

Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary

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Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

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Qere, Qesitah, Qoheleth, Quadratus, Apology of, Quail, Quart, Quartus, Quaternion, Queen, Queen of Heaven, Quince, Quirinius, Qumran, Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament

Qere

An Aramaic word meaning "what is to be read." Until the time of the Masoretes (medieval Jewish scribes), the Hebrew Bible was written only with consonants. The Masoretes, however, thought that the vowels would make the Scriptures easier to read. So, they began to write them with the vowels.

When they copied a word they thought was unclear as it was written, they would put the word in the margin with other vowels, changing the meaning or intent. The word that was written in the text was called the "Ketib," and what was to be read was "Qere." The qere was the word written in the margins.

Qesitah

Weight of unknown value ([Gn 33:19](#); [Jos 24:32](#); [Jb 42:11](#), rsv mg). *See* Money.

Qoheleth

The Hebrew title for the book of Ecclesiastes. The word Qoheleth is often translated as "the Preacher" or "the Teacher." It can also be spelled "Koheleth." It comes from a word that means "to call an assembly." It later developed the meaning "to address an assembly." The author of the book of Ecclesiastes refers to himself as Qoheleth in many passages throughout the book.

See Ecclesiastes, Book of.

Quadratus, Apology of

Around AD 125 Quadratus wrote an early Christian defense (or apology) of Christianity to emperor

Hadrian. The writings of Eusebius preserve the only surviving fragment of this apology. The fragment says the following:

"But the works of our Savior were always present (for they were genuine): namely, those who healed, those who rose from the dead; who were not only seen in the act of being healed or raised, but were also always present; and not merely when the Savior was on earth, but after his departure as well, they lived for a considerable time; insomuch that some of them survived even to our own day."

According to Eusebius, Quadratus wrote the apology to defend the church. Eusebius wrote, "Certain evil men tried to trouble those who belonged to us." Quadratus also hoped to persuade Hadrian of the truthfulness of Christianity. If Quadratus could assure Hadrian of the pure intentions of the Christians, Hadrian might end the persecutions. The apology of Quadratus is sometimes mistakenly identified with the "Letter to Diognetus."

Quail

A quail is a short, stocky bird with a bill and feet like a chicken. These features help it eat seeds and insects. The common quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) is the smallest member of the poultry family that also includes pheasants and partridges.

Quail are about 25.4 centimeters (10 inches) long. They have small, rounded wings and a white belly. When startled, they burst from grass or bushes with a whirring sound. A female may lay up to 18 eggs. If the female dies, the male may care for the young.

Quail from the Mediterranean region spend the winter in Sudan. In spring they migrate north in large flocks. Quail cannot fly for long periods. Instead, they ride wind currents to stay in the air.

Quail in the Bible

Very large flocks of quail fed the Israelites twice during their time in the wilderness of Sinai ([Exodus 16:13](#); [Numbers 11:31-32](#); [Psalm 105:40](#)). The second time, they were likely flying along the Gulf of Aqaba and were blown off course by an east wind ([Numbers 11:31](#); [Psalm 78:26-28](#)).

Because quail cannot fly for long, they stay low to the ground, about two cubits, or 101.6 centimeters (40 inches). When tired, they could be caught by hand ([Numbers 11:31-32](#)).

Quail were considered clean food under the law of Moses. They were valued as the most delicate of all game birds. People often preserved them by drying them in the sun.

See also Birds.

Quart

See Weights and Measures (Choinix).

Quartus

Christian who joined the apostle Paul in sending greetings to the church in Rome ([Rom 16:23](#)).

Quaternion

The King James Version translation for “squad” in [Acts 12:4](#).

See Warfare.

Queen

A word used to describe a reigning monarch, a queen consort, or a queen mother.

The queen of Sheba was the world's richest woman. She became so after visiting King Solomon's luxurious court ([1 Kings 10:1](#); [Matthew 12:42](#); [Luke 11:31](#)). She arrived with a large retinue and camels bearing gold, jewels, and spices. Candace, queen of Ethiopia, is mentioned in [Acts 8:27](#). A eunuch, a senior minister in her court, was converted by Philip while visiting Jerusalem.

In Jewish history, Athaliah reigned for six years. She thought she had killed all rival claimants to the

throne in the royal family ([2 Kings 11:3](#)). Also, Salome Alexandra succeeded her husband, Alexander Jannaeus, as ruler from 76 to 67 BC. A queen consort usually played a minor role. Two exceptions are Bathsheba ([1 Kings 1:15-31](#)) and Jezebel ([1 Kings 21:1-29](#)). Bathsheba wanted her son to succeed to the throne. Jezebel plotted a false accusation that led to Naboth's death.

The queen mother played a powerful role. She not only ruled over the royal household but also was held in respect both by the court and by the monarch (compare [Exodus 20:12](#)). Her requests were unlikely to be denied ([1 Kings 2:20](#)). As the king's mother, she was unique. His wives shared their position with others. Maacah, queen mother of Abijam, even retained her authority during much of her grandson's reign ([1 Kings 15:2](#), [10](#), [13](#); [2 Chronicles 15:16](#)). The queen mother was crowned ([Jeremiah 13:18](#)). Bathsheba, now queen, was powerful enough to sit at King Solomon's right hand ([1 Kings 2:19](#)).

Queen of Heaven

Goddess mentioned by Jeremiah in his denunciations of Judah's idolatry ([Jer 7:18](#); [44:17-19](#), [25](#)). The women of Judah were especially involved in worshiping the Queen of Heaven. After the destruction and depopulation of Jerusalem in 586 BC, a group of exiles fled to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. There he again condemned the idolatry that had brought this disaster. This provoked a sharp reaction from the men and their wives. In the recent catastrophe, they had seemingly vowed to return to the worship of the Queen of Heaven. They claimed that since they had given up this worship, nothing but trouble had befallen the nation—the complete reversal of Jeremiah's affirmation. To this, the prophet's response was that if this was their attitude, nothing remained to be said. He delivered them over to their reprobate mind, asserting that in Egypt, among the Jews who settled there, true worship would become extinct, so that even the name of the Lord would not be heard ([44:25-28](#)).

The goddess is generally identified with Ishtar, a Babylonian deity associated with the planet Venus, whose worship was probably imported into Judah during Manasseh's reign. Through the preaching of the prophets and the reforms of Josiah, worship of this god largely died out, but it must still have been cherished secretly, possibly among the women of the royal court.

See also Canaanite Deities and Religion.

Quince

The quince is a tree native to western Asia. It has white flowers and fruit that looks like apples. The fruit can only be eaten when cooked. Some scholars believe that the "apples" mentioned in the Old Testament were actually quinces, *Cydonia oblonga*.

The quince tree is quite common in the region of Palestine, though mainly as a cultivated tree rather than growing wild. It may be found growing naturally in the northern parts of Syria. The quince is native to northern Persia and Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).

The fruit is yellowish in color and has a strong, pleasant smell. It was this fragrance that made the quince highly valued by people in ancient times.

Quirinius

Roman governor of Syria at the time of Jesus' birth ([Luke 2:2](#)). According to the Roman historian Tacitus (*Annals* 3.48), Publius Sulpicius Quirinius was elected consul of Syria in 12 BC. He was appointed around 7 BC, along with Varus, legatus (or governor) of Syria. His duties were in military and foreign affairs. Varus handled civil matters. Quirinius's first term as governor lasted several years. He led a successful expedition against the Homonadenses. They were a rebellious group of mountaineers in Asia Minor's Cilician province. He also oversaw an empire-wide census ordered by Caesar Augustus. Luke records that Jesus's birth took place at the time of this first enrollment "while Quirinius was governor of Syria" ([Luke 2:2](#)). Matthew says it was during the reign of King Herod the Great ([Matthew 2:1](#)), presumably in 4 BC.

Quirinius became rector to Gaius Caesar in 1 BC. He married Aemilia Ledipa in AD 2, but later divorced her. In AD 6, he was reappointed legatus of Syria, perhaps serving in this position for a couple of years. In this second administration Quirinius again supervised a census of Judea. The second census was not done according to Jewish custom, as was the first. The second census taxed the Jews as a subservient people to Rome. This caused Jewish opposition and rebellion against Rome. This is probably the census referred to by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 17.13.5) and Gamaliel ([Acts 5:37](#)).

The remainder of Quirinius's career was probably spent in Rome, where he died at an advanced age in AD 21.

See also Census; Chronology of the Bible (New Testament).

Qumran

An ancient Jewish religious community that lived near the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947.

This Jewish monastery, called Khirbet Qumran, lies on the north side of the Wadi Qumran. It is about 1.6 kilometers (one mile) south of Cave I. Travelers had noted the ruins for years.

Excavations at Khirbet Qumran

The first investigations of Khirbet Qumran were made in 1949 by Harding and de Vaux. The Jordanian Archaeological Museum and the École Biblique began routine excavations starting in 1951. They found the main building in the complex and discovered it lay at the center of a well-organized community. An estimated 200–400 people lived at Qumran at one time, most of them in tents outside the buildings or in nearby caves. There was also a large cemetery to the east toward the Dead Sea. De Vaux concluded that Khirbet Qumran was the headquarters of a Jewish sect called the Essenes.

History of Khirbet Qumran

The site was occupied at various times in history. The earliest occupation was in the eighth and seventh centuries BC, maybe during the reign of King Uzziah (compare [2 Chronicles 26:10](#)). There is a lot of evidence of occupation in the Greco-Roman period (from 332 BC–395 AD). Major settlement began shortly around 100 BC, probably during the time of Hyrcanus I (the first priest of the Hasmonean dynasty, from 134–104 BC). This settlement ended with an earthquake in 31 BC. The site was reoccupied around the time of Herod the Great's death in 4 BC. The site was abandoned when it was captured by the Romans in AD 68. The Romans remained there until about AD 90. Later, Jewish rebels used the site in AD 132–135 during the second revolt against the Romans under Bar-Kochba.

Features of Khirbet Qumran

The largest building was the main assembly hall, with many adjoining rooms. Lots of pottery was found, both for kitchen use and for protecting scrolls that were copied in the writing room or scriptorium. No manuscripts were found in the ruins of Khirbet Qumran. But the pottery was the same as the ones found in Cave I, which contained the Dead Sea Scrolls. This creates a link between the ruins and the manuscripts. The scriptorium contained Roman plaster tables, benches, and inkwells.

The site had an elaborate water system. Many round and rectangular cisterns collected water from the mountains to the west. The cisterns were likely used for ritual purifications and baptisms. Hundreds of coins from the Greco-Roman period were found, which helped date the various layers of occupation. About 3 kilometers (two miles) to the south is a spring known as 'Ain Feshka. It appears to have been an agricultural outpost of Khirbet Qumran.

Identity of the Qumran Sect

The Qumran community was a Jewish sect that formed in the second century BC. Likely, the sect grew after the Greek culture was forced on the Jews by the Seleucid rulers. The community rejected the Jerusalem temple and moved to the desert. They probably called their community "Damascus." They believed they were obedient to God's will and were keeping his covenant.

The sect has been identified with various groups, but the best match seems to be the Essenes. First-century AD writers like Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder all mentioned the Essenes. The writers described the Essenes as an ascetic group (they were committed to self-discipline and rejecting pleasure). They lived along the western shore of the Dead Sea. The sect shared many beliefs and practices with the Essenes:

- Two-year probationary period for members
- Ranked members
- Shared wealth among the community
- Ate communal meals
- Practiced baptism and ritual cleansing
- Strict discipline

The Qumran sect included both priests and lay people. The community's leadership contained 15 men: 3 priests and 12 laymen. The leader of the group was a superintendent or examiner. There were some differences between the Qumran sect and the Essenes. Unlike the Essenes, the sect at Qumran:

- were allowed to marry,
- allowed women to be members, and
- were not pacifists.

Beliefs of the Qumran Sect

The Qumran sect held the Scriptures in high esteem. They considered themselves to be God's covenant people. So they separated themselves from mainstream Jewish life in order to study the law of God and prepare for the Lord's coming. As Jews, they believed in the God of the Old Testament. They believed God was:

- The Lord of creation
- Sovereign over all things
- Predestined human beings to either salvation or condemnation

Angels were important to their theology. Angels were spirit creatures who would fight beside the "elect" in the war against evil. They believed in strict monotheism (the view that there is only one God), so they believed that God was the author of both good and evil.

Qumran teachings pictured humans as sinful and in need of God's grace. Cleansing only came by obeying God's laws and the community's teachings. Their teachings came from an anonymous Teacher of Righteousness, who was described in the "Habakkuk Commentary" and other scrolls. The Teacher was not the founder of the sect but was sent by God to teach the community. He was told about God's plans, which would be accomplished in

the end times. He was a priest and was taught by God to interpret the words of the prophets. He was not the Messiah (God's chosen leader). The Teacher was persecuted by a "Wicked Priest." Attempts to identify these figures with specific historical people are speculative.

The Qumran sect had a strong messianic hope. They believed that they were living in the last days before the Messiah's arrival and the final battle with evil. The "Damascus Document" mentioned "the anointed ones [messiahs] of Aaron and Israel." This may refer to two messiahs: a priestly messiah from Aaron and a kingly messiah from Israel. Some scholars suggest three messianic figures: a king from David, a priest from Aaron, and a prophet from Moses (compare [Deuteronomy 18:18](#)). The Teacher of Righteousness may have been the anticipated prophet. Members of the community believed in the resurrection of the dead and the immortality of the righteous. The wicked, they taught, would be punished and destroyed by fire.

Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament

See Bible, Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament.