

# The Baker COMPACT BIBLE Dictionary

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# Contents

Preface vii

Contributors ix

Abbreviations xiii

A 1	N 243
B 31	O 251
C 60	P 257
D 87	Q 278
E 95	R 279
F 113	S 298
G 126	T 329
H 146	U 341
I 168	V 344
J 180	W 347
K 203	X 361
L 209	Y 362
M 221	Z 363



# Preface

Christians read the Bible because the triune God has revealed himself to us through these pages. We worship God, not the Bible, but we learn about who God is and what pleases him through these divinely inspired words. We not only learn about God, but also about ourselves and, using the language of Jesus' parable of the sower (Mark 4:1–20), the word of God, like a seed, if planted in the rich soil of a receptive heart and mind, will transform the lives of those who read it.

The main message of the Bible is clear and easy to understand. God created everything, including us, but we rebelled against him. We need a savior, and that savior is Jesus Christ. That said, though the main message is clear, the Bible is not always easy to understand. We encounter many strange names, places, customs, and concepts. *The Baker Compact Bible Dictionary* is a handy tool that can help the interested reader gain the knowledge necessary to read the Bible with clarity of understanding.

The *Compact Bible Dictionary* is a shorter version composed of the most important entries from the much larger *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Thus, the same team that produced the *BIBD* is to be thanked for the work

that led to the *Compact Dictionary*. I served as the general editor and made the choices of which articles to include in the *Compact Dictionary* and also helped make them, well, more compact. Mark Strauss and Peter Enns were the New Testament and Old Testament editors of the *BIBD* respectively. Well over one hundred contributors wrote the articles that compose both these reference works and I thank them heartily for their labors.

I also want to express my appreciation to Baker Publishing Group. Jack Kuhatschek, my longtime friend, initiated the project by inviting me to be editor. I also want to thank Brian Vos and James Korsmo for their work on this project. The latter in particular was extremely helpful in his close reading of the text that helped us avoid many mistakes. That said, as general editor, any remaining errors are my responsibility.

My sincere prayer and hope is that this tool will help you, its user, to read the Bible with understanding so that you may come to know God even better.

Tremper Longman III  
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# Abbreviations

## General

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//	parallels
Aram.	Aramaic
c.	circa
cf.	confer
chap(s).	chapter(s)
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
e.g.	for example
esp.	especially
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
i.e.	that is
Lat.	Latin
lit.	literally
LXX	Septuagint
mg.	margin
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
par(s).	parallel(s)
r.	reigned

## Bible Versions

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ESV	English Standard Version
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
KJV	King James Version
MSG	<i>The Message</i>
NAB	New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version

## Apocrypha and Septuagint

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Jdt.	Judith
1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees

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Sir.	Sirach
Tob.	Tobit

## Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

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<i>Let. Aris.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sybilline Oracles</i>
<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>

## Dead Sea Scrolls

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11Q13	11QMelchizedek
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## Rabbinic Tractates

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<i>m.</i>	<i>Mishnah</i>
<i>Roš. Haš.</i>	<i>Rosh HaShanah</i>

## Apostolic Fathers

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1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>

## Greek and Latin Works

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### Herodotus

<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae (Histories)</i>
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### Josephus

<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>

### Ovid

<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
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### Philo

<i>Embassy</i>	<i>On the Embassy to Gaius</i>
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### Pliny the Elder

<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis historia (Natural History)</i>
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**AARON**—Aaron was Moses' older brother and his close associate during the days when God used both of them to establish his people Israel as a nation. Aaron's particular importance came when God selected him to be the first high priest of Israel.

Aaron plays a supportive role in the Exodus account of the plagues and the departure from Egypt. He was at Moses' side. As previously arranged, Aaron was the spokesperson, acting as a prophet to Moses, who was "like God to Pharaoh" (Exod. 7:1).

The event of greatest significance involving Aaron in the wilderness was his appointment as high priest. The divine mandate for his installation is recorded in Exod. 28. Aaron did not fare well on the one occasion when he acted independently from Moses. While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the two tablets of the law from the hand of God, Aaron gave in to the people's request to make a calf idol out of golden earrings that they gave him.

In spite of Aaron's sin, God did not remove him from his priestly responsibilities (thanks to the prayers of Moses [Deut. 9:20]), the height of which was to preside over the annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). The incident of the golden calf was not the only occasion when Aaron tried God's patience. According to Num. 12, Aaron and his sister, Miriam, contested Moses' leadership. Using his marriage to a Cushite woman as a pretext, Moses' siblings asserted their equality. God, however, put them in their place, affirming Moses' primacy.

Other tribal leaders questioned Aaron's priestly leadership, according to Num. 17. Moses told all the tribal leaders to place their walking staffs along with Aaron's before God at the tent of testimony. God showed his favor toward Aaron by causing his staff to bud.

Both Moses and Aaron forfeited their right to enter the land of promise when they usurped the Lord's authority as they brought water from the rock in the wilderness (Num. 20:1–13). Sick and tired of the people's complaining, Moses wrongly ascribed the ability to make water come from the rock to himself and Aaron, and rather than speaking to the rock, he struck it twice. For this, God told them that they would die in the wilderness. Aaron's death is reported soon after this occasion (Num. 20:22–27).

In the NT, the most significant use of Aaron is in comparison to Jesus Christ, the ultimate high priest. Interestingly, the book of Hebrews argues that Jesus far surpassed the priestly authority of Aaron by connecting his priesthood to Melchizedek, a mysterious non-Israelite priest who blesses God and Abram in Gen. 14 (see Heb. 7:1–14).

**AARON'S ROD**—Aaron's rod is his wooden walking stick, which had a significant role in the accounts of the plagues of Egypt. In Moses and Aaron's first confrontation with Pharaoh, Aaron threw his rod to the ground, and it turned into a snake. Although the Egyptian magicians could mimic this act, Aaron's snake swallowed the snakes produced by their rods, thus showing the superiority of Aaron's God over their false gods (Exod. 7:8–13). Aaron used his rod by either extending it or striking the ground in order to initiate other plagues as well. Interestingly, Aaron's rod was featured in the early plagues, whereas Moses used his rod in some of the later and more powerful plagues as well as in the crossing of the Red Sea, perhaps showing Moses' prominence (9:23 [hail], 10:13 [locusts], 14:16 [Red Sea]).

The rod was not a magical wand but rather a symbol of the presence of God. It is best to

understand the rod as related to a tree that stands for God's presence. It is a portable tree.

**ABADDON**—A transliteration of the Hebrew word for “destruction,” signifying the grave or the underworld (Rev. 9:11).

**ABANA**—A river in the region of Damascus mentioned by the Syrian general Naaman as surpassing the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:12).

**ABBA**—An Aramaic term for “father,” used three times in the NT (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:5; Gal. 4:6), always coupled with its Greek equivalent, *patēr*. A term of endearment used to refer to God, it demonstrates that the speaker has an intimate, loving relationship with God.

**ABEDNEGO**—The Babylonian name given to Azariah, one of Daniel's three friends, by Nebuchadnezzar's chief official, Ashpenaz, as part of an attempt to turn him into a Babylonian official (Dan. 1:7).

**ABEL**—The name of Cain's brother. As Adam and Eve's second son, he is mentioned in Gen. 4:2–9 (also v. 25) as the murdered brother of Cain, who slew him out of anger at his being more favored by God for offering a better sacrifice. He is not mentioned again until the Gospels (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51), where he is cast as the first representative of the “righteous blood” shed on earth. In Heb. 11:4 an explanation is given for why Abel's sacrifice was favored over Cain's: it was offered in faith. In Heb. 12:24 Abel's blood is contrasted with Christ's. The nature of the contrast is not made explicit, but the context suggests that whereas both Christ and Abel were innocent, it is Christ's shed blood that is efficacious to mediate the new covenant.

**ABIATHAR**—A high priest, son of Ahimelek, first mentioned in 1 Sam. 22:20, when he escaped Saul's slaughter of the priests of Nob. He took refuge with David in the cave of Adullam and, having escaped with the ephod (1 Sam. 23:6–12), became the high priest after David's reign was established. When Absalom rebelled against David, Abiathar remained supportive (2 Sam. 15). Later, however, he supported Adonijah rather than Solomon as David's successor, which led to his banishment to his hometown, Anathoth, by Solomon, thus fulfilling Eli's prophecy (1 Sam. 2:30–35; 1 Kings 2:26–27). He is mentioned once in the NT,

Mark 2:26, where Jesus recounts when David took the showbread to feed his men “in the days of Abiathar the high priest.”

**ABIGAIL**—The wife of Nabal, a wealthy man from Carmel (1 Sam. 25). While David was hiding from Saul in the desert, he sent a word of greeting to Nabal to ask for some food. This would have been a gesture of good faith on Nabal's part, since his servants had been treated well by David and his men (vv. 7, 15–16). Nabal treated David's request and his ten messengers with disrespect, so David intended to retaliate, even swearing that not a male would be left alive among Nabal's people (vv. 21–22). Thinking quickly, and without telling Nabal, Abigail prepared food and brought it to David. She pleaded with David not to shed any blood, which would be to act like the foolish Nabal (“Nabal” in Hebrew means “fool” [v. 25]). She asked for forgiveness on Nabal's behalf, spoke of the Lord's favor on David's “lasting dynasty” (v. 28), and said that she wished to be remembered when David's current status was behind him and his rule was established (v. 31). David was persuaded by her words. Abigail then returned home and reported to Nabal what she had done. Upon hearing the news, his heart failed and he became “like a stone” for ten days, and then God struck him dead (vv. 37–38). David rejoiced at hearing the news and then made Abigail his wife.

**ABIHU**—The second of Aaron's four sons (Exod. 6:23). He and his older brother, Nadab, were allowed to approach the Lord on Mount Sinai with Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders (Exod. 24:1, 9). He and his three brothers (the younger two were Eleazar and Ithamar) were made Israel's first priests (Exod. 28:1). He and Nadab “offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command,” so they were consumed by fire (Lev. 10:1–2; cf. Num. 3:4; 26:61; 1 Chron. 24:2).

**ABIJAH**—(1) Samuel's second son, who, along with his older brother Joel, served as judge in Beersheba, but whose corruption drove Israel's elders to ask Samuel to appoint a king (1 Sam. 8:2–5). (2) Son of Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom (930–909 BC). He died as a boy, in accordance with Ahijah's prophecy, because of Jeroboam's idolatry (1 Kings 14:1–18). (3) Son of Rehoboam, called “Abijam” in 1 Kings 15:1–8. He was the second king of the southern kingdom (913–910 BC).

**ABIJAM**—See Abijah.

**ABILENE**—A region in Syria named after its chief town, Abila, located about eighteen miles northwest of Damascus. Luke reports that at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry the region was governed by Lysanias II (Luke 3:1) as one of four rulers in the Judea province (with Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, and Philip).

**ABIMELEK**—(1) The king of Gerar who took Sarah into his house, deceived by Abraham into thinking that she was Abraham's sister. God warned Abimelek of this in a dream, so he released her and made restitution to Abraham and Sarah. He is likely the same person mentioned in Gen. 21:22–24 as one who made a treaty with Abraham at Beersheba.

(2) The king of Gerar during Isaac's lifetime (Gen. 26:1–35) and likely a son or grandson of the Abimelek mentioned in 20:1–18. As in the earlier incident with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac passed his wife, Rebekah, off as his sister, causing Abimelek great concern when he found out the truth. Abimelek ordered his people to cause no harm to the couple.

(3) Son of Gideon and his concubine (Judg. 8:31). After Gideon's death he murdered his seventy brothers in an effort to consolidate power under himself in Shechem. The youngest of the brothers, Jotham, escaped and spoke a parable against the citizens of Shechem. Three years later they rebelled against Abimelek under Gaal, but Abimelek was successful in capturing Shechem and killing many of its residents. When he attacked Thebez, he was killed by women who dropped a millstone on his head. That incident is mentioned later in 2 Sam. 11:21 by Joab as he is preparing his messenger for possible criticism by David for his strategy in besieging Rabbah.

(4) The man before whom David pretended to be insane, according to the superscription to Ps. 34. If the incident of 1 Sam. 21:10–15 is in view, where Achish the king of Gath is named, then it is possible that "Ahimelek" is a title for Philistine kings.

**ABINADAB**—(1) The man in whose house the ark of the covenant rested for twenty years after it was returned by the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:1; 1 Chron. 13:7). (2) Son of Jesse and older brother of David who was passed over by Samuel when choosing a king (1 Sam. 16:8; 17:13; see also 1 Chron. 2:13).

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**ABISHAG**—A young Shunammite woman brought to David's bed in his old age to keep him warm (1 Kings 1:3, 15). After David's death, his son Adonijah asked to marry her (1 Kings 2:17), which was a declaration of his continued attempt to secure the throne (see 1 Kings 1), for which Solomon put him to death (1 Kings 2:23–25).

**ABISHAI**—Son of Zeruah, David's sister, and brother of Joab, David's general (1 Sam. 26:6; 1 Chron. 2:16), he was an accomplished soldier in David's army.

**ABNER**—Son of King Saul's uncle, Ner (1 Sam. 14:50–51). Abner was Saul's military commander. He maintained loyalty to the house of Saul during Saul's struggle with David. Upon Saul's death, Abner made Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king over the northern kingdom. In battle with David's forces, Abner killed Asahel, the brother of David's military commander, Joab (2 Sam. 2:17–23). Abner rallied support for David's kingship after Ish-Bosheth accused Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine (2 Sam. 3:7–13). Joab later murdered Abner to avenge his brother Asahel's death (3:22–27).

**ABOMINATION, ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**—Abomination is used of idols (e.g., 2 Kings 23:13, 24; Jer. 7:30; cf. Ezek. 8:10), forbidden practices (e.g., 2 Kings 23:24), and generally anything contrary to the true worship of Israel's God (e.g., 2 Chron. 15:8; Isa. 66:3; Jer. 4:1; cf. forbidden foods [Lev. 11:10, 13, 42] and ceremonial defilement [Lev. 7:21]). The term also includes the prohibition of idol worship (Deut. 7:25; 27:15; 32:16) but can more widely apply to immorality (e.g., Lev. 18:22, 26–27), prophecy that leads to paganism (Deut. 13:13–14), blemished animals offered in sacrifice to Yahweh (Deut. 17:1), and heathen divination (Deut. 18:9, 12).

The "abomination of desolation" (NIV: "abomination that causes desolation"), or "desolating sacrifice," refers to the desecration of the Jerusalem temple. The description occurs or is alluded to in Dan. 8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20; 2 Thess. 2:4, as well as 1 Macc. 1:54–64. These texts seem to attest to two or three stages of fulfillment of the prophecy.

**ABRAHAM**—Abram is a well-known biblical character whose life is detailed in Gen.

11:25–25:11. Abram's name (which means "exalted father") is changed in Gen. 17:5 to "Abraham," meaning "father of many nations."

The narrative account in Genesis details one hundred years of Abraham's life and moves quickly through the first seventy-five years of events. In just a few verses (11:26–31) we learn that Abram was the son of Terah, the brother of Haran and Nahor, the husband of the barren Sarai (later Sarah), and the uncle of Lot, the son of Haran, who died in Ur of the Chaldees. The plot line marks significant events in Abraham's life chronologically. He left Haran at the age of 75 (12:4), was 86 when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (16:16), 99 when the Lord appeared to him (17:17) and when he was circumcised (17:24), 100 when Sarah gave birth to Isaac (21:5), and 175 when he died (25:7). In summary, the biblical narrator paces the reader quickly through the story in such a way as to highlight a twenty-five-year period of Abraham's life between the ages of 75 and 100.

The NT features Abraham in several significant ways. The intimate connection between God and Abraham is noted in the identification of God as "the God of Abraham" in Acts 7:32 (cf. Exod. 3:6). The NT also celebrates the character of Abraham as a man of faith who received the promise (Gal. 3:9; Heb. 6:15). Abraham is most importantly an example of how one is justified by faith (Rom. 4:1, 12) and an illustration of what it means to walk by faith (James 2:21, 23).

Those who exercise faith in the living God, as did Abraham, are referred to as "children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). Regarding the covenant promises made to Abraham in the OT, the NT writers highlight the promises of seed and blessing. According to Paul, the seed of Abraham is ultimately fulfilled in Christ, and those who believe in Christ are the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 29). In a similar way, those who have Abraham-like faith are blessed (3:9). The blessing imparted to Abraham comes to the Gentiles through the redemption of Christ and is associated with the impartation of the Spirit (3:14).

**ABRAM**—See Abraham.

**ABSALOM**—The third of David's sons, born in Hebron while David was king of Judah alone. He plays a prominent role in the violence that overtook David following his murder of Uriah (2 Sam. 11). Absalom's sister Tamar was raped

by his older half brother Amnon (13:1–19), and two years later he ordered his men to murder Amnon (13:23–33) before fleeing to Geshur. Joab convinced David to restore him (14:1–21). David snubbed him on his return, and he later rebelled against David, coming close to toppling him before being killed by Joab in the forest of Ephraim after his hair became caught in a tree (18:9–15).

**ABYSS**—In the NT, "abyss" refers to the world of the dead (Rom. 10:7; KJV, NIV: "deep") and especially the subterranean prison of disobedient spirits (fallen angels?; Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1–2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1–3).

**ACHAIA**—Achaia is a region along the northern coast of the Peloponnese, the southern peninsula of Greece. Paul's letters to the Corinthians were sent to this region (1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 1:1). In the NT, the term also has a broader meaning, so that the phrase "Macedonia and Achaia" refers inclusively to all of Greece (Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:26; 1 Thess. 1:7–8).

**ACHAN**—A Judahite who disobeyed Joshua and kept for himself some of the plunder from Jericho (Josh. 7:1, 21). Achan's sin was discovered after the Israelite army was defeated by the men of Ai (7:4–21). He was stoned and burned along with his family and possessions (7:25–26). The place where he was killed was known as the Valley of Achor, the valley of "trouble" (Josh. 7:26).

**ACHISH**—A Philistine, king of Gath. When David sought sanctuary at Gath by pretending to be insane, Achish turned him away (1 Sam. 21:10–15). When Saul continued to persecute David, David and his men allied themselves with Achish, who gave David the city of Ziklag (27:1–6).

**ACHOR**—A valley in northern Judea (Josh. 15:7). Achor was the place where judgment was rendered to Achan after he stole plunder from Jericho (Josh. 7:24–26). The prophets envision the transformation of Achor into a verdant area (Isa. 65:10; Hos. 2:15).

**ACROPOLIS**—An acropolis (lit., "high city") is the elevated portion of an ancient city, typically containing temples, palaces, or other public architecture. The most famous acropolis in the Greco-Roman world was



that of Athens, where the Parthenon stands. Paul preached within sight of the Athenian acropolis, already ancient by his time, on the nearby Areopagus during his visit to the city (Acts 17:19–34).

**ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**—This book, commonly referred to simply as Acts, is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke and records the exciting history of the first three decades of the early church. The book begins with the ascension of Jesus, followed by his sending of the Holy Spirit, and ends with the gospel message being proclaimed by Paul as a prisoner in the capital city of the Roman Empire. In the pages in between, the reader is introduced to the key people, places, and events of this strategic and crucial time of Christian history.

In terms of authorship, the book technically is anonymous; however, there are good reasons for holding to church history's traditional view that its author is Luke. The specific recipient of Acts is Theophilus (1:1). Theophilus could be characterized as a relatively new believer of high social status, a person educated in Greco-Roman rhetoric and history, and one who possessed the financial means to promote and publish Luke's work (both the Gospel of Luke and Acts).

**Witnesses in Jerusalem (Acts 1:1–8:3).** Immediately following his ascension, Jesus tells his followers to return to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They promptly obey, and after ten days of waiting, the disciples are dramatically filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to share the gospel with those around them. This event occurs at the Jewish Pentecost festival, which was attended by Jews and Jewish proselytes from throughout the Roman Empire. After the Spirit comes at Pentecost, Peter boldly preaches to the crowds, and over three thousand people respond with saving faith (2:41).

Luke next provides a summary of the Spirit-led life within the early church. This life is characterized by the early believers' participation together in the sharing of worship activities, material possessions, and spiritual blessings (2:42–47). This summary is followed by several dramatic healing miracles accomplished through Peter and the subsequent arrest of Christian leaders by Jewish religious authorities. Instead of squelching the Christian movement, however, these arrests only enhance the spiritual revival and its accompanying miracles. This revival is characterized by extreme

generosity and unity within the early church (4:32–37).

The revival joy, however, is marred by the deceitful actions of Ananias and Sapphira, who lie to the church and to the Holy Spirit and are judged by God with immediate death (5:1–11). This story proves that God will go to extreme lengths to protect the unity of his church. Following more persecution and miracles, the disciples choose seven men to oversee distribution of food to Hellenistic widows who have been neglected in daily food distributions (6:1–7). One of these leaders, Stephen, is arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. Stephen testifies boldly before the Jewish leaders and is promptly executed by stoning (chap. 7). This execution is endorsed by Saul, a zealous Pharisee who begins to lead fierce persecution against the church in Jerusalem (8:1–3).

**Witnesses in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:4–12:25).** Saul's persecution forces many of the early church believers to leave Jerusalem. These believers scatter throughout the surrounding areas of Judea and Samaria. As they scatter, however, they continue to preach the gospel (8:4). Philip preaches in Samaria and performs many miraculous signs, producing a spiritual revival in the region. Hearing about this, the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria to minister to the Samaritans (8:18–25), thus confirming the cross-cultural nature of the gospel (Samaritans traditionally were hated by the Jews). Next Luke tells of Philip's evangelizing of an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40).

Following the Ethiopian's belief in Jesus, the narrative tells of Saul's dramatic conversion while traveling to Damascus to persecute Christians there (9:1–19). Saul's turnaround is met with suspicion by the other disciples, but eventually he is accepted by the believers with the help of Barnabas (9:27–30). Next Peter travels to the Judean countryside and heals the paralytic Aeneas and raises Dorcas from the dead (9:32–42). These miracles produce a spiritual revival in the region. Following this, God gives Peter a vision to go to the coastal city of Caesarea in order to minister to Cornelius, a Roman army officer. Cornelius is a God-fearer, and through Peter's witness he responds to the gospel message and receives the Holy Spirit (chap. 10). Peter explains his actions with Cornelius to his concerned Jewish companions and verifies that God has indeed included the Gentiles in his plan of salvation (11:1–18).

This verification is followed by the report of what is happening in the church at Antioch, where Jews begin to share the gospel with larger groups of Gentiles (11:19–21). This cross-cultural evangelism produces a spiritual revival in Antioch, causing the Jerusalem church to send Barnabas to the large Syrian city to investigate (11:22–30). Barnabas confirms that God is indeed at work in Antioch and invites Saul to come and help him disciple the new Gentile believers (11:25–26). Next Luke reports more persecution breaking out against Christians in Jerusalem, resulting in the arrest of James and Peter by King Herod. James is executed, but Peter miraculously escapes from prison with the help of an angel (12:1–19), and the church continues to increase, spreading throughout the Roman Empire.

**Witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 13:1–28:31).** Starting with chapter 13, the narrative shifts its focus from the ministry of Peter to that of Paul (formerly Saul). The church at Antioch begins to take center stage over the church at Jerusalem. This church commissions Paul and Barnabas and sends them off on their first missionary journey, accompanied by Barnabas's cousin John Mark. The missionaries first sail to Cyprus, where they preach in synagogues and encounter a Jewish sorcerer, Bar-Jesus. Next they sail to Pamphylia, thus crossing into Asia Minor, and preach the gospel in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (this area was known as part of the region of Galatia). In these cities, God provides numerous miracles, and the missionaries experience a great response to the gospel as well as much persecution because of the gospel. On one occasion, Paul is actually stoned and left for dead (14:19–20).

Unfazed, Paul and his team boldly continue their mission. Eventually, they retrace their steps, strengthen the churches that they have started, and sail back to Syrian Antioch, where they give an exciting report to the church (14:26–28). Following this report, Luke tells of an important meeting of church leaders in Jerusalem (the Apostolic or Jerusalem Council). The subject of the meeting involves whether or not the new Gentile Christians should be required to follow the Jewish laws and customs. After debating the issue, the leaders side with Paul, determining that the Gentiles should not be burdened with Jewish laws and traditions, but simply must live moral lives and not eat food that has been sacrificed to idols (chap. 15).

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Following this meeting, Paul and Barnabas decide to make a second missionary journey. Unfortunately, the two missionaries get into a dispute over whether to take John Mark with them again. The argument is such that the missionaries decide to separate, and Paul chooses a new partner, Silas. They travel by land back to Galatia. Barnabas takes John Mark and sails to Cyprus. Paul and Silas return to Derbe and Lystra and then make their way to Macedonia and Greece. They spend significant time in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth before returning to Caesarea and Antioch (chaps. 16–18). Following his return, Paul makes a third missionary journey, revisiting churches in Galatia and Phrygia and staying in Ephesus for three years before visiting Macedonia and Greece for a second time.

Paul concludes his third missionary journey with a trip to Jerusalem, where he is falsely accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple. This accusation creates a riot, and Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers, who arrest him and transfer him to a prison in Caesarea, where he spends two years awaiting trial under the rule of Felix and Festus (23:34–25:22). Paul eventually exercises his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard by the emperor. He is sent to Rome by boat and is shipwrecked on the island of Malta. Eventually he makes his way to the capital city, where he is placed under house arrest. While in Rome, Paul maintains a rented house and is free to receive visitors and write letters. In fact, it is thought that Paul penned his “prison letters” during this time of house arrest (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon). The narrative of Acts ends with Paul ministering boldly in Rome while awaiting his trial.

**ADAM**—See Adam and Eve.

**ADAM, TOWN OF**—A town on the western bank of the Jordan River near Zarethan, just below where the Jabbok River empties into the Jordan. It was here that the waters of the Jordan stopped so that the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua could cross into Canaan further to the south, opposite Jericho (Josh. 3:14–17).

**ADAM AND EVE**—The first human beings. According to Gen. 2, God created Adam (whose name means “humanity” and is related to the word for “ground”) from the dust of the ground and his own breath, showing

that humankind is a part of creation but has a special relationship with God. God placed Adam in a garden in Eden (a name that means “delight” or “abundance”). Even so, God, noting that it was not good for Adam to be alone, created Eve (whose name means “living”), his female counterpart. She was created from Adam’s side (or rib), signifying their equality. She was to be his “helper,” a word that does not denote subordination. Eve was Adam’s wife, and God pronounced that future marriage will be characterized by leaving one’s parents, being joined as a couple, and consummating the relationship with sexual intercourse (Gen. 2:24).

Adam and Eve were to tend the garden of Eden. They were permitted to eat the fruit of all the trees of the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eating the fruit of this tree, against God’s express prohibition, would be an assertion of moral independence that would meet with God’s punishment.

In Gen. 3 the serpent convinced Eve that it would be good to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam was present with her as the serpent spoke, but he remained silent. After eating the fruit, Eve gave some to Adam, and he ate without protest. Both Adam and Eve were therefore guilty of the first sin. The results were immediate, including the alienation of Adam and Eve, signaled by the fact that they could no longer stand naked before each other without shame.

Adam and Eve were punished for their rebellion. Eve was punished in her most intimate relationships. She would now experience increased pain when giving birth, and her relationship with her husband would become a power struggle as her desire to control him would be met with his attempt to dominate her (Gen. 3:16). Adam felt the consequences of his action in his work, which now would be tinged with frustration (3:17–19). In addition, although they did not die immediately, they were removed from the garden and access to the tree of life, so death would be their ultimate end.

After Adam and Eve departed from the garden, they had children. We know of Cain and Abel, whose conflict is well known from Gen. 4. After the death of Abel, Eve gave birth to Seth.

In the NT, Adam is mentioned in the Lukan genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:38) and in Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Tim. 2:13–14; Jude 14. In Romans, Paul associates Adam with the

entry of sin and death into the world. Paul contrasts Adam with Christ. Whereas Adam’s act introduced sin and death, Christ’s act brought reconciliation with God and life. Paul makes essentially the same point in 1 Cor. 15 (see esp. vv. 22, 45). Christians thus read Gen. 3 through the commentary supplied by Paul and believe that it supports the notion of original sin, that all humans are sinners from birth.

Eve is mentioned twice in the NT. In 1 Tim. 2:11–15 Paul argues that women should learn quietly and not teach or have authority over men because Eve was created after Adam and was the one deceived by the serpent. Debate surrounds the issue whether Paul here addresses a local situation or is citing a universal principle. Paul again mentions the deception of Eve in 2 Cor. 11:3, but here he applies it to men and women who are in danger of being deceived by false teachers.

**ADONI-BEZEK**—The leader of Bezek who was defeated by men of the tribes of Judah and Simeon early in the conquest of Canaan.

**ADONIJAH**—David’s fourth son, a rival to Solomon for the succession to David’s throne. When David became old, Adonijah strengthened his claim on the throne greatly by garnering the support of Joab and Abiathar (1 Kings 1:7), whose support Absalom had failed to win in his earlier rebellion. When David heard of Adonijah’s actions, he instructed his leaders to install Solomon as king in Gihon, which they did so loudly that Adonijah and his supporters were able to hear the commotion at their own feast (1:33–41). Solomon mercifully chose not to kill Adonijah for his treason (1:50–53). The peace between Solomon and Adonijah quickly came to an end when Adonijah requested that Abishag the Shunammite, a virgin attendant of David, be given to him as a wife. Solomon then ordered Benaiah to kill Adonijah.

**ADONI-ZEDEK**—The Amorite king of Jerusalem who organized a five-city coalition to attack the city of Gibeon after its capitulation to Joshua (Josh. 10:1–3).

**ADOPTION**—The voluntary process of granting the rights, privileges, responsibilities, and status of child or heir to an individual or group that was not originally born to the adopter. While birth occurs naturally, adoption occurs only through the exertion of will. Two

significant figures in the OT were adopted, Moses (Exod. 2:10) and Esther (Esther 2:7).

Although adoption is fairly uncommon in the OT, God's adoption of Israel is of the utmost importance. It demonstrates God's willingness to initiate relationship with humankind, a truth that later culminated in Jesus Christ. God chooses to adopt the nation of Israel as his child (Deut. 7:6; Isa. 1:2; Hos. 11:1) and more significantly as his firstborn son (Exod. 4:22; Jer. 31:9).

The concept of adoption is more prevalent in the NT, primarily in the apostle Paul's writings. Based on the belief that Israel's exclusive position as the adopted firstborn son of God the Father is no longer deserved, the NT includes those who believe in Jesus Christ as adopted children of God's eternal family (John 1:12; 11:52; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1). The adopted children of God enjoy all the rights of a natural-born child, including the opportunity to call God "Father," as Jesus did (e.g., Matt. 5:16; Luke 12:32). Paul in particular uses adoption to describe the Christian's new relationship with God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:15–16, 21–23; 9:25–26).

**ADRAMMELEK**—(1) A god of the people of Sepharvaim. After the exile of the northern kingdom, the king of Assyria transplanted people from all over his empire into the territory that he had taken from the Israelites. Each of these people groups "made its own gods in the several towns where they settled" (2 Kings 17:29). Those people who had been transplanted from Sepharvaim established worship of Adrammelek and Anammelek in former Israelite territory by sacrificing their own children in fire (2 Kings 17:31).

(2) One of the sons of the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib who, along with his brother Sharezer, assassinated his father in the temple of Nisrok and escaped to the land of Ararat.

**ADRAMYTIIUM**—See Asia Minor, Cities of.

**ADRIATIC SEA**—The Adriatic Sea is a portion of the Mediterranean Sea that separates Italy from Greece. It was in these waters that Paul found himself adrift for fourteen days during his trip to Rome to plead his case before Caesar (Acts 27:27).

**ADULLAM**—A city in the western foothills of Judah, located about fifteen miles southwest of

Jerusalem (Josh. 15:35). Prior to the conquest of Canaan, the patriarch Judah lived for some time in Adullam (Gen. 38:1–5). The Israelites conquered the city several hundred years later under Joshua (Josh. 12:15), and Rehoboam fortified the city after the division of Israel (2 Chron. 11:7). Adullam became a refuge for David both before and after his enthronement (1 Sam. 22:1–2; 2 Sam. 23:13–17).

Micah warned the people of Adullam and several nearby cities that disaster was imminent (Mic. 1:10–15); this materialized when Sennacherib captured all the fortified cities of Judah (Isa. 36:1). The Bible does not mention Adullam again until Nehemiah's returnees from exile reestablish an Israelite presence in the city during the time of Artaxerxes (Neh. 11:30).

**ADULTERY**—One of the sins forbidden in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18). Narrowly interpreted, the prohibition forbids extramarital relations with a married woman (Lev. 20:10), but it is applied more broadly in Lev. 20 and Deut. 22–24 to cover a variety of sexual offenses.

**ADVERSARY**—A human or heavenly opponent. Adversaries include David's soldiers (2 Sam. 19:22), David (1 Sam. 29:4), and God (Num. 22:22). God both raises up (1 Kings 11:14) and delivers one from (Ps. 107:2) adversaries. In Job, the adversary (Heb. *satan*) works for God (Job 1:7–12).

**ADVOCATE**—In John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 the term *paraklētos* (lit., "called alongside" [NRSV, NIV: "Advocate"; RSV: "Counselor"]) refers to the Holy Spirit, sent as the Spirit of truth. The advocacy roles of the Spirit are to remain with God's people; to teach, remind, and testify about Jesus; to convict the world of guilt regarding sin; and to guide into all truth. In 1 John 2:1 Jesus is the *paraklētos* who speaks in defense of his children.

**AGABUS**—The only church-era prophet whose spoken words are recorded in Scripture. Agabus was one of a company of prophets who traveled from Jerusalem to the fledgling church at Antioch (Acts 11:27–28).

**AGAG**—A title used for the king of the Amalekites. When Balak king of Moab hired Balaam to curse the Israelites, Balaam blessed Israel in an oracle, including a prophecy that Israel's

king would “be greater than Agag” (Num. 24:7).

**AGAGITE**—Haman, the opponent of Mordecai, is identified as an Agagite (Esther 3:1, 10; 8:3, 5; 9:24). Given Mordecai’s descent from Kish, father of Saul (2:5), the term is intended to recall the Amalekite king (Agag) whom Saul spared (1 Sam. 15). *See also* Agag.

**AGRICULTURE**—For the biblical Israelites and their ancestors, agriculture was one of the primary expressions of subsistence in their economy and life. The priority of agricultural pursuits for Israel’s worldview is indicated in the fact that it was among the first mandates given by God to man in the garden (Gen. 1:28–29).

The primary produce of the biblical farmer included cereals (wheat, barley, millet), legumes (beans, peas), olives, and grapes. Less predominant crops included nuts (almonds, walnuts, pistachios), herbs (cumin, coriander, sesame), and vegetables (cucumbers, onions, greens). The production of the various crops was largely limited to certain geographic regions of Israel (such as the coastal plain or the plains of Moab) because much of the land was ill suited for agriculture, being rocky and arid.

The actual craft of agriculture involved the three steps of sowing, reaping, and threshing/production. The fields typically were plowed following the first autumn rains, and sowing lasted about two months. Harvest season lasted seven months in all. Cereal products went through the process of threshing, whereas fruits were immediately produced into wine or dried. The practice of threshing the grains mostly took place on threshing floors located adjacent to the fields. The threshing floors were designed as a circle, generally twenty-five to forty feet in diameter. Typically animals such as donkeys or oxen were driven around the floor as the grains were fed into their paths and subsequently crushed. The resulting broken husks were then thrown into the air, allowing the wind to carry away the chaff and producing a separated grain that could then be cleaned and processed for home use.

Besides playing a significant role in the practical matters of life, agricultural practices found numerous applications in the images and ideals of the biblical writers (Judg. 8:2; 9:8–15; Ezek. 17:6–10). The medium could be used to express both blessings and curses. Several texts point to the cursing of agricultural endeavors

as a punishment from God. Ceremonial defilement was a possibility if proper methodology in sowing seeds was not followed (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:9). Similarly, Yahweh’s assessment of Israel’s failure to uphold the covenant commitments could lead to disease, locust attacks, crop failure, and total loss of the land (Deut. 28:40; Joel 1:4; Amos 7:1). Conversely, agricultural bounty and blessings were also a part of covenant stipulations. Indeed, many of the offerings themselves were centered on agriculture (Lev. 2; Num. 18:8–32). Even the Sabbath rest itself was extended to matters of agriculture and care for the land (Lev. 25:1–7). Finally, the covenant saw some of the greatest benefits of life before Yahweh as being blessed through agricultural bounty (Deut. 28:22; Amos 9:13). In a few cases, agricultural imagery cut both ways. For instance, the vine was an image that could express judgment, care, and restoration in both Judaism and Christianity (Isa. 5:1–8; John 15:1–11). Despite the link between agricultural realities and the covenant, the Scriptures are very careful to distinguish Israel from the fertility cults of its Canaanite neighbors (1 Kings 18:17–40; Hos. 2:8–9). This distinction also seems to have found expression in certain NT texts (1 Cor. 6:15–20).

**AGRIPPA**—*See* Herod.

**AGUR**—The son of Jakeh whose oracle is recorded in Prov. 30. Agur directs his oracle to Ithiel and Ukal (Prov. 30:1; *see* NIV mg.).

**AHAB**—(1) Son of Omri, king of Israel, whom he succeeded, reigning for twenty-two years (871–852 BC). The summary of Ahab’s reign in 1 Kings 16:29–33 serves as a prologue to the Elijah narrative, identifying the issue that Elijah addressed: Ahab’s patronage of Baal at the instigation of his foreign wife, Jezebel. Ahab is condemned by the writer of 1 Kings in superlative terms (16:33).

(2) Son of Kolaiah, Ahab was a false prophet whom Jeremiah condemned in his letter to the exiles (Jer. 29:21–23).

**AHASUERUS**—*See* Xerxes.

**AHAVA**—A place in Babylonia to which a canal flowed (Ezra 8:15). Ezra’s camp on the Ahava Canal served as the launching point for his expedition to Jerusalem during the reign of the Persian king Artaxerxes (Ezra 8:31).

**AHAZ**—Son of Jotham, king of Judah, and father of Hezekiah. His reign is described in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chron. 28, and his confrontation by the prophet Isaiah in Isa. 7:1–17. Ahaz reigned for sixteen years (743–727 BC). He followed the syncretistic pagan practices of the Israelite kings. When besieged by the Syrian and Israelite kings, with the aim of replacing him with a puppet ruler (734 BC), he sent a massive tribute to elicit Assyrian protection (2 Kings 16:5–9). This resulted in pro-Assyrian religious compromise (16:10–18). The goal of Isaiah’s embassy to the fearful Ahaz was to encourage a response of faith (Isa. 7:9). Though Isaiah offered him any sign of his choosing, Ahaz masked his refusal in a facade of piety about not testing God (Isa. 7:10–12; cf. Deut. 6:16). The hypocritical Ahaz did not want a sign because he had no intention of trusting God in this national crisis. The exasperated prophet responded by announcing the sign of Immanuel.

**AHAZIAH**—(1) Ahaziah became the eighth king over the northern kingdom of Israel after his father, Ahab, died in battle (1 Kings 22:40). He reigned for only two years (852–851 BC) and he served and worshiped Baal (22:51–53).

(2) Ahaziah the son of Jehoram became the sixth king of Judah around 843 BC. During his one-year reign he “did evil in the eyes of the LORD” (2 Kings 8:27). He became an ally of King Jehoram (Joram) of Israel against King Hazael of Aram, but both were killed in Jehu’s revolt (8:28–29; 9:16–29).

**AHIJAH**—The prophet from Shiloh who superintended the division of Solomon’s united kingdom (928 BC). He predicted to Jeroboam that he would tear away ten tribes from the Davidic house (1 Kings 11:29–39). This prediction was fulfilled after Solomon’s death (1 Kings 12:15; 2 Chron. 10:15). Certain events in Solomon’s reign were written up in “the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite” (2 Chron. 9:29). Later, Jeroboam’s wife went in disguise to Ahijah to inquire about her sick son. Ahijah predicted the death of the child and the destruction of Jeroboam’s entire house as a punishment for idolatry (1 Kings 14:1–16). Both predictions came true (1 Kings 14:17–18; 15:29).

**AHIKAM**—One of King Josiah’s royal advisers, Ahikam was part of the delegation that Josiah sent to the prophetess Huldah to inquire

about the future of the kingdom of Judah in light of its wickedness before the Lord (2 Kings 22:12–14). Ahikam supported Jeremiah during the reign of Jehoiakim; this support saved Jeremiah from being put to death by the people of Judah (Jer. 26:24). Nebuchadnezzar appointed Ahikam’s son Gedaliah as governor over the remnant in Judah after the Babylonian deportation (Jer. 40:5).

**AHIMAAZ**—Son of Zadok the priest. As David fled from Jerusalem during his son Absalom’s conspiracy, he told Zadok and Abiathar, also a priest, to return with their sons to Jerusalem and to bring him information about Absalom’s military plans (2 Sam. 15:27–29). When Zadok and Abiathar learned of Absalom’s plans, they informed Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan. Ahimaaz and Jonathan had to flee to Bahurim and hide in a well when Absalom’s men learned of their presence in nearby En Rogel. After their pursuers could not find them, the two men delivered the news to David (17:15–22). Ahimaaz was eager to inform David of his son Absalom’s defeat and became the first to tell David of his victory by outrunning another messenger. However, Ahimaaz concealed the news of Absalom’s death (18:19–33).

**AHITHOPHEL**—From the town of Giloh, he was originally King David’s most respected and wise adviser (2 Sam. 15:12; 16:23). Ahithophel allied himself with King David’s son Absalom during Absalom’s rebellion. Ahithophel committed suicide in Giloh, presumably anticipating the defeat of Absalom and David’s reprisal for his treason (2 Sam. 17:23).

**AI**—The Hebrew term behind Ai means “the ruin.” Biblical Ai was situated east of Bethel in the highlands of Ephraim overlooking the Jordan Valley.

In the Bible, Ai first appears as a landmark in Abram’s travels (Gen. 12:8; 13:3). In the book of Joshua, it figures prominently as a lesser city in the initial conquest of Canaan (7:3; 10:2; but see 8:25). Following Israel’s initial defeat (7:4–5), Joshua proscribes Ai according to Yahweh’s instruction (8:2), slaying its inhabitants and hanging its king, then reducing the settlement to a ruin (8:25–28). This strikes fear into the neighboring populations (9:3–4; 10:1–2). The disproportionate attention given to its capture sets the conquest within

a theological framework: victory depends on obedience to Yahweh.

**AIJALON**—The Aijalon Valley provided access from the northern Philistine Plain on the Mediterranean Sea through the foothills to the hill country. The city of Aijalon was near the eastern end of the valley. During Israel's conquest of Canaan, a confederation of Canaanite cities attacked the Gibeonites, who had made an alliance with the Israelites (Josh. 9–10). The Israelites defeated the confederation forces at Gibeon and pursued them west through the Aijalon Valley. Some centuries later, after Jonathan and his armor bearer attacked the Philistine outpost at Mikdash in the hill country, the Israelites struck them down from Mikdash to Aijalon in the valley (1 Sam. 14:31).

**AKELDAMA**—The place where Judas Iscariot met his demise after betraying Jesus. According to the book of Acts, with the money he received for betraying Jesus to the chief priests, he bought a field, where “he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out”; the inhabitants of Jerusalem called the field “Akeldama,” an Aramaic name meaning “field of blood” (Acts 1:18–19). According to Matt. 27:7–8, the field was purchased by the chief priests and subsequently used as a burial place for foreigners.

**AKSAH**—The daughter of Caleb who was given as a wife to Othniel when he captured the city of Debir (Josh. 15:16–17; Judg. 1:12–13).

**ALEXANDER THE GREAT**—Alexander, born in 356 BC, was the son of Philip, king of Macedon. The amazing, swift conquests of Alexander are alluded to in Daniel. Daniel 8:5–8 (cf. 2:40–43; 7:19–24) portrays Greece as the “goat” from the west, with a notable horn between its eyes (representing Alexander), which defeats the ram (the Medo-Persian army). This prophecy was fulfilled when Alexander led the Greek armies across the Hellespont into Asia Minor in 334 BC and defeated the Persian forces at the river Granicus. Alexander again met and quickly defeated the Persians at Issus (“without touching the ground” [Dan. 8:5]). Alexander then turned south, moving down the Syrian coast and conquering Egypt without a blow. He then moved eastward, again defeating Darius the Persian for the last time, east of the Tigris River. Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis (the last two were capitals of Persia) all fell to

the young warrior king. Alexander marched his armies as far eastward as the Hydaspes River in India and won a decisive battle there. Because his armies refused to go any further, however, Alexander was forced to return to Persepolis and then to Babylon. There he died in 323 BC at the age of thirty-three.

**ALEXANDRIA**—Alexandria was a Greek city founded in Egypt in 331 BC by Alexander the Great. It soon became the capital of Egypt. In the Bible, Alexandria is mentioned only in the book of Acts: the home of some of the Jews who opposed Stephen (6:9); the home of Apollos (18:24); the source of ships that helped carry Paul to Rome (27:6; 28:11).

**ALMS**—Provision for the extremely needy. Alms provide what is essential to human survival: food, clothing, and shelter (1 Tim. 6:8).

**ALPHA AND OMEGA**—The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The book of Revelation uses “the Alpha and the Omega” for God or Christ (1:8; 21:6; 22:13) and closely connects it with “First and Last” and “the Beginning and the End” (1:17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13) to declare God's sovereign control of history.

**ALTAR**—Altars were places of sacrifice and worship constructed of various materials. They could be either temporary or permanent. Some altars were in the open air; others were set apart in a holy place. They could symbolize either God's presence and protection or false worship that would lead to God's judgment.

**AMALEK, AMALEKITES**—The Amalekites inhabited the Negev territory south of Judah (Num. 13:29). The OT represents the Amalekites as descended from Esau and thus related to the Edomites (Gen. 36:12, 16).

The history of relations between the Amalekites and the Israelites is one of perpetual hostility. The Amalekites attacked the Israelites shortly after the Red Sea crossing. The outcome of the battle included a declaration of perpetual war between the Amalekites and the God of Israel (Exod. 17:8–16; Deut. 25:17–19). There were several subsequent conflicts (Num. 14:45; Judg. 3:13; 6:3, 33; 7:12; 10:12), continuing in the campaigns of Saul (1 Sam. 15:1–9) and David (1 Sam. 27:8; 30:16–20).

The final chapter in the historic struggle between Israel and the Amalekites is Mordecai and Esther's confrontation with Haman, who

is identified as an “Agagite”—that is, a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite king spared by Saul (Esther 3:1; cf. 1 Sam. 15:8).

**AMANA**—A mountain mentioned in Song 4:8, associated with the more commonly known Hermon. *See* Hermon, Mount.

**AMASA**—A relative of David (2 Sam. 19:13). Absalom, during the rebellion against David his father, appointed Amasa as the leader of his army. Following Absalom’s defeat, which included his death, David requested that Amasa continue to serve as the military commander (2 Sam. 19:13). Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, David ordered Amasa to summon the men of Judah due to an uprising incited by the Benjamite Sheba and to return before the king within three days. Amasa arrived late; as a result, David sent men out under the command of Abishai to pursue Sheba. When Amasa finally met up with the men, he was greeted by Joab, who killed him with a dagger. Once Amasa’s body was removed from the road, the men followed Joab in pursuit of Sheba (2 Sam. 20:1–13).

**AMAZIAH**—(1) The son of King Joash of Judah who succeeded him on the throne after the murder of his father (2 Kings 12:21). His reign is narrated in 2 Kings 14:1–22; 2 Chron. 25. Amaziah was twenty-five years of age when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years (798–769 BC). He was one of the better kings of Judah, though not measuring up to David’s high standard (2 Kings 14:3).

(2) “The priest of Bethel” (Amos 7:10), which may signal that Amaziah was head priest of this northern shrine, a position also suggested by the authoritative way in which he rebuked and tried to silence Amos. In instructing Amos not to prophesy, Amaziah directly contradicted God’s words (7:15–16). Amaziah’s opposition earned him an oracle personally directed at him and his priestly family (7:17), the only oracle of Amos against an individual. Amaziah would die “in an unclean country” (NIV mg.), preventing him from exercising priestly functions.

**AMMI**—This name occurs only in Hosea as a symbolic name for one of Hosea’s children (see 2:1). It means “my people.” The term is used particularly of Israel, especially to express the covenant relationship between God and his people. Its negation (1:9) and subsequent

affirmation (2:23) seem to make a powerful statement about God’s judgment and also his restoration of his unfaithful people.

**AMMINADIB**—This word occurs only in Song 6:12 (KJV). If it is a proper name (so LXX, KJV), the identity of the person is unknown (NIV mg.: “Amminadab”). The expression seems to mean “my people is princely” or something similar. English Bibles vary widely in their translations, though most seem to take the expression as a reference to magnificent chariots fit for a bridal party. A good translation might be: “Before I knew it, my desire placed me (among) the noble chariots of my people” (cf. NIV).

**AMMON, AMMONITES**—Ben-Ammi was the son of Abraham’s nephew Lot and the younger of Lot’s two daughters (Gen. 19:36–38). He is represented as the ancestor of the Ammonites, a Transjordanian people who were a perennial threat to Israel from the wilderness period through to David’s reign.

The nation of Ammon was located east of the Jordan, just north of the Dead Sea. Its capital was Rabbah, and it bordered Gad to the west, the half-tribe of Manasseh to the northwest, and Moab to the south (see also Deut. 3:16). Much of the source of their contention was over the fertile land of Gilead, which encompassed the Jordan River and bordered Ephraim, the western tribe of Manasseh, Benjamin, and Judah.

**AMNON**—The firstborn son of King David (2 Sam. 3:2). He became infatuated with the beauty of his half-sister Tamar. Then he listened to counsel to deceive her and David. When she brought him a meal, he raped her. Afterward, he despised her. Tamar’s brother Absalom cared for her and later deceived Amnon and David by inviting Amnon to a feast. There Absalom had Amnon killed (2 Sam. 13). David is portrayed as an ineffective leader throughout.

**AMON**—The fourteenth king of Judah (641–640 BC) and the son of Manasseh, he continued unrepentant in idolatrous worship. He was assassinated by his officials in his second year as king (2 Kings 21:19–26; 2 Chron. 33:21–25; Zeph. 1:4; 3:4, 11).

**AMORITES**—One of the nations that occupied part of Canaan and the Transjordan (by the Jordan River) before Israel’s conquest. They



appear in lists of the peoples occupying Canaan (e.g., Gen. 15:21). According to the Table of Nations (Gen. 10), they are descendants of Canaan, one of the sons of Ham. This territory was conquered by Abram and his forces (Gen. 14), and in fact Abram was living “near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite” (14:13). Later the Israelites remain enslaved for four generations because the sin of the Amorites has not reached its full measure (15:16).

The Amorites were constantly in conflict with the Israelites. They were to be driven out of Canaan, along with the other Canaanite peoples (Exod. 23:23; 33:2). In Num. 21:21 the Amorites are mentioned as one nation through which Israel would need to go in order to reach Canaan. King Sihon refused, a war ensued, and the Israelites were victorious and settled in the land of the Amorites (Num. 21:31).

**AMOS**—See Amos, Book of.

**AMOS, BOOK OF**—Amos is largely concerned with judgment oracles against the nations, particularly Judah and Israel.

Amos has a message of divine judgment against God’s people, particularly those in the northern kingdom. God is sovereign and will see to the appropriate punishment. God controls the nations, so he can raise up an enemy to bring destruction on Israel as well as other offending nations. Although the nations are the tool of his anger, there should be no mistake that it is God himself who is behind their punishment (1:4; 3:2, 14; 9:4).

The punishment is for idolatry and ethical violations, particularly social injustice. God’s people worshiped false gods (2:8; 5:5, 26; 7:9–13; 8:14). Also, the wealthy classes indulged in sins and oppressed the lower classes (2:7–8; 5:12; 8:6).

Amos is also well known as the first to use the language of the “day of the LORD” (5:18–20). Although this appears to be the first mention of this day in Scripture, the way Amos refers to it indicates that it was already known in his society. The people thought that the day of the Lord would be good for them, but Amos says that because of their sins, it will be horrible. The day of the Lord is the day of God’s coming as a warrior to judge sinners.

**AMRAM**—Grandson of Levi, son of Kohath (Exod. 6:16–18; 1 Chron. 6:1–2), and the father of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam (Exod. 6:20; 1 Chron. 6:3).

**AMRAPHEL**—A member of a coalition of four kings who raided Canaan during Abraham’s lifetime (Gen. 14:1, 9). They defeated five local kings, plundered the area, and kidnapped Lot along with some other people. Abraham set out and defeated these kings, recovered the plunder, and rescued Lot and the other captives. Amraphel was king of Shinar (i.e., Babylon).

**ANAKITES**—The descendants of Anak, the Anakites (NRSV: “Anakim”), known for their height (Deut. 2:10, 21; 9:2), inhabited the Judean hill country when Israelite spies entered the land (Num. 13:21–33; Deut. 1:28). The spies viewed them as Nephilim (Num. 13:33; cf. Gen. 6:4). Arba, a hero among the Anakites, gave his name to Kiriath Arba (Josh. 14:15), later Hebron (Josh. 15:13–14; Judg. 1:20).

**ANANIAS**—(1) A member of the Jerusalem church whose death was followed by that of his wife, Sapphira, as a result of holding back part of their possessions (Acts 5:1–11).

(2) A disciple at Damascus who helped restore Saul’s eyesight and baptized him in accordance with the Lord’s direction in a vision (Acts 9). (3) A high priest in Jerusalem during AD 47–58. He presided over the interrogation of Paul at the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem (Acts 23:1–10) and testified against Paul before Felix (24:1).

**ANATH**—The father of Shamgar the judge (Judg. 3:31; 5:6). This name is also associated with a Canaanite war goddess and with Egyptian and Syrian goddesses as well.

**ANATHEMA**—A transliterated Greek word meaning “curse.” See Blessing and Cursing.

**ANATHOTH**—Anathoth was just a few miles northeast of Jerusalem in the tribal allotment given to Benjamin. This village was assigned to the Levites (Josh. 21:18; 1 Chron. 6:60). The city’s most famous resident was the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1).

**ANCIENT OF DAYS**—A title for the sovereign God seated on his heavenly throne in Daniel’s vision of Dan. 7:9, 13, 22. A passage relevant to the Ancient of Days in Dan. 7 is Rev. 1:14–16, where John sees a heavenly figure in whom is combined the features of the heavenly Son of Man and the Ancient of Days. Imagery characterizing the latter figure (white hair, fiery presence) is now applied to Jesus, indicating

that the Son of Man is equal to the Ancient of Days in glory and authority.

**ANDREW**—One of the twelve apostles and brother of Peter. Andrew came from Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44), though he lived and worked with Peter in Capernaum as a fisherman (Matt. 4:18). At first a disciple of John the Baptist, he, with an unnamed disciple (possibly John), transferred allegiance to Jesus (John 1:35–40). His first recorded act was to bring his brother to Jesus (John 1:41–42). Subsequently, he was called by Jesus to become a permanent follower (Matt. 4:19) and later was appointed as an apostle (Matt. 10:2).

**ANGEL**—The English word “angel” refers to nonhuman spirits, usually good. The biblical words usually translated “angel” mean “messenger” and can refer to one sent by God or by human beings. A messenger must be utterly loyal, reliable, and able to act confidentially (Prov. 13:17). The messenger speaks and acts in the name of the sender (Gen. 24).

Messengers sent by God are not always angels. Yahweh’s prophets were his messengers (Hag. 1:13), as were priests (Mal. 2:7).

**ANGER**—See Wrath; Wrath of God.

**ANNA**—An elderly Jewish prophetess at the time of Jesus’ birth. Anna is the daughter of Penuel, and she is from the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36). She was married for only seven years and then remained a widow for many years. Anna was present when the baby Jesus was dedicated, and she responded in worship of God and spoke prophetically about the child (2:38).

**ANNALS OF THE KINGS**—In 1–2 Kings there are eighteen references to the “book of the annals of the kings of Israel” (e.g., 1 Kings 14:19; 15:31) and fifteen to the “book of the annals of the kings of Judah” (e.g., 1 Kings 14:29; 15:7). These (now lost) works may identify sources from which information was extracted or at least where further information about a king may be obtained.

**ANNAS**—An influential high priest who played a part in the trial and death of Jesus (John 18:12–24). Annas served as high priest in AD 6–15 and continued as high priest emeritus while his son-in-law Caiaphas held that position in an official capacity. Immediately after

Jesus was arrested (and before being sent to Caiaphas), he was brought to Annas, who questioned him about his disciples and teaching. His name heads the list of important members of the Sanhedrin when Peter and John were arrested (Acts 4:6), suggesting that he was a dominant figure of the high-priestly party.

**ANOINT, ANOINTED**—See Messiah.

**ANTEDILUVIANS**—These were the people who lived before the worldwide flood in Noah’s time. They were divided between two ancestral lines, those of Cain (Gen. 4:17–24) and Seth (Gen. 5). Although it is common to speak of the Cainites and Sethites, the second line is depicted as starting with Adam, not Seth (5:3).

**ANTHROPOMORPHISM**—A special type of figure of speech that is quite common in the Bible. Anthropomorphism is a figure of speech in which God is represented with human features or human characteristics. Anthropomorphisms abound in Scripture. Isaiah 59:1, for example, states: “Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.” Likewise, note the colorful anthropomorphic description of God in Ps. 104:2–3: “The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.”

**ANTICHRIST**—The term “antichrist” is used only four times in the Bible (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). John defines the antichrist as the one who denies that God has come in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

**ANTIOCH**—*Antioch of Pisidia*. See Asia Minor, Cities of (Pisidian Antioch).

*Antioch of Syria*. The most important Antioch mentioned in the NT was the capital city of the Roman province of Syria. Syrian Antioch was an important political, economic, and religious center during the Roman period.

Antioch’s diverse population made for a great diversity of religions connected to the city. Its suburb of Daphne was a major worship site for paganism, and the city maintained a large Jewish population throughout its history. Additionally, it was to Antioch that many Jerusalem Christians fled during the early persecution of the church. Here, for

the first time, the Jewish Christians began to intentionally focus on sharing the gospel with Gentiles (Acts 11:19–21). The result was a large, multicultural, and vibrant church. The church at Antioch was known for its ethnic and cultural diversity, its generosity (sending an offering to Jerusalem during a famine [see 11:27–30]), and its heart for missions (serving as Paul’s headquarters for his three missionary journeys). Not surprisingly, it was at Antioch that Christ followers were first called “Christians” (11:26).

**ANTIOCHUS (EPIPHANES)**—Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175–164 BC) was the younger son of Antiochus III, ruler of the Seleucid Empire. The name “Epiphanes” means “manifest,” implying “manifest as a god.” Daniel 8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; 1 Macc. 1:54–64 speak of his desecration of the Jerusalem temple in 167 BC.

**ANTIPAS**—(1) One of the sons of Herod the Great who ruled as tetrarch (“ruler of a fourth [part]”) of Galilee and Perea (Luke 3:1). He was responsible for the imprisonment and subsequent beheading of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1–12). He interviewed Jesus at length following his arrest without getting a response (Luke 23:6–12). (See also Herod.) (2) A faithful witness to the gospel who was martyred at Pergamum during a period of intense persecution when believers in that city were under pressure to renounce their faith in Christ (Rev. 2:13).

**ANTIPATRIS**—A city built by Herod the Great to honor his father, Antipater, in 9 BC. The city was built on the site of the ancient city of Aphek. Roman soldiers took Paul to Antipatris from Jerusalem by night to avoid a plot on his life, and cavalry took him on to Caesarea the next day (Acts 23:31–33). The city was forty miles from Jerusalem and twenty-five miles from Caesarea on the Via Maris.

**ANTONIA, TOWER OF**—The primary military fortification of Jerusalem near the Herodian temple, also called the Antonia Fortress. The tower may have served as an official residence for the Roman procurator. Thus, the tower’s courtyard has traditionally been considered the site of Jesus’ trial before Pilate (John 18:28; 19:13). However, Herod’s palace may have been used for the procurator and as a residence of the governor. The fortress was

destroyed during Titus’s siege of Jerusalem in AD 70.

**ANTONIA FORTRESS**—See Antonia, Tower of.

**APHEK**—The most significant Aphek in the Bible is about seven miles east of Tel Aviv. Traffic on the international coastal route passing through Israel was forced between the foothills to the east and the river, making this a strategic location. During the transition to the monarchy, the Philistines were at Aphek when the Israelites attacked them from Ebenezer (1 Sam. 4:1) just east in the foothills. The Philistines won the battle, captured the ark, and continued Philistine control of the international coastal highway. At the end of Saul’s life, the Philistines mustered their troops at this northern “boundary” of the Philistine plain before setting off to challenge Israel for control of the Jezreel Valley (1 Sam. 29:1).

**APIS**—A sacred bull worshiped in Egypt, apparently a representation of the Egyptian god Ptah. Jeremiah may mention the bull in his ridicule of the people’s idolatry in his taunt “Why has Apis fled?” (Jer. 46:15 NRSV).

**APOCALYPSE**—See Revelation, Book of.

**APOCALYPTIC**—The word “apocalypse” means “revelation.” Scholars have identified those texts that resemble the form of the book of Revelation as “apocalyptic literature,” including the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.

**APOCRYPHA, NEW TESTAMENT**—The word “apocrypha” is derived from a Greek word meaning “secret” or “hidden” and refers to texts regarded by some Jews and Christians as religiously valuable but not meeting the criteria of canonicity. The more specific title “New Testament Apocrypha” distinguishes certain writings from those commonly referred to as “the Apocrypha,” a collection of works written by Jews (with later Christian editing in places) between approximately 200 BC and AD 90, recognized as Scripture by Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches but generally rejected by Protestants.

**APOCRYPHA, OLD TESTAMENT**—The Greek word *apokrypha* means “hidden” or “secret,” and later it came to refer to religious

books considered to be of inferior quality to the OT and the NT. During the third century, several church fathers (e.g., Origen [d. 253], Irenaeus [d. 202], Tertullian [d. 220]) used this term to distinguish these works from canonical works. Currently, the phrase “Old Testament Apocrypha” refers to Jewish literary works written between approximately 200 BC and AD 90 that were included in the earliest Greek codices of the LXX.

Since the time of Luther, Protestants have rejected the canonicity of the Apocrypha. However, the Roman Catholic Church has argued that thirteen apocryphal works are part of their authoritative Scriptures (Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach [or Ecclesiasticus], Tobit, Judith, 1 Esdras [or 3 Ezra], 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Additions to Esther, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Young Men). In the past, two other books have been included (2 Esdras [or 4 Ezra, Apocalypse of Ezra] and Prayer of Manasseh). The Greek Orthodox Church includes two additional works (3 Maccabees; Psalm 151) in its authoritative canon.

**APOLLOS**—Apollos was born in Alexandria (Acts 18:24) and probably educated there. He came to Ephesus, perhaps on business, after Paul had left the city during his second missionary journey. In addition to his knowledge of the OT, Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was teaching accurately his knowledge of Jesus. He knew only the baptism of John—that is, the baptism of repentance. When Priscilla and Aquila “explained to him the way of God more adequately” (18:26), this probably entailed an explanation of the atoning significance of Jesus’ death, God’s vindication of Jesus in the resurrection, and the personal experience of the Holy Spirit for all believers. After ministering in Ephesus (18:24), he went to Corinth (19:1; cf. 1 Cor. 3), where he was able to overwhelm the Jews in argument that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28). Apollos returned to Ephesus sometime thereafter and was present in that city when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:8). Apollos probably remained a faithful member of the Pauline missionary band, for he is mentioned later in Paul’s letter to Titus and was probably a courier of that letter with Zenas (Titus 3:13).

**APOLLYON**—The Greek name, meaning “destroyer,” for the angel of the Abyss, the

bottomless pit. The Hebrew form is “Abaddon” (Rev. 9:11). The name may derive from Apollo, an important Greek god.

**APOSTASY**—In the Bible this term is used specifically to describe rebellion against God. While there is a sense in which every human being has consciously and deliberately sinned and fallen short of God’s standards (Rom. 3:23), apostasy is normally used only in reference to those who have flagrantly and high-handedly known the truth, turned their back on it, and rejected God.

**APOSTLE**—See Offices in the New Testament.

**APOSTOLIC COUNCIL**—See Acts of the Apostles.

**AQABA, GULF OF**—See Red Sea, Reed Sea.

**AQUEDUCT**—A conduit used to transport water from one place to another. It could be either a trough cut into rock or soil, or pipes made from stone or other materials. Aqueducts were used in OT times to transport water into cities from nearby springs. The “aqueduct of the Upper Pool” in Jerusalem is mentioned in 2 Kings 18:17; Isa. 7:3; 36:2. Its location is uncertain, though it is said to be “on the road to the Washerman’s Field.” Hezekiah’s tunnel was an underground aqueduct that took water from the Gihon spring to the Pool of Siloam (2 Kings 20:20).

**AQUILA AND PRISCILLA**—Aquila and Priscilla were important coworkers with the apostle Paul in his missionary effort. They joined Paul in cooperative efforts and also worked in relative independence. They were Christian workers in what came to be important centers of early Christianity: Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. Mentioned in the NT as a pair (Acts 18:18, 19, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19), four of these list Priscilla first, probably indicating her wealth, social status, or prominence in the Christian community.

**ARABAH**—One of several major topographical features of Israel (Deut. 1:7; Josh. 11:16). The Arabah corresponds to the Great Rift Valley running north to south through the land. Situated within it is the Jordan River Valley, which extends southward from the Sea of

Galilee (Kinnereth) sixty-five miles to the Dead Sea (Sea of the Arabah). The Dead Sea and its surroundings are also part of it, as is the desert region to the south, which extends 103 miles to the Gulf of Aqaba. “The way of the Arabah” (*derek ha’arabah*) occurs five times, once indicating a road leading from the Gulf of Aqaba (Deut. 2:8), possibly the King’s Highway (see Num. 20:17, 21).

**ARABIA**—A large peninsula lying between the Red Sea on the west and the Persian Gulf on the east. In the Bible the term is actually seldom used (2 Chron. 9:14; Isa. 21:13; Jer. 25:24; Ezek. 27:21; 30:5; Gal. 1:17; 4:25), and when it is, it refers more to the general area than to any specific group of people or geographic location. It seems to stand as a designation for that expanse of land that lies to the south and east of Canaan and the Transjordan peoples. On several occasions the term “Arabs” is used to designate the people from those regions (2 Chron. 17:11; 21:16; 22:1; 26:7; Neh. 4:7; Acts 2:11). Elsewhere they are referred to as “eastern peoples” (Gen. 29:1; Judg. 6:3, 33; 7:12; 8:10) or “people of the East” (1 Kings 4:30; Job 1:3; Jer. 49:28; Ezek. 25:4, 10). In Gen. 25:6 Arabia is referred to as the “land of the east,” and in Isa. 2:6 simply as “the East” (although this may refer simply to Syria and Mesopotamia).

In the NT, Arabs were among those present at Pentecost (Acts 2:11). After his conversion Paul journeyed to Arabia (Gal. 1:17), by which is meant the Nabatean kingdom, stretching from the Transjordan southwest toward the Sinai Peninsula. Interestingly, Paul’s reference to Mount Sinai as being in Arabia (Gal. 4:25) may suggest a location other than the traditional one of the Sinai Peninsula—for example, across the Gulf of Aqaba (the eastern arm of the Red Sea) in or near Midian (see Exod. 2:11–3:3)—although there is no consensus on this matter.

**ARAD**—A Canaanite city located in the Negev Desert, approximately eighteen miles northeast of Beersheba. This was the site of the defeat by the king of Arad when the Israelites attempted a southern entrance into Canaan, the result of which was the capture of several of their own people (Num. 21:1; 33:40). Later, the king of Arad is listed among the conquered kings of Canaan (Josh. 12:14). The city was destroyed and renamed “Hormah” (Num. 21:2–3). The area is also mentioned as a reference point

for the land of the Kenites, the descendants of Moses’ father-in-law (Judg. 1:16).

**ARAMAIC**—Aramaic comprises one of the two main branches of the northwest Semitic language group. The language most closely related to Aramaic is Hebrew, although Akkadian and Arabic also show considerable similarities in terms of morphology, grammar, and lexical content. There is considerable extrabiblical literature dating from around 1500 BC through the biblical period and beyond that is written in Aramaic, some of which is important for the study of the Bible. Also, considerable portions of the books of Ezra and Daniel are written in Aramaic.

**ARAMEANS**—Descendants of Shem (Gen. 10:22) and Nahor (Gen. 22:21) identified in the LXX and English translations as “Syrrians.” According to the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, Arameans originated from Upper Mesopotamia in the early second millennium. Abraham is referred to as a “wandering Aramean” (Deut. 26:5), which suggests that the Hebrews descended from Arameans.

Their expansion to the west impacted ancient Israel as early as the days of Saul (1 Sam. 14:47). David defeated the alliance of the Ammonites with the Aramean king Hadadezer (2 Sam. 8:3–8; 10–12). King Asa of Judah made a treaty with an Aramean king in his war against Baasha of Israel (1 Kings 15:16–22). King Ahab was defeated and killed in his battles with the Arameans (1 Kings 22:1–38). Later, God provided a “deliverer” (possibly an Assyrian king or officer), which relieved Aramean pressures upon Israel (2 Kings 13:3–5). This allowed Jehoash of Israel to defeat the Arameans and regain previously lost territories. In the eighth century BC the Aramean king Rezin, in alliance with Israel and Tyre, attempted to force Ahaz of Judah into their league to oppose the growing Assyrian threat (2 Kings 16:5–9; Isa. 7:1–9). By the end of the eighth century, all Aramean territories had become provinces in the Assyrian Empire.

**ARAM NAHARAIM**—Literally, “Aram of the Two Rivers.” This is a region of the northern Euphrates above the point where it is joined by the River Harbor in the west of what is now Syria, and thus northwest of Mesopotamia proper. Associated with the patriarchs, its proximity to Israel also made it a place from which opposition might come. Genesis 24:10 notes

that it was here that Abraham's servant came to the city of Nahor and met Rebekah at the well, while Deut. 23:4 indicates that this was Balaam's home region. Cushan-Rishathaim, Israel's first foreign oppressor in Judges, came from here (Judg. 3:8), while both 1 Chron. 19:6 and the title of Ps. 60 indicate that the Ammonites hired mercenaries from the region when engaged in war against David.

**ARAM ZOBACH**—A minor state in the Anti-Lebanon among a group of Syrian states that attacked Israel after David's message of sympathy to the Ammonites was misconstrued (1 Chron. 19:6), but which he ultimately defeated (2 Sam. 8:3; cf. Ps. 60:1).

**ARARAT**—Ararat refers to a mountainous region in eastern Asia Minor. The best-known reference to Ararat is as the location where Noah's ark comes to rest after the flood. Genesis 8:4 actually speaks of the "mountains of Ararat," not one particular mountain. In Gen. 8:2–14 the perspective is of the rain stopping and the floodwaters slowly receding in an extended process during which the ark is deposited on the Ararat mountain range. Tradition has favored Agri Dag, an extinct volcano rising 16,916 feet on the northeastern border of Turkey, as a viable site for Ararat.

**ARAUNAH**—A Jebusite (called "Ornan" in Chronicles) who sold David a threshing floor on which the king constructed an altar (2 Sam. 24:16–25; 1 Chron. 21:15–27). This story legitimized the locale for the construction of the Solomonic temple (1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 3:1) by asserting that it was the place where the sacrifice of David averted the destroying angel of pestilence (2 Sam. 24:16, 25).

**ARBA**—Arba was the leader of the Anakites, a tribe of giants (Deut. 2:10, 21; 9:2) that lived near Hebron. The town was originally called Kiriath Arba ("city of Arba"; Josh. 14:15; 15:13; 21:11).

**ARBITRATOR**—*See* Mediator.

**ARCHANGEL**—A chief or first angel. *See also* Angel.

**ARCHELAUS**—The son of Herod the Great who, following his father's death and by permission from the Roman emperor Augustus, ruled over Judea, Samaria, and Idumea (Edom)

from 4 BC to AD 6. Archelaus is mentioned once in the NT (Matt. 2:22). Joseph, warned by an angel of the Lord, had taken Jesus and Mary to Egypt to escape the murderous intentions of Herod the Great. After the death of Herod, Joseph was told to return to Israel, but on arriving he discovered that Archelaus now governed Judea. Being afraid of him and warned in a dream, he settled in Nazareth in the district of Galilee, an area ruled by another of Herod's sons, Antipas.

**ARCHIPPUS**—A Christian whom Paul encouraged to complete "the ministry you have received in the Lord" (Col. 4:17). Paul described him as a "fellow soldier" (Philem. 2), which probably indicates a position of leadership. The nature of the ministry received from the Lord that Paul refers to in Col. 4:17 is not specified.

**AREOPAGUS**—An ancient and prestigious council of Athenians that met on Mars Hill and in former days exercised judicial and legislative authority. Paul was invited to address the Areopagus and explain his teaching about Jesus and the resurrection. Among the converts from this occasion, two are named: Dionysius, himself a council member, and Damaris, a woman about whom nothing else is said (Acts 17:16–34).

**ARETAS**—The name of several Arabian kings. Paul mentions Aretas (2 Cor. 11:32), king of Arabia Petraea and father-in-law of Herod Antipas, who divorced his daughter to marry Herodias, his brother's wife (see Mark 6:17 pars.). This led to war and the subsequent destruction of Antipas's army, which the people blamed on his murder of John the Baptist (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.116). Following the death of Emperor Tiberius (AD 37), Aretas apparently had gained control of Damascus, where Paul, being pursued by the king's ethnarch, escaped in a basket through a window in the wall (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:32–33).

**ARIMATHEA**—A town of Judea whose exact location is uncertain. It is mentioned in all four Gospels, only in connection with Joseph, a rich man and member of the Sanhedrin, in whose tomb Jesus was laid (Matt. 27:57; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51; John 19:38).

**ARIOCH**—(1) The king of Ellasar who joined a coalition against five kings of the Dead Sea

region (Gen. 14:1, 9). Abram was swept up in this conflict because his nephew Lot was captured in Sodom (14:12). (2) The captain of the guard in the court of Nebuchadnezzar who was commanded to kill the wise men of Babylon, including Daniel (Dan. 2:14–15). Arioch protected Daniel by warning him of the king's order and then securing an audience for Daniel with the king (2:24–25).

**ARISTARCHUS**—A native of Thessalonica who was a close companion of Paul. Associated with Paul's Gentile mission, he and Gaius were seized by a mob and brought to the theater in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). Later he journeyed to Jerusalem (possibly as one of the delegates of the Macedonian churches) accompanying the collection for poor relief (Acts 20:4). When Paul appealed for his case to be heard by Caesar, Aristarchus sailed with him to Rome (Acts 27:2). Writing from prison in Rome, Paul commends him as a Jewish coworker (along with Mark and Justus) and fellow prisoner (Col. 4:10, 11; Philem. 24).

**ARISTOBULUS**—The head of a household greeted by Paul (Rom. 16:10). According to church tradition, he was the brother of Barnabas and one of the seventy disciples, who eventually became a missionary to Britain. Others have suggested that he was the son of Aristobulus, grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Agrippa I.

**ARK**—God announced to Noah that he was going to destroy all the inhabitants of the earth and commanded him to build an "ark" (Heb. *tebah*; Gen. 6:14–16). Apart from the Genesis flood narrative, Exod. 2:3–5 is the only other passage in the Bible where this word is used, there for the ark of bulrushes in which the infant Moses was placed. Both arks were made waterproof by a coating of pitch (tar). An ark is something built to save people from drowning. It is not the name of a kind of boat as such (e.g., yacht), but rather a geometric box-like shape. The ark was without rudder, sail, or any navigational aid. The NT refers to Noah's construction of the ark (Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20) and his entering it (Matt. 24:38; Luke 17:27).

**ARK OF THE COVENANT**—A sacred cultic object, in the shape of a box, that represented the presence of God among the Israelites. The ark, constructed in wood, measured forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide, and

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twenty-seven inches high (Exod. 25:10), and it was transported by means of two poles inserted on either side of the ark. The most important aspects of the ark were the cover and the cherubim attached to the ark cover. Blood was ritually sprinkled on the cover, which was the designated place of atonement. In the earliest accounts, the ark became the place of atonement, meeting, and revelation between God and Israel.

**ARMAGEDDON**—Commonly believed to be the place of the final, cataclysmic battle that climaxes in the visible return of Christ (Rev. 16:16). The literal rendering "mount of Megiddo" is somewhat problematic, for there is no Mount of Megiddo. The apocalyptic indications relate Zech. 12:11 (the only apocalyptic reference to Megiddo, although there it is the "plain of Megiddo") with Ezek. 38–39 (where the final battle in history takes place on the "mountains of Israel"). At the least, Armageddon represents the place where the kings of the world will gather for the final battle before God judges the world. The choice of Megiddo may result from the fact that it was the place where the righteous Israelites repeatedly fought off attacks by wicked nations (cf. 2 Kings 23:29).

**ARMY**—The army of Israel was primarily a volunteer military force directed by God and his word. Deuteronomy 20 establishes the guidelines for warfare, Num. 1 describes organization, and Num. 2:17 highlights God's strategic position as commander in the sacred event of war. Israelite warriors were men twenty years and older from the nation's tribes, clans, and families. The Levites were appointed tabernacle caretakers and not counted in the census for military duties. The priest was responsible for addressing the nation prior to a battle and then leading the battle procession in connection with the ark of the covenant.

The Israelite army structure is not overly developed in the biblical material. Under God as commander in chief was the king, who then worked in connection with his commanders and officers to execute God's will by means of a tribal confederation. Prior to the monarchy, God worked through Moses and Joshua to rally the men for battle. Samuel warned the nation that the king would abuse the volunteerism of the army and take their sons and make them render military service with his chariots and horses (1 Sam. 8:11–12). This warning was

realized under the leadership of Solomon and Rehoboam. Army divisions included a list of family heads, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, and their officers. In addition, a period of their service was noted (1 Chron. 27).

Army size was not a matter of importance for success in battle. God as divine warrior led the nation in battle and determined the outcome in keeping with his sovereign purposes. Only a few Israelites were necessary to defeat thousands (Lev. 26:8; Deut. 32:8). The defeat of Pharaoh and his army in the exodus and the conquest provides the most dramatic premonarchy illustrations of God's defiance of the numbers. During the monarchy, God orchestrated the defeat of the vast Aramean army with a smaller Israelite army (1 Kings 20:27). On the other hand, when the Israelites were disobedient to the covenant, they would be put to flight (Josh. 7).

**ARNON**—The wadi and gorge that runs into the east side of the Dead Sea opposite En Gedi. It formed the northern boundary of Moab (Num. 22:36; Judg. 11:18) and southern boundary of the kingdom of Sihon the Amorite (Deut. 2:24, 36). Its first mention in the OT is as a campsite of the migrating Israelites (Num. 21:13–36). The Israelites captured all the territory of the Transjordan north of the Arnon River (Deut. 3:8–17; 4:48; Josh. 12:1–2). In the days of Jephthah, the Ammonite king attempted unsuccessfully to regain the territory from the Arnon to the Jabbok Rivers (Judg. 11). During Jehu's reign, the Syrian king Hazael captured from Israel the Transjordan territory as far south as the Arnon Gorge (2 Kings 10:32–33).

**AROER**—A settlement on the northern rim of a deep gorge along the Arnon River, east of the Dead Sea. Because the gorge served as a natural border for surrounding territories, Aroer was a strategically attractive stronghold. Aroer was controlled by Sihon the Amorite until Moses defeated him (Deut. 2:36; 4:48; Josh. 12:2) and incorporated the settlement within Reuben's territory (Deut. 3:12; Josh. 13:9, 16), although Gad was involved in rebuilding it (Num. 32:34). Later, the settlement likely marked the starting point for David's census (2 Sam. 24:5). Still later, Hazael of Syria gained dominance over the Transjordan as far south as Aroer (2 Kings 10:33; cf. Isa. 17:2). By Jeremiah's time, Aroer had once again come under Moab's control (Jer. 48:19).

**ARTAXERXES**—Artaxerxes I was the fourth king of the Persian Empire (464–424 BC). It was an appeal by provincial officials to Artaxerxes at the beginning of his reign that brought a halt to an early attempt to repair the walls of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7–23). Ezra went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of his reign (458 BC; Ezra 7:7). The appearance of beneficence in Artaxerxes' decree (7:11–26) was spoiled by the revelation of the self-serving political motivation behind its apparent generosity (7:23). Ezra's nonuse of the sweeping powers given to him by Artaxerxes further suggests that Persian royal assistance might not be the kind of help really needed by God's people. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign (445 BC; Neh. 1:1). The positive impression made on the reader by Artaxerxes' personal favoritism toward Nehemiah, allowing him to return to rebuild the walls of his native city, Jerusalem (2:3, 5), is undercut by Nehemiah's disparagement of his royal master (1:11: "this man"). Nehemiah's second mission took place sometime later than the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes' reign (5:14; 13:6) but before the king's death.

**ARTEMIS**—The goddess Artemis was known as the protector, nurturer, and overseer of Ephesus. The only mention of Artemis in the Bible is in Acts 19:23–41, the incident of the Ephesian riot and demonstration in the amphitheater. This was instigated by Demetrius the silversmith over his concerns that Paul's ministry was creating an economic hazard for him and his tradesmen, who made silver shrines of Artemis. They also feared that the temple and Artemis herself would suffer a decline in stature. The intercession of the city clerk eventually quieted the mob, but not until they had spent two hours chanting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

**ASA**—The third king of Judah (1 Kings 15:8–24; 2 Chron. 14:1–16:14), succeeding his father, Abijah, and reigning for forty-one years (908–867 BC). Early in his life, Asa was a good king, obeying God and removing the worship of foreign gods from the land. He even removed an idolatrous object that his own grandmother Maakah had set up and removed her from leadership in the land. As a result, God blessed him, even providing a tremendous military victory over Zerah, an Ethiopian leader who had attacked Judah with



a million-man army (2 Chron. 14:9–15). Later in life, however, he showed a lack of confidence in God when he enlisted the king of Aram to help him against the encroachment of Baasha, the king of Israel, even paying him with gold and silver objects from the temple. Although Baasha withdrew, Asa's actions caught up with him when he developed a serious foot disease, from which he died.

**ASAHIEL**—One of the three sons of Zeruiah. He and his brothers, Joab and Abishai, were nephews of David who served prominently in his army. Asahel was noted as a swift runner (2 Sam. 2:18). His speed and persistence cost him his life at the hands of Abner and led to a division between David and Joab. Abner had been King Saul's general. After Saul was killed by the Philistines, Abner sided with Saul's son Ish-Bosheth for two years. Most of Israel followed Ish-Bosheth, while Judah followed David. In one battle, Abner and the men of Israel were put to flight (2:17). The swift Asahel decided to chase Abner down. Abner warned him off, but Asahel refused to relent, so when he caught up, Abner killed him. When a rift developed between Ish-Bosheth and Abner, Abner determined to bring the loyalty of Israel over to David. He met peaceably with David toward that end. But when Joab heard, he was upset. He tricked Abner into a meeting without David's knowledge and killed him in revenge for Asahel's death.

**ASAPH**—One of the Levites appointed by David to lead in worship. Asaph was part of the procession to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Along with Heman and Ethan, also mentioned in the Psalter, he was appointed by the Levites to the bronze cymbals (1 Chron. 15:19). Subsequently, David assigned Asaph continuing duties (16:7, 37). He served further under Solomon at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 5:11–14). Asaph is described as singer (1 Chron. 15:17), the chief (15:19), who played cymbals (15:19), gave thanks to God (16:7), ministered before the ark (16:37), prophesied under direction of the king (25:2); and gave direction to his sons (25:2). The sons of Asaph served under his direction (25:2); prophesied and sang with lyres, harps, and cymbals (25:1, 6); and served as gatekeepers (26:1). The descendants of Asaph continued these duties after the exile (Ezra 2:41; 3:10; Neh. 11:22; 12:46). Twelve psalms are associated with Asaph (Pss. 50; 73–83).

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They reflect his prophetic ministry by including sections of prophecy or of God speaking. God's covenant and justice are frequent topics of these psalms.

**ASCENSION**—The visible and bodily ascent of Jesus from earth to heaven concluding his earthly ministry, which then continued through the promised Holy Spirit, given at Pentecost.

A detailed historical account of the ascension is given only by Luke (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:4–11 [cf. Mark 16:19, in the longer ending to Mark's Gospel]). The event, however, was anticipated in John's Gospel (John 6:62; 20:17).

The ascension is frequently implied throughout the NT by reference to the complex of events that began with the death of Jesus and ended with his session at the right hand of God in glory. Paul writes of the divine-human Christ's ascent to the heavenly realms as the beginning of his supreme cosmic reign in power (Eph. 1:20–23) and as the basis for holy living (Col. 3:1–4; 1 Tim. 3:16). In Hebrews, the ascension is a crucial stage that marks off the completed work of Jesus on earth, in which he offered himself as the perfect and final sacrifice for sin (9:24–26), from his continuing work in heaven as our great high priest, which is described in terms of sympathy (4:14–16) and intercession (7:25). Peter makes the most direct reference to the ascension, explaining that Jesus, who suffered, is resurrected and “has gone into heaven” (1 Pet. 3:22). Therefore, just as Jesus, the righteous sufferer, was vindicated by God, so too will his people, who suffer for doing good.

**ASCENTS, SONG OF**—The titles, or supercriptions, of fifteen psalms include the designation “a song of ascents,” also called “a song of degrees.” The notion of ascending, or going up, has influenced the understanding of these psalms. The “going up” has been seen as going up to Jerusalem for a holy day, going up to Jerusalem as part of the return from the exile, going up the fifteen steps at the courts of the temple (a Jewish tradition in the Mishnah), or an aspect of their poetic style. These psalms occur together as a group, Pss. 120–34.

**ASENATH**—The daughter of Potiphar, priest of On in Egypt, she was given as wife to Joseph and became the mother of Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 41:45, 50–52; 46:20).

**ASHDOD**—One of five principal cities of the Philistines (Josh. 13:3). Ashdod was situated in the coastal plane of Canaan, roughly two and one-half miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea, near the main coastal route sometimes called the “Way of the Philistines.”

Ashdod is mentioned in relation to both the overall success of the Israelite conquest of Canaan (Josh. 11:22; the feared Anakim remained only in Philistine territory [see Num. 13:28]) and its unfinished nature (Josh. 13:3). Joshua 15:46–47 lists Ashdod in the territory allotted to Judah. That this territory remained largely unconquered by Israel features prominently in the narrative of Judges and Samuel.

When the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4), it was taken to Dagon’s temple at Ashdod (5:1–2). Excavation of Tel Ashdod has yet to identify this cult site, although an incense stand portraying a procession of musicians may pertain to Dagon’s cult (see 1 Sam. 10:5). First Macc. 10:84 reports Jonathan’s burning of Azotus (Ashdod) and destruction of Dagon’s temple during the Hellenistic period.

Among the prophets, oracles portend the destruction of Ashdod and the other Philistine cities (Amos 1:6–8; Zeph. 2:4; Zech. 9:5–6). Jeremiah 25:20 mentions “the people left at Ashdod,” possibly alluding to Psamtik I’s destruction of the city. Conspicuously absent is any mention of Gath, which by this time had been subjugated or destroyed (1 Chron. 1:18; 2 Chron. 26:6; also 2 Kings 12:17).

**ASHER**—The name of a person (the eighth son of Jacob [Gen. 30:12–13]), a tribe of Israel (see Asher, Tribe of), and possibly a city (Josh. 17:7).

**ASHER, TRIBE OF**—One of the twelve tribes, descended from the eighth son of Jacob, born to Jacob by Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid (Gen. 30:12–13). The tribe of Asher is specifically recorded as participating in the enslavement in Egypt (Exod. 1:4), the rescue from Egypt and the failure to enter the land of promise (Num. 1:40–41; 13:13; 26:44–47), the conquest of the land (Josh. 19:24–31), and the failure to drive out the Canaanites as God had commanded (Judg. 1:31–32). The tribal allotment afforded Asher included the western hills of Galilee and the Phoenician coast north of the Carmel range and south of Sidon. In the NT, Asher is listed as the tribe of

Anna, the prophetess who blessed the infant Jesus (Luke 2:36–38). Asher is also included among Revelation’s listing of the tribes sealed for protection (Rev. 7:6).

**ASHERAH**—A cult object as well as a goddess attested throughout the Levant.

In the OT, Asherah refers primarily to a wooden cult object (see Deut. 16:21). That these were objects and not trees is evident from descriptions of their (NIV: “Asherah poles”) being “made” (1 Kings 14:15) and “set up” (14:23).

The Israelites were instructed to destroy the Asherah poles upon entering Canaan (Exod. 34:13; also Deut. 7:5; 12:3). Instead, they fashioned their own (1 Kings 14:15, 23), assimilating them into worship of Yahweh (2 Kings 23:6). Later efforts at removing the poles were sporadic and temporary (cf. 2 Kings 18:4 with 21:3, 7). Despite the apparent pervasiveness of these cult objects, archaeologists have yet to retrieve one.

In a handful of instances, “Asherah” denotes a deity. In Judg. 3:7 “the Asherahs” (here indicating “goddesses”) is grammatically parallel to “the Baals”; likewise “Asherah” corresponds to Baal and “the starry hosts,” designating a specific deity (2 Kings 23:4). In 1 Kings 18:19 Elijah speaks of the “prophets of Asherah,” who presumably spoke in the goddess’s name.

**ASHKELON**—One of five principal cities of the Philistines (Josh. 13:3). It was situated approximately midway between Ashdod (north) and Gaza (south) on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

Ashkelon was listed among the territory still to be conquered at the end of Joshua’s life (Josh. 13:3). Judah took the city but ultimately was unable to keep it (Judg. 1:18–19). The OT subsequently reckoned Ashkelon as part of Philistine territory, beginning with Judg. 14:19, which recounts one of Samson’s exploits.

Ashkelon shared in the affliction visited on the Philistines for taking the ark of the covenant, which they attempted to forestall by reparations or “sympathetic magic” (1 Sam. 6:17 [“the gold tumors” were likely meant to bear away the source of the Philistines’ suffering]). Ashkelon and Gath represent the Philistines overall as David anticipates their response to news of Saul’s and Jonathan’s deaths (2 Sam. 1:20).

The remaining references occur in the prophets, who portended the destruction of

Ashkelon and the other Philistine cities at various times (Jer. 25:20; 47:5, 7; Amos 1:8; Zeph. 2:4, 7; Zech. 9:5). Notably, Zeph. 2:7 expected that Judah would finally take possession of Ashkelon.

**ASHPENAZ**—The chief eunuch in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:3), whom the king charged with the task of bringing in and training some young Israelite men to serve in his court. Ashpenaz changed the names of Daniel and his three friends to Babylonian names. Following the king's orders, he refused to let the four young men follow a strict diet of vegetables and water, but Daniel found a way to avoid the diet required by Nebuchadnezzar.

**ASHTAROTH**—(1) A goddess attested in Syro-Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt. In the Bible, "Ashtaroth" is generally regarded as the plural form of the deity's name (NIV: "the Ashtoreths"; NRSV: "the Astartes"; NET: "the Ashtars"). It occurs all but once in conjunction with other deities, most often Baal or "the Baals" (Judg. 2:13; 1 Sam. 12:10), but also with the gods of neighboring peoples (Judg. 10:6) or "foreign gods" (1 Sam. 7:3). "Ashtaroth" broadly designates goddesses whom Israel pursued rather than the true God, Yahweh. In 1 Sam. 31:10 is mentioned a Philistine temple devoted to "the Ashtoreths." See also Asherah.

(2) A city associated with Og, king of Bashan (Deut. 1:4). "Ashtaroth" designates an Amorite city captured by the Israelites en route to the plains of Moab (Num. 21:33–35). The region was allotted to the half-tribe of Manasseh (Josh. 12:30–31), and the city to the Levites (1 Chron. 6:71).

**ASHURBANIPAL**—In 668 BC Ashurbanipal (Osnapper [Asnapper] is the Aramaic equivalent; Ezra 4:10) succeeded his father, Esarhaddon, in Assyria, while his brother Shamash-shum-ukin became the ruler of Babylon. Esarhaddon had made his vassals swear loyalty to the two sons before his death. They were able to rule peacefully alongside each other for seventeen years, with Ashurbanipal as the superior. Then a civil war broke out between them in 651 BC, which Ashurbanipal won, though at great cost. Less is known of him after this victory, and perhaps the decline of Assyria begins at that point.

Early in his reign he conquered Egypt as far south as Thebes, while to the east he defeated

the Medes, which helped pave the way for the rise of the Persians. He may be the king who captured Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:11–12).

**ASIA**—A Roman province in western Asia Minor, not to be confused with the modern designation for the larger continent. The exact boundaries are difficult to determine, but the region, formed in 133–130 BC, and since the time of Augustus ruled by proconsuls, included the older kingdoms of Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and part of Phrygia, as well as several islands. Paul and his companions enjoyed an especially successful mission in Asia (Acts 19:10, 22, 26–27; Rom. 16:5). He later wrote letters to Christians in Colossae and Ephesus (Ephesians; 1 Timothy). Inscriptions attest to the wealth of many Ephesians. Through Timothy, Paul warns those pursuing wealth in the city (1 Tim. 6:9–10; cf. Rev. 3:17). The apostle John eventually settled in Ephesus and later was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4–3:22).

**ASIA MINOR, CITIES OF**—Asia Minor, the land area of modern-day Turkey, was initially settled by the Hatti people between 2500 and 2000 BC. Toward the end of that period, the Indo-European Hittites, drawn to the mild climate, began a slow settlement alongside the indigenous Hattis, mixing peaceably with them. By 1750 BC, the Hittites had become the dominant people group.

In the twelfth century BC the Hittites fell to the Sea Peoples. They developed coastal cities along the Aegean, which by the eighth century were conquered by the Greeks. The Lydian king Croesus came to power in 560 BC in Sardis and subdued the Greeks, only to fall in 546 BC to Cyrus of Persia. In 334–333 BC Alexander the Great defeated the Persians in two key battles and won Asia Minor. After Alexander's death, one of his generals, Seleucus, took over. Then, in 190 BC the Romans defeated the Seleucids and assumed control. This inaugurated an extended period of peace, during which time Jewish communities of the Diaspora settled throughout the region.

The missionary journeys of the apostle Paul (Saul of Tarsus) took him into and around much of Asia Minor, and directly or indirectly he was responsible for the establishment of most of the first-century churches there. The following cities of Asia Minor are mentioned in the NT.

## Eastern Mediterranean

**Tarsus.** The birthplace of the apostle Paul (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3), Tarsus is located on the Mediterranean coast, nine miles northeast of modern-day Mersin. Tarsus became the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia in 67 BC. Cleopatra and Mark Antony met and built their fleet in this grand city. When his life was threatened after his conversion, Paul was sent to Tarsus from Jerusalem (9:30).

**Antioch.** Antioch (Antakya) is located just inland from the Mediterranean coast, on the east bank of the Orontes River. Jewish and Gentile believers who fled Jerusalem after the death of Stephen planted a church here, where followers of Jesus were first called "Christians." Barnabas brought Saul from Tarsus to Antioch, where they labored together for a year, teaching the church, prior to setting off on their first missionary journey (Acts 11:19–30). Paul later returned, along with Silas, bearing the requirements for Gentile believers from the Jerusalem council (15:22–35).

## Southern Ports

**Seleucia.** Known today as Samandağ, Seleucia was Antioch's port, the place from which Saul, Barnabas, and John Mark embarked on their first missionary journey in AD 47 (Acts 13:4).

**Perga in Pamphylia.** Perga is just east of Antalya on the southern Mediterranean coast. Archimedes' student Apollonius the mathematician lived here in the late third century BC. On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas disembarked in Perga for destinations in southwestern Asia Minor, while John Mark left them to return to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13–14). On their return trip of the same journey, Paul and Barnabas stopped in Perga again, this time preaching before heading to Attalia (14:25).

## Galatia

The following cities became part of the politically defined Roman province of Galatia in 25 BC. They are to be distinguished from ethnic Galatia, which is a region farther north, around modern-day Ankara.

**Pisidian Antioch.** Modern Yalvaç, or Pisidian Antioch, is northeast of Isparta in the lake region. On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue here and generated enormous interest in the gospel (Acts 13:14–43). The following Sabbath,

nearly the entire city came out to listen to them. Jealous Jewish leaders incited a persecution, causing Paul and Barnabas to reorient their ministry to Gentiles and then leave the region for Iconium (13:26–51). They returned on their way back to Antioch to strengthen the disciples and appoint elders (14:21–23).

**Iconium.** Iconium, today called Konya, is about sixty-five miles southeast of Pisidian Antioch. It is one of the most ancient settlements of the region, dating to the third millennium BC. Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue here on their first missionary journey, initially winning Jewish and Gentile converts but angering other Jews. Paul and Barnabas eventually feared for their safety and escaped to Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:1–6). However, they came back on the return trip to Antioch (14:21–23).

**Lystra.** Frequently mentioned with Derbe (Acts 14:6; 16:1), Lystra (modern Hatunsaray) is nineteen miles south of Iconium. Paul and Barnabas fled here from Iconium and preached. Paul healed a lame man, and as a result he and Barnabas were presumed by the enthusiastic crowd to be Zeus and Hermes. At the instigation of Paul's Jewish opponents, the crowd's sentiments turned, and Paul was nearly stoned to death. He and Barnabas left for Derbe the following day (14:6–20), but they came back on their return trip (14:21–23). Paul returned on his second missionary journey, where he met his protégé, Timothy (16:1–2).

**Derbe.** About fifty miles southeast of Lystra and slightly north of present-day Karaman is Derbe. Paul and Barnabas fled here after Paul's stoning in Lystra on their first missionary journey, preached the gospel, made many disciples, and appointed elders (Acts 14:21–23). Among the disciples likely was Gaius, who later accompanied Paul during his third missionary journey (20:4).

## Western Aegean Ports

**Troas.** Troas was a major northwest seaport located about twelve miles southwest of Troy. On his second missionary journey, Paul, traveling with Silas and Timothy, was prevented from entering Bithynia by the Spirit of Christ and went instead to Troas. Here he had a vision beckoning him to Macedonia, which he promptly obeyed (Acts 16:6–11). Because this is the first of the so-called "we" passages in Acts, Luke may have joined the group here (16:10). Paul also stopped at Troas on the return to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey.

There he raised Eutyclus after the latter's traumatic fall (20:4–12). Troas is mentioned twice more, suggesting that Paul spent time here in addition to the above visits (2 Cor. 2:12–13; 2 Tim. 4:13).

**Adramyttium.** A few miles south of Troas was the port of Adramyttium. It was the origin of the ship that transported Paul from Caesarea to Myra around AD 60 en route to Rome (Acts 27:2).

**Assos.** Assos is an acropolis sitting 774 feet above sea level, up from the village of Behramkale. It overlooks the Bay of Edremit and has a splendid view of Lesbos. Doric columns from the seventh-century BC temple of Athena are prominent at the site. According to Acts 20:13–14, on his return from his third missionary journey, Paul went overland from Troas to Assos, and there he joined his traveling companions on their ship. From here on the way to Miletus, they made several nearby island stops off the coast of Asia Minor: Mitylene on Lesbos, Chios, and Samos (20:14–16).

**Miletus.** Located about twenty miles south of Ephesus, at the point where the Meander River met the Gulf of Latmus (now silted over), was the important southwestern seaport of Miletus. The city was significant in the NT era for its four harbors. A center for commerce, scholarship, geometry, and science, it was also the prototype for principles of city planning later applied throughout the Roman Empire. On his third missionary journey, Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders took place here (Acts 20:15–38). Later he left the ill Trophimus in Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20).

### Southwestern Ports

**Patara.** Sitting on the Mediterranean coast at the mouth of the Xanthus River, about forty miles west of present-day Demre, Patara was a flourishing harbor and commercial center in antiquity. Paul changed ships here as he returned to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey, after island stops in Kos and Rhodes (Acts 21:1–2).

**Myra.** Myra is a coastal ruin due south of present-day Demre. In the NT era, the seaport featured a Roman theater, Roman baths, and two rock-cut necropolises. Here, Paul changed ships around AD 60 on his way to Rome while in the custody of a centurion (Acts 27:5).

**Cnidus.** At the tip of the long, narrow Datca peninsula on the extreme southwestern corner of Asia Minor lies Cnidus. Founded around 360 BC, the acropolis rises one thousand feet

above sea level. The port included two harbors and four theaters but was most famous for its fourth-century BC statue of Aphrodite, carved by the Athenian sculptor Praxiteles. Around AD 60 the ship carrying Paul to Rome stopped here because of slow winds and changed course (Acts 27:7).

### Seven Churches of Revelation; Lycus Valley

The seven churches of Rev. 1–3 lay along a north-south elliptical route in western Asia Minor. Laodicea, the seventh, forms a tight geographic triangle with Hierapolis and Colossae in the Lycus Valley.

**Ephesus.** Known today as Selçuk, ancient Ephesus is located on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor at the mouth of the Cayster River. It was founded in the eleventh century BC by the Ionians and later ruled successively by the Athenians, Spartans, Persians, and Greeks. Roman governance began in 190 BC. Later, Ephesus became the capital of the province of Asia, as well as its most important commercial center. During the NT era, the Artemision (*see* Artemis) was an important pilgrimage site.

Paul stopped in Ephesus briefly on his second missionary journey, leaving Priscilla and Aquila. They later encountered and mentored Apollos there (Acts 18:19–26). On his third journey, Paul remained in Ephesus for three years, teaching, performing miracles, and healing the sick (19:1–22) until the riot incited by Demetrius the silversmith (20:1). He wrote 1 Corinthians in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8) and later wrote to the Ephesians from his Roman prison cell (Eph. 3:1) as well as to Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).

In Rev. 2:1–7 the Ephesian church is commended for its perseverance but chastised for having lost its first love.

**Smyrna.** Smyrna (modern İzmir) is located about thirty-five miles north along the coast from Ephesus. In 195 BC it became the first city in Asia Minor to erect a temple for the imperial cult, and by the next century it was known as “the ornament of Asia.” In its letter, which mentions no negatives, the church is encouraged to be faithful in its suffering (Rev. 2:8–11).

**Pergamum.** About seventy miles north of Smyrna is Pergamum (modern Bergama). The dazzling acropolis sits one thousand feet high and about sixteen miles inland from the Aegean. The Attalids, who ruled 263–133 BC, allied Pergamum with Rome and built it

into a major religious and intellectual center, constructing the great altar to Zeus Soter, the temple to Athena Nicephorus, and the large complex dedicated to Asclepius Soter. They also established a ruler cult and built a library containing two hundred thousand volumes, which at its peak was second only to the library at Alexandria.

The letter to the church (Rev. 2:12–17) references Satan's throne, which many believe to be a reference to the altar to Zeus. The church is commended for its faithfulness and yet is admonished for tolerating those advocating pagan practices within the community.

**Thyatira.** Thyatira (now called Akhisar) is about thirty-five miles southeast of Pergamum. It was mainly noted as having a significant concentration of trade guilds, especially those connected with textiles. Lydia, Paul's disciple and host in Philippi, was a dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The church is commended for its good deeds but criticized for tolerating the false teacher Jezebel (Rev. 2:18–29).

**Sardis.** Forty-five miles east of Smyrna, on the banks of the Pactolus, is Sardis, where Croesus, the sixth-century BC Lydian king, was said to have panned for gold. He also built an impressive Ionic temple to Artemis here. The letter to Sardis is a stern warning to wake up, highlighting the church's incomplete deeds and impurity (Rev. 3:1–6).

**Philadelphia.** Philadelphia (modern Alaşehir) is twenty-six miles southwest of Sardis on the Cogamis River. The city was noted for its wine production, and it was nicknamed "Little Athens" during the Roman era. Its letter is thoroughly positive; the church is commended for its deeds and faithfulness (Rev. 3:7–13).

**Laodicea.** Laodicea is located about a hundred miles east of Ephesus, in a valley where the Lycus River joins the Meander; Hierapolis is just to the north, and Colossae just to the east. Laodicea was founded in the third century BC by the Seleucid king Antiochus II, who named it after his wife. Cicero served as proconsul there in 51 BC.

Laodicea was a prosperous city, a center for banking, eye salve ("Phrygian powder"), and wool production. Its water was supplied via aqueducts from Hierapolis's hot springs, but it arrived lukewarm and heavy with mineral impurities—no match for either its hot source or Colossae's cold springs. The Laodicean letter

employs all of this background in its harsh message to the church, which it describes as tepid, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3:14–22).

**Hierapolis.** Eight miles to the north of Laodicea, Hierapolis sits atop dramatic white cliffs created by its hot springs (Col. 4:13). The city was home to the reputed entrance to the underworld, the Plutonium, and had an enormous necropolis.

**Colossae.** Colossae, ten miles east of Laodicea, was a center for dyed red wool. Although wealthy in the late fourth century BC, it was later eclipsed by Laodicea.

The churches in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae (the oldest of the three cities) were begun by Epaphras and shared letters, including Paul's letter to the Colossians (Col. 4:13–16). The slave Onesimus carried it, along with the Letter to Philemon, to Colossae, where Philemon hosted the house church (Col. 4:9; Philem. 10–12).

**ASSASSINS**—See Jewish Parties (Zealots).

**ASSYRIA**—The geographic center of Assyria consisted of a triangle between the Kurdish mountains, the Tigris River, and the Upper Zab River (which flows into the Tigris). This triangle sits within the modern-day country of Iraq and for the most part contained the four most important cities in the history of ancient Assyria: Ashur, Nineveh, Arbela, and Calah. At the height of its power, the Assyrian Empire stretched far beyond this geographical region, but this heartland served as the political and social base throughout its history.

Though Assyria had a significant history beforehand, this survey begins with the neo-Assyrian period since that is when interaction with Israel and the biblical record begins.

After the death of Tiglath-pileser, Assyria entered another period of decline due to the absence of a sufficient administrative structure to rule the enormous territory of the empire as well as the increasing pressure by the Arameans. However, Assyria again gained stability under Ashur-dan II (c. 934–912 BC). He began to renew military campaigns to recover lands previously held and fortified the capital city of Ashur. His two successors, Adad-nirari II (911–891 BC) and Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BC), continued the successful military campaigns and ambitious building projects. This revival of the Assyrian Empire under Ashur-dan II marks the beginning of what historians call the Neo-Assyrian

Empire, an era of power that would last for three hundred years and grow to supersede the accomplishments of all prior Assyrian reigns.

In 883 BC Ashurnasirpal II came to power. Under him the Assyrian army became better organized and thus more efficient and engaged in military campaigns regularly instead of sporadically. There was also an increase in the brutality exercised by the Assyrian army in order to dissuade smaller states from attempting to resist Assyria's expansion. Ashurnasirpal II also built the small town of Calah into a major city and relocated the capital of Assyria there.

Shortly after inheriting the Assyrian empire in 858 BC, Ashurnasirpal II's son Shalmaneser III turned his attention to the north and the west and began moving to assert Assyrian control over those territories. In 853 BC he dismantled a northern alliance and then proceeded southward. At Qarqar Shalmaneser's forces clashed with the Damascus coalition, which consisted of a number of nations, including Israel under King Ahab, that had banded together to resist the Assyrian encroachment. This battle is not mentioned in the Bible, but the lopsided nature of the victory claimed by the Assyrians seems overstated, since Shalmaneser continued to fight against the Damascus coalition over the next decade. By 841 BC, Israel (under King Jehu), Tyre, and Sidon had voluntarily submitted to Assyrian control. As Shalmaneser grew old, he delegated more and more authority to those under him, creating friction among his subordinates and sons over the direction of the monarchy. Even though Shalmaneser's son Shamshi-Adad V (823–811 BC) emerged as the monarch after his father's death, instability within the kingdom and the rapidly increasing external threat of the Urartian Empire to the north resulted in a weakening of the Assyrian Empire that would last for almost a century until the rise of Tiglath-pileser III in 744 BC.

With the ascension of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) to the throne, the empire entered a hundred-year period that would be the golden age of Assyrian rule in the ancient Near East. In addition to reclaiming lands lost in the previous century to Urartu, he reasserted Assyrian control over Damascus, Hamath, Byblos, Tyre, and Samaria. Shortly afterward, King Pekah of Israel and King Rezin of Damascus banded together to resist Assyrian hegemony in what is called the "Syro-Ephraimite coalition." When they tried to force King Ahaz of

Judah to join them, he appealed to Tiglath-pileser for help in exchange for fealty, against the counsel of Isaiah (see 2 Kings 16; 2 Chron. 28; Isa. 7). In 734 BC Tiglath-pileser crushed the coalition, captured Gaza, and developed it into a trade center between Assyria and Egypt. In addition to improving the military and restructuring the administration of the empire, Tiglath-pileser instituted the policy of deporting and exiling subjects who rebelled against him, a policy that his successors would continue.

The next king over Assyria, Shalmaneser V, ruled for only about four years (726–722 BC). His chief importance is that he conquered Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (see 2 Kings 17–18), though he was killed around the same time. The next king, Sargon II (721–705 BC), exiled the northern Israelites and settled in their place peoples from Syria and Babylonia. Sargon also built an entirely new capital, Dur-Sharrukin, just a few miles north of Nineveh.

In 704 BC Sargon's son Sennacherib came to the throne and established the Assyrian capital at Nineveh. The kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem, became a top priority for Sennacherib because Judah was not only refusing submission to Assyria but also allying itself with Egypt and Ethiopia against Assyria. In 701 BC Sennacherib invaded Palestine, and at Eltekeh the Assyrian forces clashed with a coalition of Egyptian and Ethiopian forces that had come to the aid of Hezekiah, king of Judah. After defeating these forces, Sennacherib marched toward Jerusalem. Along the way he laid waste to the Judean countryside and exiled the inhabitants. The brunt of the damage was done in the Shephelah region, especially the city of Lachish. Although Sennacherib is not named explicitly, these are the circumstances that seem to be reflected in Mic. 1:8–16. When Sennacherib's army reached Jerusalem, it laid siege to the capital city. Although Sennacherib had gone to Libnah, he sent his Rabshakeh (a senior official in the Assyrian army) to press his claims. The account of the ensuing standoff between Hezekiah and the Rabshakeh is given in three places in the Bible: 2 Kings 18–19; 2 Chron. 32; and Isa. 36–37. According to the Bible, the angel of the Lord slaughtered much of the Assyrian army, forcing the survivors to retreat and thus delivering Jerusalem. Variant accounts are given by Josephus (*Ant.* 10.1.4–5) and Herodotus (*Hist.* 2.141).

After the death of Sennacherib in 681 BC, his son Esarhaddon took control of the Assyrian Empire until 669 BC. During his reign Assyria gained superficial control of Egypt. Before his death he appointed Ashurbanipal as his heir over Assyria (668–612 BC), but he made Shamash-shuma-ukin the king over Babylonia. This fateful move eventually led to the downfall of Assyria because it resulted in civil war. With its resources already depleted by the vast empire, Assyria crumbled in the late seventh century BC to a coalition of Babylonian, Median, and Scythian forces. The end came quickly, and in 612 BC Nineveh was sacked (see the book of Nahum) and the Neo-Babylonian Empire was born.

**ASTROLOGER**—A person who studies the stars and their supposed effect on human personality and history. Such individuals were well known in both Mesopotamia and Egypt, though the former is more represented in the biblical texts.

In several places the OT prophets either ridicule or attack astrologers and their practice (Isa. 47:13; Dan. 2:27; 4:7; 5:7, 11; Amos 5:26), and the practice is strictly forbidden in the law codes (Deut. 4:19). Although there are several texts that may apply to astrology in the NT, the only explicit mentions of the practice are in connection with the magi (Matt. 2) and Simon, Bar-jesus, and Elymas (Acts 8:9; 13:6, 8). However, in light of admonitions against astrology and the fact that it is an affront to faith in God, the birth narrative of Jesus should not be read as an approval of the practice but rather as an extraordinary event in which the heavens themselves proclaim the coming of the one born “king of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2).

**ATHALIAH**—Daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, later the wife of the Judean king Jehoram and the mother of the succeeding short-lived king, Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25–27; 2 Chron. 22:2). On first introduction to the Bible reader, she is ominously described as “a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel,” a dynasty that profoundly damaged the spiritual life of the northern kingdom. Through her, this infection entered the southern kingdom. She encouraged her son Ahaziah to follow “the ways of the house of Ahab,” promoting the false worship of Baal in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 22:3). On the death of her son at the hands of Jehu, she exterminated the royal family of Judah and reigned over the

land (2 Kings 11). Only Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, escaped the purge and remained hidden for six years. In the seventh year of her reign (836 BC) Jehoiada the priest brought Joash out of hiding and organized a palace coup against Athaliah, and she was executed. The destruction of the paraphernalia of Baal worship and slaying of the priest of Baal followed immediately on her death.

**ATHENS**—Athens is located five miles north-east of the port of Piraeus on the Saronic Gulf. It was the chief city of the ancient Greek province of Attica (2 Macc. 9:15; Acts 17:15–18; 18:1; 1 Thess. 3:1) and is the capital of modern Greece.

Paul visited this city on his second missionary journey. His debate with the Greek philosophers in the agora (the marketplace) brought him before the city council of Athens, the Areopagus, where religious matters were settled (Acts 17:16–34). Traditionally, the site is identified as Mars Hill, located on the west side of the Acropolis. Interestingly, Paul founded no church in Athens.

**ATONEMENT**—The English word “atonement” comes from an Anglo-Saxon word, “onement,” with the preposition “at”; thus “at-onement,” or “at unity.” In some ways this word has more in common with the idea of reconciliation than our modern concept of atonement, which, while having “oneness” as its result, emphasizes rather the idea of how that unity is achieved, by someone “atone-ing” for a wrong or wrongs done. Atonement, in Christian theology, concerns how Christ achieved this “onement” between God and sinful humanity.

The need for atonement comes from the separation that has come about between God and humanity because of sin. In both Testaments there is the understanding that God has distanced himself from his creatures on account of their rebellion. Isaiah tells the people of Judah, “Your iniquities have separated you from your God” (59:2). And Paul talks about how we were “God’s enemies” (Rom. 5:10). So atonement is the means provided by God to effect reconciliation. The atonement is required on account of God’s holiness and justice.

**ATONEMENT, DAY OF**—See Festivals.

**ATONEMENT COVER**—See Mercy Seat.



**AUGUSTAN COHORT**—An auxiliary unit in the Roman army made up of non-Roman citizens who could gain citizenship through their service. This particular unit was stationed in Syria and held some level of favor as related to its association with the famed emperor. The centurions of this cohort escorted Paul on his journey from Caesarea to Rome (Acts 27:1 [NIV: “Imperial Regiment”]).

**AUGUSTUS**—See Rome, Roman Empire.

**AVENGER**—The term “avenger” occurs sixteen times in the NIV, usually in the phrase “avenger of blood.” The Hebrew word may be translated “redeemer,” “avenger,” or “near relative” and referred to a kinsman who acted on behalf of a close relative. The term was used of one who avenged (repaid) the death of a murdered relative (Num. 35:12), received restitution for crimes against a deceased relative (Num. 5:7–8), bought back family property that had been sold (Lev. 25:25), purchased a relative who had been sold into slavery (Lev. 25:48–49), or married a relative’s widow in order to raise up heirs for her deceased husband (levirate marriage) (Deut. 25:5–10). The “avenger of blood” refers specifically to the first of these functions, a murder victim’s near relative who would exact justice by executing the murderer. This was in line with the OT principle of “eye for an eye” and “tooth for a tooth” (Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). Punishment was to be in proportion to the degree and severity of a crime. In the NT, this role of justice is assigned to government authorities (Rom. 13:4).

This procedure for justice for the avenger of blood is found in Num. 35:9–27; Deut. 19:11–13; Josh. 20. If a person was found guilty of intentional murder on the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15), the avenger of blood served as executioner.

In cases of accidental manslaughter, the accused could flee to one of six cities of refuge, where the city assembly would judge the case and provide protection from the avenger of blood (Num. 35:6–34; Deut. 4:41–43; 19:1–14; Josh. 20:1–9). Numbers 35:12 designates that “they will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that anyone accused of murder may not die before they stand trial before the assembly” (cf. Josh. 20:9). Deuteronomy 19:4–7 explains the necessity of this protection: the avenger may be filled with rage and take revenge without concern for whether

the death was accidental or intentional. If the accused left the city of refuge, the avenger of blood could take his life (Num. 35:27). This held true until the death of the high priest, at which time the accused could leave the city without fear of reprisal. The primary purpose of the laws related to the avenger of blood was to provide consistent justice and so reduce blood feuds and continued cycles of retaliation and revenge.

**AWEL-MARDUK**—The son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. In Hebrew tradition, he is known by the name “Evil-Merodach.” Reigning in the years 562/561–560 BC, he pardoned King Jehoiachin of Judah, who had been imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar. Thereafter, Jehoiachin dined at the king’s table (2 Kings 25:27–30; Jer. 52:31–34; confirmed by Babylonian records).

**AZARIAH**—See Uzziah.

**AZAZEL**—Azazel appears only in Lev. 16 (NIV: “scapegoat”), instructions for the Day of Atonement, on which lots were cast over two goats, one for God and the other for Azazel. After sacrificing the first goat, the high priest confessed the Israelites’ wickedness over the second goat and sent it into the desert.

There are multiple interpretations of the Hebrew word *aza'zel*, one of which is “the goat [ez] of removal.” The term “scapegoat” (originally “escapegoat”) comes from this interpretation. Nevertheless, a goat “for the goat of escape” is redundant. Instead, “Azazel” is likely the name of a demon of the wilderness.

**AZEKAH**—Between the protected hill country of Judah and the open coastal plain lies a range of low rolling hills cut through by significant valleys. Toward the western end of the Elah Valley, Azekah stands guard. Because of its strategic location, it played an important role in critical conflicts between Israel and its enemies.

As Joshua and the Israelites routed the Jerusalem confederation (Josh. 10), the enemies of Israel fled westward from the central Benjamin plateau, through the Aijalon Valley, and south beyond Azekah. Some centuries later, the major threat to Israel was the Philistine presence on the coast. The Philistines sought to expand their control into the hill country and camped on the south side of the Elah Valley between Sokoh and Azekah; the Israelites were on the opposite side of the valley. David

challenged and killed the Philistine champion, Goliath, and the Philistines fled west past Azekah toward Ekron, one of their own cities (1 Sam. 17).

After Solomon's death, Rehoboam fortified a ring of cities to protect the southern kingdom. Among them was Azekah (2 Chron. 11:5–12), southwest of Jerusalem. At the end of the

Judean monarchy, the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and the other cities that were still holding out. Lachish and Azekah were the only fortified cities left in Judah (Jer. 34:6–7). A poignant letter discovered in the gate area of Lachish reads, "We were watching for the smoke signals of Lachish . . . because we do not see Azekah" (Lachish Letter 4).