afraid of King David's anger, Absalom fled across the Jordan River to King Talmai of Geshur, his mother's father (2 Sm 13:21-39).

After three years in exile, Absalom was called back to Jerusalem through the efforts of David's general, Joab, and a wise woman from Tekoa. After two years he was back in full favor with the king (2 Sm 14), and in that position he began to maneuver himself to gain the throne. He put on an impressive public relations campaign, in the process undermining confidence in his father, the king (2 Sm 15:1-6).

Eventually, Absalom plotted a rebellion against David, gathering supporters in Hebron from all over Israel. After Ahithophel, one of David's wisest counselors, joined Absalom, the prince announced his own kingship. By the time news of Absalom's conspiracy reached him, David was unable to do anything but flee from Jerusalem (2 Sm 15; Ps 3).

Absalom arrived in Jerusalem without a struggle, and Ahithophel asked permission to attack David immediately with 12,000 troops. But Hushai, David's secret agent in Absalom's court, advised Absalom instead to take the time to mobilize the entire nation against David. He also used flattery, suggesting that Absalom himself should lead the attack. Absalom preferred Hushai's advice, and Ahithophel out of desperation committed suicide. Meanwhile, Hushai sent word of Absalom's plans to David by two priests, Zadok and Abiathar. With this information, David crossed the Jordan and camped at Mahanaim (2 Sm 16-17).

Absalom led his forces across the Jordan to do battle in the forest of Ephraim. David's loyal forces were under the able generalship of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite, who routed Absalom's forces. Absalom himself fled on a mule, but his long hair got caught in the branches of an oak tree, and he was left dangling helplessly. Joab, leading his men in pursuit, came upon Absalom and killed him. Joab's men threw the body in a pit and piled stones on it (2 Sm 18:1-18). Absalom's death stunned David, who had given explicit orders to keep Absalom from harm. David moaned: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I could have died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sm 18:33, NLT). In his excessive grief, David took no notice that a serious rebellion had been crushed until Joab reminded him that David's followers had risked their lives for him (2 Sm 19:1-8). See David.

ABUBUS Ptolemy's father. Ptolemy was a military governor of Jericho who treacherously killed his father-in-law Simon Maccabeus and two of Simon's sons in 134 BC (1 Macc 16:11-17). See *Maccabean Period*.

ABYSS Bottomless, immeasurable deep or underworld. See *Bottomless Pit*.

ACACIA Palestinian wood used in the construction of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:10). See *Plants*.

ACBOR

1. Father of the Edomite king Baal-hanan before the establishment of Israel's monarchy (Gn 36:38-39; 1 Chr 1:49).
2. Micaiah's son, courtier of King Josiah of the southern kingdom of Judah. Josiah sent Acbor in a delegation to ask Huldah the prophetess about the newly found Book of the Law (2 Kgs 22:12-14). Acbor was also referred to as Abdon, son of Micah (2 Chr 34:20). He was the father of Elnathan (Jer 26:22; 36:12).

ACCAD* One of the three cities (Babel, Erech, and Accad, rsv) in the plains between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers said to have been founded by Nimrod (Gn 10:10). "Akkadian" (from Accad) has become a general designation for the Semitic language of Mesopotamia from the days of Sargon (c. 2360 BC) through Assyrian and Babylonian times.

ACCHO*, ACCO Major Palestinian port city from the earliest Canaanite period. The only clear OT reference to Acco is the statement that at the time of Israel's conquest of Canaan, Asher's tribe failed to drive out its inhabitants (Jgs 1:31). Acco is frequently mentioned in Middle and New Kingdom Egyptian texts and in Assyrian records. Presumably Acco came under Israelite control during David's reign and was among the 20 cities given by Solomon to King Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:11-14). In later centuries, Acco was captured by Alexander the Great of

Macedonia. It was eventually rebuilt and renamed Ptolemais (Acts 21:7).

ACCOS Name of Hakkoz in 1 Maccabees 8:17. *See* Hakkoz.

ACELDAMA* KJV form of Akeldama, meaning "Field of Blood," in Acts 1:19. *See* Blood, Field of.



Aerial View of Acco

ACHAIA Name generally used in NT times to refer to the entire Greek peninsula south of Thessalonica. *See* Greece, Greek.

ACHAICUS Early Christian convert in Corinth. Achaicus, Stephanas, and Fortunatus were visiting Paul in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 16:17). It was probably Achaicus and his companions who brought Paul a letter from the Corinthian church (1 Cor 7:1) and returned with Paul's reply.

ACHAN, ACHAR* Member of Judah's tribe who kept some of the spoils from the Israelite victory at Jericho in violation of Joshua's order and God's command (Jos 6:1-7:1). A subsequent Israelite defeat at Ai, a weaker city than Jericho, revealed God's anger to Joshua. With God's help, Joshua determined which of the Israelites had been guilty of disobedience. Achan confessed that he had buried a robe and some gold and silver from Jericho in his tent (Jos 7:20-22). The recovered loot was taken to the valley of Achor (meaning "trouble," "calamity"), where Achan and his family were stoned. In the Hebrew text, 1 Chronicles 2:7 gives Achan's name as Achar ("disaster") because he "brought disaster on Israel by taking plunder that had been set apart for the LORD" (NLT).

ACHAZ* KJV form of Ahaz, Judah's king, in Matthew 1:9. *See* Ahaz #1.

ACHBOR* Alternate spelling for Achor. *See* Achor.

ACHIM* Descendant of Zerubbabel, listed in the NT as an ancestor of Jesus (Mt 1:14). *See* Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

ACHIOR The book of Judith introduces Achior as "leader of all the Ammonites" (5:5). The main part of Judith 5 is devoted to Achior's version of the history of Israel and culminates in his warning Holofernes that God would protect Israel. At this the hearers threatened to tear him limb from limb. Holofernes then handed Achior over to the Israelites and Uziah provided his hospitality (Jdt 6:1ff.). After Holofernes' demise, Achior was brought to view the Assyrian general's severed head. Seeing this he threw himself at the feet of Judith, pro-

claimed her praise, recognized the mighty works of God, accepted circumcision, and was incorporated in the house of Israel forever (Jdt 14:6-10).

ACHISH King of the Philistine city of Gath. Although David had killed Goliath, Gath's champion (1 Sm 17), David later fled from Saul to Achish's court. Realizing his mistake, David pretended to be crazy in order to preserve his life. His feigned madness caused Achish to throw him out (1 Sm 21:10-15), but later when David came back to Gath with a band of 600 guerrilla fighters, Achish gave him the city of Ziklag as a base of operations (1 Sm 27:1-7). Achish thought David's men were raiding the Israelites, not realizing they were actually wiping out Philistine towns (1 Sm 27:8-12).

ACHMETHA* KJV form of Ecbatana, a Persian city, in Ezra 6:2. *See* Ecbatana.

ACHOR Valley that received its name when Achan, the troubler of Israel, was stoned and burned there (Jos 7:24-26; cf. 1 Chr 2:7). Achor was on the northern boundary of Judah's tribal allotment (Jos 15:7). Later, the valley is mentioned in prophecies of Israel's future blessings. A valley once known as the scene of Israel's trouble would become "a door of hope" and a place for joyful singing (Hos 2:15); a place of relative desolation would one day become a place for herds to lie down (Is 65:10). The valley of Achor is commonly identified as the Buqei'ah.

ACHSA*, ACHSAH* Caleb's daughter (1 Chr 2:49). Othniel, Caleb's nephew, accepted his uncle's challenge to capture Kiriath-sepher in order to marry Achsah. She persuaded Othniel to ask her father, Caleb, for a field, and she herself asked Caleb for two springs of water, a necessity for life in the desert (Jos 15:16-19; Jgs 1:12-15).

ACHSHAPH* Canaanite royal city in Joshua's time. Its king joined an alliance led by Jabin, king of Hazor, against Israel in a battle at the springs of Merom (Jos 11:1). After Israel's decisive victory, Achshaph's king was one of 31 Canaanite kings conquered by Joshua (Jos 12:20), fulfilling God's promise to deliver kings into Israel's hand (Dt 7:24). The city was subsequently assigned to Asher's tribe for an inheritance (Jos 19:25).

ACHZIB* KJV form of Aczib. *See* Aczib.

ACRA* Citadel of Jerusalem during the Seleucid and Hasmonean periods. The citadel was located on a high point near the temple. An exceptionally strong fortress, the Acra housed the garrison and controlled the city throughout the Maccabean wars. The Seleucid government considered the Acra a royal stronghold to be administered separately from the rest of Judea. At times, one armed force held the Acra and its opponent held the city itself, so that the fortress almost became an independent city. Josephus made mention of two forts called Acra. The earlier citadel was captured by Antiochus III in 198 BC. That Acra must be identical with the temple fortress of the Persian and Ptolemaic periods, the "castle" of Nehemiah 7:2 (RSV). The site later became the fortress called Antonia in the Roman period.

A new citadel, the Acra proper, was later built by the Seleucids. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ruled 175-164 BC), after a humiliating defeat in Alexandria by the Romans, decided to abolish all Jewish worship practices. In 167 BC, he violated the most sacred Jewish laws by constructing an altar to the Greek god Zeus in the temple at Jerusalem and perhaps by sacrificing a pig on it (1 Macc 1:20-64;



The Acropolis in Athens with the Parthenon

2 Macc 6:1-6). The next year Antiochus sent a garrison to build the Acra and maintain his religious reforms, primarily to see that no aspect of the Jewish religion was practiced in the city. The Acra also served as a storehouse for food and loot plundered from the city. The Jews considered it “an ambush against the sanctuary, an evil adversary of Israel continually” (1 Macc 1:36).

Josephus reported that Simon, the second of the Maccabean brothers, captured the Acra in 142 BC and spent three years leveling both the fort and the hill on which it stood. Josephus’s account is questioned, however, because other accounts mention Simon as ritually cleansing the citadel and using it to maintain the city’s security (see 1 Macc 13:50; 14:37).

ACRABA Site where a contingent of the Edomite-Ammonite division of Holofernes’ army was stationed during the siege of Bethulia (Jdt 7:18). Acraba was probably located about 10 miles (16 kilometers) southeast of Shechem, modern Nablus.

ACRE Measure of an area of land. Literally, the Hebrew word means “yoke” and probably refers to the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plow in a day. *See* Weights and Measures.

ACROCORINTH* Massive, precipitous hilltop 1,886 feet (575 meters) above sea level to the south of the ancient city of Corinth. It overlooked the Isthmus of Corinth and controlled land traffic between central Greece and the Peloponesus, as well as sea traffic from Italy passing to the east through the Gulf of Corinth and the Saronic Gulf.

The temple of Aphrodite on the summit was unjustly notorious in antiquity. The geographer Strabo (c. AD 20) said that 1,000 prostitutes served at the temple during Greece’s golden age. The Athenians may have perpetuated the myth of Corinthian licentiousness. “Not every man’s ship is bound for Corinth” was a common saying among the ancient Greeks. Modern scholars tend to discount Strabo’s statement, though it still influences interpretation of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. It is possible that the Corinthians were no less moral than

the residents of other cities of mainland Greece. Even Strabo could find only a small temple of Aphrodite, of which there are virtually no archaeological remains.

ACROPOLIS* This term is a combination of the Greek *akros* (“highest”) *polis* (“city”), which originally applied to any fortified natural stronghold or citadel in ancient Greece. The typical acropolis was built on a hill as a place of refuge. The slopes and base of the hill often became the site of a city. The acropolis of Athens was surmounted by the Parthenon, a Doric temple for Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom. Built in the fifth century BC, it is the masterpiece of Greek architecture. Acts 17:34 records that Paul preached at the Areopagus (“hill of Ares”), a low hill northwest of the acropolis and there converted a member of the Athenian council.

ACROSTIC* Poetic composition in which the first letters of successive lines or stanzas spell out the alphabet, a word, or a motto. The Hebrew prophets and poets often used an alphabetical acrostic as a poetic or mnemonic (memory) device (see Pss 9; 10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145; Prv 31:10-31; Lam 1-4; Na 1).

ACSAH *See* Achsa, Achsah.

ACSHAPH *See* Achshaph.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, Book of the NT book presenting the history of the early church and written as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. In the arrangement of the NT books, Acts comes after the four Gospels and before the Epistles.

P R E V I E W

- Author
 - Date, Origin, Destination
 - Background and Content
 - Purpose
-

Author The book of Acts does not state clearly who its writer is, but the general consensus is that Luke was its author.

Early church tradition from the second century states that Acts (as well as the third Gospel) was written by a traveling companion and fellow worker of the apostle Paul. That companion is identified in Colossians 4:14 as "Luke, the beloved physician" (NASB) and mentioned among Paul's coworkers (Col 4:10-17; see also 2 Tm 4:11; Phlm 1:24).

Strong support for the tradition that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul comes from the second half of the book recounting Paul's ministry. There, several narratives are told in the first person plural:

1. "That night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia in northern Greece, pleading with him, 'Come over here and help us.' So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, for we could only conclude that God was calling us to preach the Good News there" (16:9-10, NLT).
2. "They went ahead and waited for us at Troas . . . we boarded a ship at Philippi in Macedonia and five days later arrived in Troas, where we stayed a week" (20:5-6, NLT).
3. "When the time came, we set sail for Italy" (27:1, NLT).

These "we" sections (16:9-18; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16) sound like part of a travel narrative or diary written by an eyewitness who accompanied Paul from Troas to Philippi on his second missionary journey; from Philippi to Miletus on the third; from Miletus to Jerusalem; and from Caesarea to Rome. Since the style and vocabulary of these travel narratives resemble those of the rest of the book, it is highly probably that the diarist was also the author of the entire book.

The sophisticated literary style and polished use of the Greek language in the book, as well as the fact that it is addressed to someone called Theophilus (possibly a high-ranking Roman official), provide strong support for the tradition that Luke was a gentile convert to Christianity. His consistent and frequent use of the Greek OT may indicate that he had been a gentile "God-fearer" before conversion to the new faith.

Date, Origin, Destination The question of the date and place of the origin of Acts continues to be debated.

There are no clear indications in the book itself. With regard to its destination, however, Luke did not leave any doubt. In the opening verse he addresses a certain Theophilus, to whom he had already written an earlier book about the life of Jesus. There can be no doubt that he was referring to the work we know as the Gospel of Luke. In the preface to that Gospel (Lk 1:1-4), Luke clearly stated his purpose for writing and addressed his account to the "most honorable Theophilus." It is not clear who that person was. Some interpreters think that Theophilus (which means "dear to God" or "lover of God") stands for Christian readers in general rather than any specific individual. However, the designation "most honorable" argues against such an assumption. That ascription was a common title of honor, designating a person with official standing in the Roman sociopolitical order (cf. use of the title for Felix, Acts 23:26; 24:2; and for Festus, 26:25). It is thus likely that Luke intended his two-volume work for an official representative of Roman society.

When was Acts written? Some scholars date it in the last quarter of the first century. Since the Gospel was written first, and since Luke based his story of Jesus on eyewitness accounts and written sources (among which was possibly the Gospel of Mark, probably written in the 60s), Acts should not be dated much before AD 85. Proponents of such a late date claim support from the theology of Acts, which they see as picturing a Christian church settled into history, adjusted to the prospect of a lengthy period before the Lord's return. Since expectation of the Lord's imminent return was fanned into a living flame by the Jewish revolt and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, time must be allowed for that flame to have died down a bit.

Other scholars date Acts around AD 70 or shortly thereafter. The Jewish rebellion of AD 66–70, which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, brought the Jewish faith—legal until then—into disrepute. The Christian movement, which had been accepted as a Jewish sect, became suspect. Christians were increasingly charged with being enemies of Rome. A study of Acts shows that among a number of purposes (see below), Luke seems to have been defending the Christians against the charge of hostility toward the state. He

Key Places in

Acts The apostle Paul, whose missionary journeys fill much of this book, traveled tremendous distances as he tirelessly spread the gospel across much of the Roman Empire. His combined trips, by land and ship, equal more than 13,000 miles (20,917 meters).



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.