

## **Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)**

### **Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary**

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## Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

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*Jaakan, Jaakobah, Jaalah, Jaalam, Jaanai, Jaar, Jaare-oregim, Jaareshiah, Jaasau, Jaasiel, Jaasu, Jaazaniah, Jaazer, Jaaziah, Jaaziel, Jabal, Jabbok, Jabesh (Person), Jabesh, Jabesh-Gilead (Place), Jabez (Person), Jabez (Place), Jabin, Jabneel, Jabneh, Jacan, Jachan, Jachin and Boaz, Jachinite, Jacinth, Jackal, Jackal's Well, Jacob, Jacob's Ladder, Jacob's Well, Jada, Jadah, Jaddai, Jaddua, Jade, Jadon, Jael, Jagur, Jah, Jahath, Jahaz, Jahaza, Jahazah, Jahaziah, Jahaziel, Jahdai, Jahdiel, Jahdo, Jahleel, Jahleelite, Jahmai, Jahzah, Jahzeel, Jahzeelite, Jahzeiah, Jahzerah, Jahziel, Jair, Jairite, Jairus, Jakan, Jakeh, Jakim, Jakin, Jakin and Boaz, Jakinite, Jalam, Jalon, Jambres, Jambri, James (Person), James, Letter of, Jamin, Jamine, Jamlech, Jamnia, Janai, Janim, Jannai, Jannes and Jambres, Janoah, Janohah, Janum, Japheth, Japhia (Person), Japhia (Place), Japhlet, Japhletites, Japho, Jar, Jarah, Jared, Jaresiah, Jarha, Jarib, Jarmuth, Jaroah, Jashen, Jashobeam, Jashub, Jashubi-Lehem, Jashubite, Jasiel, Jason, Jasper, Jathan, Jathniel, Jattir, Javan (Person), Javan (Place), Javelin, Jazer, Jaziz, Jearim, Mount, Jeaterai, Jeatherai, Jeberechiah, Jeberekiah, Jebus, Jebusite, Jecamiah, Jecholiah, Jechoniah, Jecoliah, Jeconiah, Jedaiah, Jediael, Jedidah, Jedidiah, Jeduthun, Jeezer, Jeezerite, Jegar-Sahadutha, Jehallel, Jehdeiah, Jehezkel, Jehiah, Jehiel, Jehiel, Jehielite, Jehizkiah, Jehoadah, Jehoaddah, Jehoaddin, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jehohanan, Jehoiachin, Jehoiada, Jehoiakim, Jehoiarib, Jehonadab, Jehonathan, Jehoram, Jehoshabeath, Jehoshaphat (Person), Jehoshaphat, Valley of, Jehosheba, Jehoshua, Jehoshuah, Jehovah, Jehovah-Tsidkenu, Jehozabad, Jehozadak, Jehu, Jehubbah, Jehucal, Jehud, Jehudi, Jehudijah, Jehush, Jeiel, Jekabzeel, Jekameam, Jekamiah, Jekuthiel, Jemimah, Jemuel, Jephthah, Jephunneh, Jerah, Jerahmeel, Jerahmeelite, Jared, Jeremai, Jeremiah (Person), Jeremias, Jeremoth, Jeremy, Jeriah, Jeribai, Jericho, Jeriel, Jerijah, Jerimoth, JeriOTH, Jeroboam, Jeroham, Jerubbaal, Jerubbesheth, Jeruel, Jerusalem, Jerusalem Council, Jerusalem, New, Jerusha, Jerushah, Jeshaiyah, Jeshanah, Jesharelah, Jeshebeab, Jesher, Jeshimon, Jeshishai, Jeshohaiah, Jeshua (Person), Jeshuah, Jeshurun, Jesiah, Jesimiel, Jesse (Person), Jesse, Root of, Jesui, Jesuite, Jesurun, Jesus, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Teachings of, Jesus Justus, Jether, Jetheth, Jethlah, Jethro, Jetur, Jeturites, Jeuel, Jeush, Jeuz, Jew, Jewelry, Jewels, Jewish Literature, Extrabiblical, Jezaniah, Jezebel, Jezer, Jeziyah, Jeziel, Jezliah, Jezoar, Jezrahiah, Jezreel (Person), Jezreel (Place), Jezreel Valley, Jezreelite, Jibsam, Jidlaph, Jimna, Jimnah, Jimnite, Jiphtah, Jiphthah-El, Joab, Joah, Joahaz, Joanan, Joanna, Joarib, Joash, Joatham, Job (Person), Jobab, Jochebed, Joda, Joed, Joel (Person), Joelah, Joezer, Jogbehah, Jogli, Joha, Johanan, Johanan Ben Zakkai, John (Person), John Hyrcanus, John Mark, John Mark, John of Gischala, John the Baptist, John, Gospel of, John, Letters of, John, the Apostle, Joiada, Joiakim, Joiarib, Jokdeam, Jokim, Jokmeam, Jokneam, Jokshan, Joktan, Joktheel, Jona, Jonadab, Jonah (Person), Jonah, Book of, Jonam, Jonan, Jonas, Jonath-Elem-Rechokim, Jonathan, Joppa, Jorah, Jorai, Joram, Jordan River, Jorim, Jorkeam, Jorkoam, Josabas, Josaphat, Jose, Josech, Josedech, Joseph, Joseph and Asenath, Joseph Barsabbas, Joseph of Arimathea, Josephus, Flavius, Joses, Josiah, Joshaphat, Joshaviah, Joshbekashah, Josheb-basshebeth, Joshibiah, Joshua (Person), Joshua, Book of, Josiah, Josias, Josibiah, Josiphiah, Jot or Tittle, Jotbah, Jotbathah, Jotham, Joy, Jozabad, Jozacar, Jozachar, Jozadak, Jubal, Jubilee Year, Jucal, Juda (Person), Juda (Place), Judaea, Judah (Person), Judah, Tribe of, Judaism, Judaizers, Judas, Judas Barsabbas, Judas Iscariot, Judas Maccabeus, Judas Maccabeus, Judas of Galilee, Jude (Person), Jude, Letter of, Judea, Judeans, Judge, Judges, Book of, Judges, Period of, Judgment, Judgment Seat, Judgment, Hall of, Judith (Person), Julia, Julius, Julius Caesar, Junia, Juniper, Jupiter, Jushab-Hesed, Just, Justification, Justified, Justus, Juttah*

### Jaakobah

#### Jaakan

Leader in Simeon's tribe ([1 Chr 4:36](#)).

Esau's descendant and a son of Ezer the Horite ([1 Chr 1:42](#), nlt mg); alternately called Akan in [Genesis 36:27](#). See Beeroth Bene-jaakan.

## Jaalah

Servant of King Solomon and head of a family who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile ([Ezr 2:56](#); [Neh 7:58](#)).

## Jaalam

KJV form of Jalam, Esau's son, in [Genesis 36:5, 14, 18](#) and [1 Chronicles 1:35](#). See Jalam.

## Jaanai

KJV form of Janai, a Gadite, in [1 Chronicles 5:12](#). See Janai.

## Jaar

*Jaar* is the most common Hebrew word for “forest.” It refers to forests generally ([Isaiah 10:18](#)). It also refers to specific forests, such as the “forest of Ephraim” ([2 Samuel 18:6](#)) and the “forest of Hereth” ([1 Samuel 22:5](#)). Both of these forests are connected to King David’s story.

The word *jaar* also appears in the name of one of King Solomon’s buildings called “the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon” ([1 Kings 7:2](#)). This building seems to have gotten its name because it used a lot of cedar wood in its construction.

Only one mention of “Jaar” seems to be a proper name. In [Psalm 132:6](#), there is a reference to moving the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem. In this verse, the place is called “the field of Jaar” (or “the wood” in the King James Version). This might be a shortened poetic way of referring to Kiriath-jearim.

## Jaare-oregim

A name that appears in some Bible translations of [2 Samuel 21:19](#). This name resulted from a scribal error in the Hebrew text. The original text likely referred to *Jair*, as reflected in the Berean Standard Bible and many other modern translations. The error happened because the word *oregim* (which means “weavers”) was accidentally copied twice from later in the verse. Many scholars and translators correct this mistake by following the

parallel passage in [1 Chronicles 20:5](#), which names *Jair* (or *Jaor* in some manuscripts).

See Jair #3.

## Jaareshiah

Jeroham’s son, a Benjaminite leader who lived in Jerusalem ([1 Chr 8:27](#)).

## Jaasau

KJV spelling of Jaasu, Bani’s son, in [Ezra 10:37](#). See Jaasu.

## Jaasiel

- Warrior among David’s mighty men. He is called “the Mezobaite” ([1 Chr 11:47](#)).
- Abner’s son and the leader of Benjamin’s tribe during David’s reign ([1 Chr 27:21](#)).

## Jaasu

Bani’s son, who obeyed Ezra’s exhortation to divorce his pagan wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:37](#)).

## Jaazaniah

1. Son of Hoshiaiah, who was a Maacathite and a leader in the armies of Judah at the beginning of the exile. These troops received assurance of safety in return for loyalty to the Babylonians ([2 Kgs 25:23](#)). Jaazaniah is alternately called Jezaniah in [Jeremiah 40:8](#) and Azariah in [Jeremiah 42:1](#) (nlt mg) and [43:2](#).

2. Son of Jeremiah (not the prophet), who was taken by Jeremiah the prophet into the Lord’s house, where he refused to drink wine because of the command of his ancestor Jonadab the Recabite ([Jer 35:3-11](#)).

3. Shaphan’s son, who led a group of elders in worshiping idols in the temple ([Ez 8:11](#)).

4. Azzur’s son and one of a group of 25 men seen by Ezekiel in a vision who gave bad counsel and plotted evil in Jerusalem near the time of the exile ([Ez 11:1](#)).

## Jaazer

The King James Version alternate form of Jazer. Jazer was an Amorite city in Gilead ([Numbers 21:32](#) and [32:35](#)).

*See* Jazer.

## Jaaziah

Descendant of Merari in a list of family leaders among Levites assigned to temple duty in David's reign ([1 Chr 24:26-27](#)).

## Jaaziel

Jaaziel was one of eight men chosen to play harps or lyres when King David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem([1 Chronicles 15:18-20](#)). He is probably also the person called Jeiel in [1 Chronicles 16:5a](#). That name may be a copyist's mistake. In [1 Chronicles 16:20](#), he is called Aziel.

## Jabal

Descendant of Cain and the first son of Lamech and Adah. He was the father of a nomadic people who dwelt in tents ([Gn 4:20](#)).

## Jabbok

Eastern tributary of the Jordan, the modern Nahr ez-Zerqa or Blue River. Its source is a spring near Amman, capital of modern Jordan (the Decapolis town of Philadelphia in Hellenistic times). From its source the Jabbok loops northeast before swinging west and cutting a valley that, characteristic of the east Jordan tributary streams, deepens into a canyon. It emerges from this ravine near Tell Deir Alla, which may be the ancient Succoth, quiets its flow, and joins the Jordan at ed-Damiyeh, the ancient Adam, some 15 miles (24 kilometers) north of the Dead Sea. The Jabbok ranks next to the Yarmuk, its more northerly companion stream, in the extent of its watershed, a region of well-watered territory blessed with an average rainfall of some 30 inches (76 centimeters) per year. The

Jabbok has a fast, strong, perennial flow; over a large portion of its 60-mile (96.5-kilometer) course, the stream averages an 80-foot (24.4-meter) drop over each mile. The loop of the river north of Amman (biblical Rabbah) was an Ammonite frontier ([Nm 21:24](#)). The river separated the kingdoms of Sihon and Og ([Jgs 11:19-22](#); cf. [Dt 3:1-2, 8-10](#)), land in Gilead that was later divided among the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh ([Dt 3:12, 16](#); [Jos 12:2-6](#)).

*See also* Jordan River.

## Jabesh (Person)

The father of Shaullum. Shallum killed Zechariah, who was the king of Israel ([2 Kings 15:10-14](#)).

## Jabesh, Jabesh-Gilead (Place)

Town appearing in the closing chapters of the book of Judges (chs [19-21](#)). This is a sad record of the division and degradation of the land, which tells of a base atrocity committed by the men of Gibeah against a Levite's concubine, a sanguinary war against Benjamin in consequence, and savage reprisals against Jabesh-gilead, whose community had sent no contingent to the battle. Such is the first mention of the town. The town was repopulated by neighboring Gileadites and next appears in [1 Samuel 11](#). East of the Jordan River, Jabesh was exposed to Ammonite attack, and Nahash of Ammon forced Jabesh-gilead to seek terms of surrender. The condition imposed by the barbarous Nahash was the loss of the right eye for all the inhabitants, a mutilation intended to humiliate Israel and destroy the military potential of a border fortress. The sequel was Saul's forced march, a fine piece of military prowess, and a tremendous boost for the new king's prestige. Saul gained in one swift blow the support of the Transjordanian tribes and the reduction of the frontier threat that a militarily powerful Ammon would undoubtedly offer. The men of Jabesh-gilead repaid their deep debt to Saul when the king, now unbalanced and rejected, died on Mt Gilboa with his son Jonathan in a last attempt to blunt the Philistine drive to the north. The bodies of Saul and Jonathan, hung headless over the walls of Bethshan, were cut down and rescued by a commando force from Jabesh-gilead, who made a forced march of nine miles (14.5 kilometers) each way to honor

their onetime benefactor ([1 Sm 31:8-13](#); [1 Chr 10:8-12](#)). When David became king, he repaid the men of Jabesh-gilead with gratitude.

The name Jabesh is preserved in that of the Wadi el-Yabis that runs into the Jordan directly south of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. The town itself, according to Eusebius's generally reliable topography, was about six miles (9.7 kilometers) south of Pella on the road to Gerasa. The twin tells of Tell el-Maqereh and Tell Abu Kharaz on the Wadi el-Yabis correspond with Eusebius's location much better than the other site suggested: Tell el-Maqlub. Tell el-Meqereh and Tell Abu Kharaz are on the eastern rim of the Jordan Valley and fit the details of the historical record—Saul's forced march from Bezek, and the route of the Jabesh-gilead raiding party to Beth-shan.

## **Jabez (Person)**

Member of Judah's tribe who was noted for his godliness. He prayed for God's protection, and his prayer was answered ([1 Chr 4:9-10](#)).

## **Jabez (Place)**

City that was probably located in Judah and was inhabited by scribes ([1 Chr 2:55](#)).

## **Jabin**

1. King of Hazor who led a coalition against Joshua at Merom. Jabin and his allies were destroyed in the battle, and Hazor was burned to the ground ([Jos 11:1-14](#)).

2. King of Hazor during the period of the judges ([Jgs 4](#)). God allowed him to oppress Israel for 20 years because of their wickedness. His army included 900 chariots of iron. Eventually, God delivered Israel through the prophetess Deborah and her captain, Barak, who defeated Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army. While resting after his flight from battle, Sisera himself was killed by a woman. Jabin was no longer a threat after Sisera's death and was soon killed ([Jgs 4:24](#); [Ps 83:9](#)).

## **Jabneel**

1. Alternate name for the town Jabneh in Judah's tribe ([Jos 15:11](#)). See Jabneh.

2. Town of Galilee near Tiberias, on Naphtali's southern border ([Jos 19:33](#)). It was located south of modern Jabneel.

## **Jabneh**

Biblical city on the coastal plain between Joppa (modern Jaffa) and Ashdod, first mentioned as Jabneel, on the northern border of the tribe of Judah ([Jos 15:11](#)). It is mentioned together with the Philistine cities Gath and Ashdod, whose walls were breached by Uzziah, king of Judah ([2 Chr 26:6](#)). In the middle Bronze Age a harbor was established at Jabneh-yam, which is probably mentioned by Thutmose III in his list of conquered cities and in the Tell el-Amarna letters (Jabni-ilu). The remains of the harbor show evidence of all periods—from early Bronze Age down to the Byzantine period. In Hellenistic times Jabneh was called Jamnia and was used as a base by foreign armies for subsequent attacks against the Judean territory of the Maccabees. After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, a small community of learned refugees was located in Jabneh. Their leader was Johanan ben Zakkai, a former member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews in Jerusalem. He founded a school there. His successor was Gamaliel II. Here the canon of the OT was defined. During the second Jewish war (Bar-Kochba Revolt, AD 132–135), Jabneh was deserted. The spiritual center of the Jewish life was removed to Galilee. The refugees settled down first in Zippori and later in Tiberias, where the Jerusalem Talmud was codified and the Masoretic Text of the OT was produced.

## **Jacan, Jachan**

Member of Gad's tribe who lived in Bashan during the reign of Jotham, king of Judah ([1 Chr 5:13](#)).

## Jachin

1. The son of Simeon and leader of the Jachinites, who moved to Egypt with his grandfather Jacob ([Genesis 46:10](#); [Exodus 6:15](#); [Numbers 26:12](#)). He is called Jarib in [1 Chronicles 4:24](#).
2. A priest who lived in Jerusalem after the exile to Babylon ([1 Chronicles 9:10](#); [Nehemiah 11:10](#)). The name Jachin may possibly refer to a family of priests that Jachin led.
3. A descendant of Aaron who led the twenty-first division of priests who served in the temple during King David's time ([1 Chronicles 24:17](#)).

## Jachin and Boaz

Names of two pillars Solomon set up before the temple vestibule. He named the south pillar Jachin and the north pillar Boaz ([1 Kgs 7:21](#); [2 Chr 3:17](#)). These hollow pillars were cast of bronze and measured about 27 feet (8.2 meters) in height and about 18 feet (5.5 meters) in circumference (nearly 6 feet, or 1.8 meters, in diameter). They were crowned with a capital (ornate cap or top) about 7½ feet (2.3 meters) high that consisted of cast lily work, chains, and 200 pomegranates each ([1 Kgs 7:15-20](#); [2 Chr 3:15-16](#); [4:13](#)).

## Jachinite

Any descendant of Jachin, the son of the patriarch Simeon ([Numbers 26:12](#)).

*See* Jachin #1.

## Jacinth

Precious stone mentioned in [Revelation 21:20](#) as a foundation stone in the new Jerusalem. *See* Stones, Precious.

## Jackal

Wolflike mammal known for its distinctive wail ([Mi 1:8](#)). *See* Animals.

## Jackal's Well

Unknown location along the Jerusalem wall between the Valley Gate and the Dung Gate visited by Nehemiah during his night inspection of the wall ([Neh 2:13](#)). It is also called Dragon's Well or Serpent's Well.

## Jacob

1. Younger of twin sons born to Isaac and Rebekah ([Gn 25:24-26](#)). Isaac had prayed for his barren wife, Rebekah, and she conceived the twins, who jostled each other in the womb. When she asked the Lord about this, he told her that she was carrying two nations and that the older son would serve the younger (v [23](#)). Esau was hairy and red (later he was called Edom, "red," [25:30](#); [36:1](#)), but Jacob was born holding the heel of his brother, so that he was named Jacob, "he takes by the heel" (cf. [Hos 12:3](#)), with the derived meaning "to supplant, deceive, attack from the rear."

### Personal History

Esau and Jacob were very different from each other. Esau was an outdoorsman, the favorite of his father, while Jacob stayed around the tents and was loved by his mother.

One day when Jacob was preparing red pottage, Esau came in famished and asked Jacob for some food. Jacob offered to sell Esau some stew in exchange for his birthright as firstborn, and Esau agreed, thus repudiating his birthright (cf. [Heb 12:16](#)). The significance of this episode of the red pottage is demonstrated by its association with Esau's second name, Edom ("red") ([Gn 25:30](#)).

Isaac became old and blind. One day he asked Esau to take his weapons and get some wild game, of which Isaac was very fond ([Gn 27:6-7](#); cf [25:28](#)), so that he could eat and then confer his blessing upon Esau. Rebekah overheard this, so she called Jacob and told him to go to the flock and select two good kids. She would prepare a dish that would pass for the game while Esau was out hunting. Jacob feared that Isaac would detect the deception, for Esau was very hairy, but Rebekah had everything planned. She placed the skins of the kids on Jacob's hands and neck to give the impression of hairiness ([27:16](#)) and clothed him in Esau's best garments, which had the smell of the outdoors on them. Although Isaac recognized the voice of Jacob, his

other senses failed him, and he was deceived by the feel of the skins and the smell of the garments. He proceeded to give the blessing to Jacob (vv [27-29](#)).

No sooner had Jacob left than Esau arrived with the game he had cooked. Jacob's ruse was discovered, but the deed could not be undone ([Gn 27:33](#)), for, as the Nuzi tablets show, an oral blessing had legal validity and could not be revoked. Esau was heartbroken (cf. [Heb 12:17](#)). Isaac gave him a blessing inferior to the one given to Jacob ([Gn 27:39-40](#)).

The animosity between the brothers deepened, and Esau plotted to kill Jacob after the death of their father. Rebekah learned of this, so she instructed Jacob to flee to her brother Laban in Haran ([Gn 27:42-45](#)). Esau's Hittite wives, meanwhile, had been making life miserable for Rebekah; she complained to Isaac, who called Jacob and sent him to Laban to marry one of his uncle's daughters ([27:46-28:4](#)).

Jacob set out for Haran. Using a stone for a pillow, he dreamed one night of a ladder reaching up to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. God spoke to Jacob and gave to him the promise he had given to Abraham and Isaac concerning the land and descendants. The next morning Jacob took his stone pillow and set it up as a pillar, anointing it with oil. He named the place Bethel ("house of God") and made a vow that if the Lord would be with him and provide for him, he would give a tithe to the Lord ([Gn 28:10-22](#)).

When Jacob reached the area of Haran, he met shepherds who knew Laban. Rachel, Laban's younger daughter, arrived with her father's flock, and Jacob rolled the large stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep for her ([Gn 29:1-10](#)). When Rachel learned that Jacob was from their own family, she ran to tell her father, who greeted Jacob warmly. After staying with them for a month, Jacob was hired to tend Laban's flocks. When wages were discussed, Jacob proposed to work seven years to earn Rachel as his wife (vv [15-20](#)).

At the end of seven years Jacob was set to claim his wages, but on the night of the wedding feast, Laban gave his older daughter, Leah, to Jacob; Jacob did not discover the substitution until morning. He felt cheated and protested to Laban, but Laban insisted that according to custom the older daughter must marry first and proposed that Jacob work another seven years for Rachel. Jacob agreed to this and put in his time ([Gn 29:21-30](#)).

[Genesis 29](#) and [30](#) relate the births of most of Jacob's children. Leah bore Jacob four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah ([Gn 29:31-35](#)). She named her first son Reuben ("see, a son") since she felt that her husband would love her because she bore a son. Simeon is derived from the root "hear," since Leah thought that God had given her this son because he had heard that she was hated. Levi is related to the verb "join," for Leah thought that her husband would be joined to her because of this third son. Judah means "praise," for she praised the Lord at the birth of her fourth son.

Rachel had not conceived any children, so she gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob. She bore him Dan and Naphtali ([Gn 30:1-8](#)). Rachel named the first son Dan ("he judged") because God had judged, that is, vindicated her. Naphtali means "my struggle, my wrestling," for Rachel said she had wrestled with and overcome her sister.

Thereupon Leah gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob as a wife; she brought forth Gad and Asher ([Gn 30:11](#)). Gad means "fortune"; Leah said, "Good fortune," when he was born. Asher ("happy") was so named because Leah said, "Now the women will call me happy."

Reuben found some mandrakes in the field, and Leah traded them to Rachel for Jacob's services. Leah then bore sons five and six, Issachar and Zebulun, followed by a daughter, whom she named Dinah ([Gn 30:14-21](#)). Issachar perhaps means "reward," for Leah said that God had rewarded her for giving her maid servant to her husband. Zebulun probably means "honor"; Leah thought that now her husband would honor her.

At last Rachel herself conceived and bore her first child, a son whom she named Joseph. "Joseph" means "he will add" or "may he add," for Rachel wanted God to add another son to her.

Jacob wanted to leave and go back to Canaan, but Laban wanted him to stay, for through divination he had learned that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob ([Gn 30:27](#)). They discussed the matter of wages, and Jacob proposed that every speckled and spotted sheep and goat and every black lamb become his (vv [32-33](#)). Laban agreed to this, but he quickly removed all the animals marked in that fashion and put them under the care of his sons, some three days' distance from the rest of the flocks (vv [35-36](#)).

Jacob also contrived to gain an advantage; he tried to influence the genetics of the animals by putting speckled and streaked wooden rods by the water

troughs when the best animals were breeding. The Lord blessed Jacob and he became rich in flocks and herds ([Gn 30:37–43](#)).

The sons of Laban became very bitter toward Jacob, and Laban's attitude toward him changed also. Jacob noticed this, and now the Lord spoke to Jacob and told him to return to Canaan ([Gn 31:3–16](#)). Jacob held a family council with his two wives and told them how God had blessed him, even though their father had cheated him and had changed his wages ten times. Jacob organized his caravan while Laban was away shearing sheep. Rachel stole her father's household gods, for their possession would make the holder heir to Laban's estate (see Nuzi Tablets). The party took off, crossed the Euphrates, and headed for Gilead. Laban and his relatives pursued them, but God spoke to Laban in a dream, warning him not to say anything to Jacob.

When Laban caught up with Jacob, he upbraided him for sneaking away and inquired about his household gods. Jacob did not know what Rachel had done, so he said that the one found with the gods should be put to death ([Gn 31:32](#)). Rachel had hidden them in a camel saddle and was sitting on the saddle when her father searched the tent. Laban did not find the idols. After this, Jacob became angry and complained that he had served Laban for 20 years and that Laban had reduced his wages ten times.

Laban suggested a covenant of peace, so the two men gathered stones to make a monument and called it "heap of witness." Early the next morning Laban said his farewells and returned home.

As Jacob and his household journeyed on, he was met by the angels of God ("God's camp," [Gn 32:2](#)), so he named that place Mahanaim, "the two camps." Jacob sent messengers ahead to inform Esau of his return. They came back with the news that Esau was approaching with 400 men. Jacob was afraid and sought the Lord's protection. To win Esau's favor, Jacob sent ahead gifts of animals, and that night he sent his family and possessions across the ford of the Jabbok River. Jacob was left alone, and "a man" wrestled with him throughout the night. Toward dawn the man touched Jacob's thigh, and his hip was dislocated, but Jacob would not give up until the "man" blessed him. Here the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel ("he strives with God"), and Jacob named the place Peniel ("face of God") because he had seen God face to face and lived ([Gn 32:30](#)).

Esau was getting near, so Jacob arranged his family and went forward, bowing low before his brother. But Esau was gracious and forgiving and the meeting was a happy one ([Gn 33:4](#)). Esau was surprised at Jacob's large family and property and made every gesture of friendship. Esau returned to Seir, and Jacob moved on to Shechem, where he bought a piece of land from Hamor, the father of Shechem. Jacob built an altar there and named it El-Elohe-Israel, "God, the God of Israel" (v [20](#)).

Acting on the Lord's instructions, Jacob moved to Bethel and expelled the foreign gods from his household. At Luz (Bethel) the Lord again met him and reaffirmed his new name, renewing his promise of land and descendants ([Gn 35:9–15](#)). As they journeyed south, Rachel died while giving birth to her second son (vv [16–20](#)). She named him Ben-oni ("son of my sorrow"), but Jacob changed his name to Benjamin ("son of the right hand"). Jacob went on to Hebron and found that Isaac was still living. Isaac died at age 180 and was buried by Esau and Jacob.

Although the story of Jacob continues in the book of Genesis, the central figure of chapters [37–50](#) is Joseph, Jacob's favorite son, the firstborn of Rachel. Jacob showed this favoritism so openly that the other sons became jealous of Joseph. They plotted to kill Joseph but instead sold him to a caravan of traders on their way to Egypt ([Gn 37:9–28](#)). They took Joseph's coat, dipped it into the blood of a goat, and took it to their father, telling him that they had found the robe. Jacob recognized the coat he had given his son and concluded that he was dead. Jacob was heartbroken and would not be comforted.

When a famine hit Canaan, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain ([Gn 42:1–5](#)), keeping Benjamin at home. When the brothers returned to Canaan, they reported to Jacob that the governor (who was really Joseph) had kept Simeon as a hostage and demanded that they bring Benjamin with them when they came again for grain. The famine continued, and Jacob again sent his sons to Egypt for grain. Very reluctantly, he permitted Benjamin to go with them, also sending a gift for the Egyptian governor ([43:11–14](#)).

The next news Jacob received was that Joseph was alive in Egypt and wanted his father and all his family to join him ([Gn 45:21–28](#)). Jacob went first to Beersheba and made offerings to the Lord. The Lord spoke to Jacob, telling him to go down to Egypt and confirming once more the promises he had previously made. Jacob and his descendants

who were in Egypt numbered 70, including the two sons of Joseph.

When Jacob reached Goshen, Joseph came to meet him, and there was a joyous reunion ([Gn 46:28-30](#)). Joseph reported the arrival of his father and brothers to the pharaoh ([47:1](#)) and took five of the brothers and his father to meet the ruler. Israel settled in the area of Goshen and prospered there. Jacob spent 17 years in Egypt and reached the age of 147.

When Jacob sensed his death was near, he called Joseph and made him swear that he would bury him with his forebears in Canaan. Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to his father for the patriarchal blessing. He presented the boys so that Manasseh, the firstborn, would be on Jacob's right and Ephraim on his left. Jacob, however crossed his hands and gave the younger son the greater blessing ([48:13-20](#)). Jacob prophesied that his people would return to Canaan, and he gave Joseph a double portion of the land. Then Jacob called for all his sons and gave to each of them a blessing ([49:1-28](#)). Judah received the place of preeminence, and it is he who appears in the genealogies of Jesus (vv [8-12](#)). The blessing of Joseph shows the mark of special favor (vv [22-26](#)). Jacob also charged his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah near Hebron, then he drew his feet up on the bed and died.

Joseph summoned the physicians to embalm his father according to Egyptian practice; there were 40 days for embalming and 70 days for the period of mourning ([Gn 50:1-3](#)). Arrangements were made to go to Canaan to bury Jacob as Joseph had promised, and a large funeral procession, including many Egyptian officials as well as the family of Jacob, went up from Egypt. The company mourned for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad; then the sons of Jacob buried him in the cave of Machpelah as he had requested. The entire group returned to Egypt, and Joseph assured his brothers that he had no intention of avenging the wrong they had done him. God had meant the whole episode for good (vv [15-21](#)).

#### Jacob as the Nation Israel

God made the same promises concerning the land and the nation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but it is by Jacob's God-given name, Israel, that the nation is known.

The name Jacob is used for the nation about 100 times (e.g., [Nm 24:5, 19](#); [Dt 32:9](#); [Ps 59:13](#)). It is often found as a parallel to Israel (e.g., [Nm 23:7](#); [Dt](#)

[33:10](#); [Is 14:1](#)). "Jacob" is also used specifically of the northern kingdom of Israel ([Am 7:2, 5](#)). In [Isaiah 41:21](#) "the King of Jacob" refers to God himself.

*See also* Genesis, Book of; Israel, History of; Patriarchs, Period of the.

2. Father of Joseph, the husband of Mary and earthly father of Jesus according to Matthew's genealogy ([Mt 1:16](#)). Luke, however, names Heli as Joseph's father ([Lk 3:24](#)). See Genealogy of Jesus Christ (The Relationship between the Two Records).

## Jacob's Ladder

When Jacob left home after deceiving his father, Isaac, into giving him the blessing that Isaac had intended for Esau ([Gn 27:6-40](#)), he was not only desirous of finding a wife from among the daughters of his mother's brother, but he was also literally fleeing for his life, because Esau had determined to kill him (v [41](#)). When he stopped to rest for the night in the open countryside, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and blessed him ([28:10-22](#)). In the vision Jacob saw a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it. At the top of the ladder stood the Lord himself, who confirmed to Jacob the promise previously given to Abraham ([12:2-3, 7](#)), and repeated to Isaac ([26:3-5](#)). In the context it seems clear that the ladder with the ascending and descending angels depicts God reaching out to Jacob and making a way for Jacob to have a relationship with him. The communion that was to exist between God and Jacob is symbolized in the ladder and the movement of the angels. This communication between heaven and earth appears to be the same point that is made in [John 1:50](#) when Jesus says to Nathanael and his other disciples, "You will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down upon the Son of Man" (nlt). Jacob was so overwhelmed by God's grace in revealing himself to him in this way that he named the place at which this took place Bethel—the House of God.

## Jacob's Well

Place mentioned only in John's Gospel ([Jn 4:5-29](#)). It was here that Jesus sat and talked with the unnamed woman of Samaria, who readily accepted

Jesus' words. This well is located in a plot of ground acquired by the patriarch Jacob, about 300 yards (274 meters) southeast from the traditional tomb of Joseph ([Gn 33:19](#); [Jos 24:32](#); [Jn 4:5-6](#)). The site is about two miles (3.2 kilometers) southeast of modern Nablus, 600 yards (549 meters) southeast of the site of ancient Shechem (modern Balata), and 1,000 yards (914 meters) south of Sychar (modern Askar). Towering over the site on the northwest is Mt Ebal (at the foot of which lies Askar), and on the southwest Mt Gerizim, mountains of cursing and blessing, respectively ([Dt 27:12-13](#); [Jos 8:30-33](#)). Near here Abraham built his first altar, and Jacob his second ([Gn 12:6-7](#); [33:18-20](#)). Thus the site is one of the most ancient and sacred in the Holy Land.

The well is about 100 feet (30.5 meters) in depth and one yard (.9 meter) in diameter, cut through limestone. Fed by subterranean streams from the adjacent mountain slopes, the water is pure and plentiful, the pride of the villagers. A church has existed on the site from at least AD 380. The Greek Orthodox Church acquired the site in 1885 and built a structure on the site. Access to the well is by steps leading from either side of the church altar to the well curb below.

## Jada

Onam's son from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 2:28, 32](#)).

## Jadah

Variant of Jehoaddah ([1 Chr 8:36](#)) and Jarah ([1 Chr 9:42](#)). See Jehoadah, Jehoaddah.

## Jaddai

Nebo's descendant, who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic era ([Ezr 10:43](#)).

## Jaddua

1. Leader who set his seal on Ezra's covenant during the postexilic era ([Neh 10:21](#)).
2. Eliashib's descendant and a contemporary of Nehemiah ([Neh 12:11, 22](#)). Jaddua's father,

Jonathan (v [11](#)), is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri as Johanan (see also v [22](#)).

## Jade

Another spelling of Jada, Onam's son from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 2:28, 32](#)).

*See* Jada.

## Jadon

Workman on the Jerusalem wall after the return from exile. Jadon worked on the section near the Old Gate of the city with men from Gibeon and Mizpah. He was a Meronothite ([Neh 3:7](#)).

## Jael

Wife of Heber. Though her husband was from the Kenite tribe, a longtime ally of Israel, he had chosen to side with Jabin, the Canaanite king. Jael demonstrated her loyalty to Israel, Jabin's enemy, however, by inviting Sisera, Jabin's general, into her tent, giving him milk instead of water, providing him a place to sleep, and then driving a tent peg into his temple ([Jgs 4:17-18, 21-22](#)). Deborah, the inspired poetess, reflecting on the God-given victory over the Canaanites, praises Jael for this deed ([5:6, 24-31](#)).

## Jagur

Place in the extreme southern part of Israel, near Edom, inherited by Judah's tribe soon after the Conquest ([Jos 15:21](#)).

## Jah

Abbreviation of the covenant name of God, YHWH or Yahweh ("Jehovah," kjv; "Lord," most modern translations). The fragment is often used in words and names (e.g., Hallelujah, Jahziel). *See* God, Names of.

**Jahath**

1. Reaiah's son and the father of Ahumai and Lahad, Zorathites from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:2](#)).
2. Gershonite Levite ([1 Chr 6:20](#)), whose descendant Asaph was appointed by King David to serve as a musician in the temple (v [43](#)).
3. A descendant of Shimei, who was a descendant of Gershon from Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 23:10-11](#)).
4. Shelomith's son from Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 24:22](#)).
5. Merarite Levite, who was one of the supervisors of the temple repairs under Josiah ([2 Chr 34:12](#)).

**Jahaz**

Town east of the Dead Sea (in modern Jordan) where the Israelites defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, when he refused to permit them to pass through his land ([Nm 21:23](#); [Dt 2:32](#); [Jgs 11:20](#)). According to [Joshua 13:18](#), Moses gave the town to Reuben's tribe as part of its allotment. The town with its surrounding pasturelands was given to the Merarite Levites ([Jos 21:36](#); [1 Chr 6:78](#)).

In later times, in prophetic oracles by both Isaiah ([Is 15:4](#)) and Jeremiah ([Jer 48:21](#)), it is referred to as a city in the land of Moab. This may indicate that it was taken from Israel by Moab (to whom it apparently belonged before Sihon conquered it). The town is mentioned on the Moabite Stone (known as the Dibon Stele and dating to c. 845 BC) as the place where Mesha, king of Moab, had lived while at war with Israel. According to Mesha, he took Jahaz from Israel and added it to his own territory.

**Jahaza, Jahazah**

KJV spellings of Jahaz. See Jahaz.

**Jahaziah**

KJV rendering of Jahzeiah, Tikvah's son, in [Ezra 10:15](#). See Jahzeiah.

**Jahaziel**

1. Warrior from Benjamin's tribe who joined David at Ziklag in his struggle against King Saul. Jahaziel

was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:4](#)).

2. One of the two priests David appointed to blow trumpets before the ark as it was brought into the tent in Jerusalem, where it remained until the completion of the temple by Solomon ([1 Chr 16:6](#)).
3. Levite belonging to the Kohathite division appointed by David to temple duties ([1 Chr 23:19](#); [24:23](#)).
4. Levite of the sons of Asaph who encouraged Jehoshaphat and the army of Judah not to be dismayed by the size of Moabite and Ammonite armies coming against them but to stand still and see the victory of the Lord ([2 Chr 20:14](#)). Jehoshaphat's response exemplified a godly king encouraging his people to have faith in the Lord their God (vv [18-21](#)).
5. Shecaniah's father. Shecaniah returned to Jerusalem with Ezra after the exile ([Ezr 8:5](#)).

**Jahdai**

Caleb's descendant from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:47](#)).

**Jahdiel**

One of the family heads of Manasseh's tribe dwelling east of the Jordan following the allotment of the land ([1 Chr 5:24](#)). He was noted as one of the mighty warriors in his tribe.

**Jahdo**

Gadite, son of Buz and a forefather of a number of valiant men who were registered during the reigns of King Jeroboam of Israel (793–753 BC) and King Jotham of Judah (750–735 BC; [1 Chr 5:14](#)).

**Jahleel, Jahleelite**

Zebulun's son ([Gn 46:14](#)) and the founder of the Jahleelite family ([Nm 26:26](#)).

**Jahmai**

Tola's son from Issachar's tribe ([1 Chr 7:2](#)).

## Jahzah

Alternate form of Jahaz, a town east of the Dead Sea, in [1 Chronicles 6:78](#) (nlt mg) and [Jeremiah 48:21](#) (nlt mg). See Jahaz.

## Jahzeel, Jahzeelite

Naphtali's son ([Gn 46:24; 1 Chr 7:13](#)) and founder of the Jahzeelite family ([Nm 26:48](#)).

## Jahzeiah

Tikvah's son and one of the persons named in connection with the divorce proceedings between the Israelites and their foreign wives ([Ezr 10:15](#)). Opinions differ as to whether he was for or against the proceedings. While the Hebrew text can be justifiably read either way, the grammar favors the interpretation that Jahzeiah opposed the proceedings (see nlt).

## Jahzerah

Ancestor of a priest who returned to Judah after the Babylonian exile ([1 Chr 9:12](#)). He is called Ahzai in [Nehemiah 11:13](#). Little else is known about him except that he was a great-grandson of a priest named Immer who lived in Jerusalem before the exile.

*See also Ahzai.*

## Jahziel

Alternate spelling of Jahzeel, Naphtali's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:13](#) (nlt mg). See Jahzel, Jahzeelite.

## Jair

1. A descendant of Manasseh ([Numbers 32:41](#)). At the time of the Conquest, he took several villages in the Argob region of Bashan and Gilead and called them after his own name, Havvoth-jair, meaning "Towns of Jair" ([Deuteronomy 3:14](#); compare [Joshua 13:30; 1 Kings 4:13; 1 Chronicles 2:23](#)). *See also* Havvoth-jair, Havvoth-jair.
2. One of the judges of Israel. He judged Israel 22 years. His being a Gileadite means he may be a descendant of #1 above ([Judges 10:3-5](#)).
3. Father of Elhanan, who killed Lahmi, Goliath's brother ([1 Chronicles 20:5](#)). In [2 Samuel 21:19](#) he is called Jaare-oregim.
4. Father of Mordecai ([Esther 2:5](#)). There is a jump in time from 597 BC, when they captured Jeconiah, king of Judah, to 486 BC, when Xerxes, king of Persia, began his reign. This is at the start of Esther. So, Jair was either the one taken captive with Jeconiah or his father, Shimei, was. In that case, Jair would have been born during the captivity.

## Jairite

Any descendant of Jair from the tribe of Manasseh ([2 Samuel 20:26](#)).

*See* Jair #1.

## Jairus

The leader of a synagogue, possibly at Capernaum. He found Jesus in the crowd and asked him to heal his dying daughter. While Jesus was delayed by another healing, Jairus learned that his daughter had died. Jesus encouraged him not to fear but to believe. Jesus then went to Jairus's house, sent the mourners away, and brought the girl back to life ([Mark 5:22, 35-42; Luke 8:41, 49-55](#)).

**Jakan**

KJV spelling of Jaakan, Esau's descendant, in [1 Chronicles 1:42](#). See Jaakan.

**Jakeh**

Agur's father. Agur authored a series of proverbs addressed to Ithiel and Ucal ([Prv 30:1](#)).

**Jakim**

1. Shimei's descendant from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:19](#)).
2. Family leader of the 12th group of Aaron's descendants assigned to temple duty in David's time ([1 Chr 24:12](#)).

**Jakin**

Another spelling for Jachin.

*See* Jachin.

**Jakin and Boaz**

*See* Jachin and Boaz.

**Jakinite**

Another spelling for Jachinite.

*See* Jachinite.

**Jalam**

Esau's son and chief of an Edomite clan ([Gn 36:5, 14, 18; 1 Chr 1:35](#)).

**Jalon**

Ezrah's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:17](#)).

**Jambres**

An enemy of Moses. Paul uses him, along with Jannes, as an example of those who "oppose the truth" and are "disqualified from the faith" ([2 Timothy 3:8-9](#)).

*See* Jannes and Jambres.

**Jambri**

Ancestor of an Arab tribe. During the Hasmonean (Maccabean) wars when Jonathan was ruler, the Jambrites captured a baggage train of the Jews when it was being sent to the Nabateans for safekeeping ([1 Macc 9:36](#)).

**James (Person)**

1. James, the brother of Jesus, was an important leader (the leading elder) in the church in Jerusalem. He also wrote the Letter of James in the New Testament.  
 The Gospels only mention James twice. These mentions list him with his brothers Joseph (or Joses), Simon, and Judas ([Matthew 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#)). James may have been the oldest of the brothers after Jesus. James might have been the oldest brother after Jesus. Some people wonder if these were Jesus's full brothers or not. But the Bible seems to say clearly that they were. Like his other brothers, James did not accept Jesus's authority while Jesus was alive ([John 7:5](#)).  
 James's conversion is not mentioned. It may have happened when Jesus appeared to him and others after his resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:7](#)). He became head of the church at Jerusalem ([Acts 12:17](#); [21:18](#); [Galatians 2:9](#)). Jesus had taught that following him was more important than being related to someone ([Matthew 12:48–50](#); [Mark 3:33–35](#); [Luke 8:21](#)). But it is likely that being Jesus's brother helped James become a respected leader.  
 People saw James as an apostle ([Galatians 1:19](#)), even though he was not one of the original twelve apostles. Some suggest he was a replacement for the martyred son of Zebedee. Others think the term "apostle" can mean both "the Twelve" and "all the apostles" (see the two separate categories cited in [1 Corinthians 15:5, 7](#)).  
 Tradition says that Jesus and the apostles chose James to be the first bishop of Jerusalem. What is certain is that he led the first Council of Jerusalem. This meeting was about how to welcome non-Jewish people into the Christian church. James helped make the final decision that was sent to churches in Antioch, Syria,

and Cilicia ([Acts 15:19–20](#)). James felt his main job was to teach Jewish people about Jesus. He helped solve arguments in the new church about how Jewish laws applied to new Christians, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

James kept following many Jewish practices even as a Christian. We can see this in what he asked Paul to do when Paul visited Jerusalem for the last time ([Acts 21:18–25](#)). This is the last time the book of Acts mentions James. He is traditionally considered to be the author of the Letter of James, where he describes himself as “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” ([James 1:1](#)).

An early Christian writer named Hegesippus (who died around AD 180) said people called James “the Just.” This was because James carefully followed Jewish law and lived a simple life. It seems clear that James was martyred (killed for his faith). A Jewish historian named Josephus says this happened in the year AD 61. There was a Jewish uprising after the Roman governor Festus died, and before a new one had been chosen.

2. James, son of Alphaeus. He was one of Jesus's 12 apostles.

James, son of Alphaeus, is always listed as one of the 12 apostles ([Matthew 10:3](#); [Mark 3:18](#); [Luke 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#)). But, we do not know much about him for certain. Levi (also known as Matthew) is also described as the son of Alphaeus ([Mark 2:14](#)). But, he and James were probably not brothers. Many scholars think this James might be the same person as the one called “James the less” or “James the smaller.” The description “the less” seems to have been given to distinguish him from the son of Zebedee. It may indicate that he was either smaller or younger than Zebedee’s son (the Greek word can cover both interpretations).

3. James, son of Zebedee. He was one of Jesus's 12 apostles. He was the first apostle to die for his faith (martyred in AD 44).

James was a Galilean fisherman. We can assume he had a comfortable lifestyle ([Mark 1:19–20](#)). He was called to be one of the disciples at the same time as his brother John ([Matthew 4:21](#); [Mark 1:19–20](#)). It is reasonable to assume that he was older than John, both because he is almost always mentioned first and because John is sometimes identified as “the brother of James” ([Matthew 10:2](#); [17:1](#); [Mark 3:17](#); [5:37](#)).

James, John, and Simon Peter were part of a fishing partnership that included Andrew, Simon’s brother ([Luke 5:10](#)). The three reached, in a sense, a place of leadership among the disciples. They were often with Jesus during important events. For example:

- They were there when Jairus's daughter was raised ([Mark 5:37](#); [Luke 8:51](#)).
- They were at the Transfiguration when Jesus's appearance changed ([Matthew 17:1](#); [Mark 9:2](#); [Luke 9:28](#)).
- They were with Jesus on the Mount of Olives ([Mk 13:3](#)).
- They were with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane ([Matthew 26:37](#); [Mark 14:33](#)).

Also, James and John had earlier gone with Jesus to the home of Simon and Andrew ([Mark 1:29](#)).

Jesus gave James and John the nickname Boanerges, meaning "sons of thunder" ([Mark 3:17](#)). Jesus corrected them for speaking without thinking and for not understanding why he had come. This might have happened when they wanted to pray for a Samaritan village to be destroyed because the people there did not welcome Jesus's messengers ([Luke 9:54](#); compare [Mark 9:38](#); [Luke 9:49](#)).

James and John once asked Jesus for important positions in his kingdom. This showed they did not understand Jesus's message yet. Jesus prophesied that James and his brother would drink the cup their Master was to drink ([Mark 10:35-40](#); compare [Matthew 20:20-23](#)). (Jesus was telling them they would suffer like he would.) James and John were probably with the other disciples when Jesus appeared by the Sea of Galilee after he rose from the dead ([John 21:1](#)). Strangely, the book of John never mentions James by name.

We do not know much about what James did after this until about the year AD 44. That's when what Jesus said came true: James was killed "by the sword" by King Herod Agrippa I. James was the first of the twelve apostles to die for his faith, as mentioned in the New Testament ([Acts 12:1-2](#)).

James and John's mother was named Salome ([Matthew 27:56](#); [Mark 15:40](#)). She may have been a sister of Jesus's mother ([John 19:25](#)). If this is true, it would mean James and John were Jesus's cousins. They might have thought this gave them a special position.

## James, Letter of

First letter of the General Epistles.

### Preview

- Author
- Date, Origin, and Destination
- Purpose of Writing and Theological Teaching
- Content

### Author

According to the salutation, this letter was written by "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" ([Jas 1:1](#), nlt). But who was this James? Of the several mentioned in the NT, only two have ever been proposed as the author of this letter—James the son of Zebedee, and James the Lord's brother.

The James who wrote this epistle was probably not James the son of Zebedee, for he was martyred too early (AD 44) to have written it (see [Acts 12:1-2](#)). Most scholars have identified this James as Jesus' brother ([Mk 6:3](#); [Gal 1:19](#)), the prominent elder of the church in Jerusalem ([Acts 15:13, 19](#); [21:17-25](#); [Gal 2:12](#)). The whole character of the epistle coincides with what we know of this James's legalism and Jewishness.

As an elder of Jerusalem writing to the 12 tribes of the dispersion (which came as a result of the persecution noted in [Acts 11:19](#)), James set forth the gospel in its relation to the law, which the Jews revered. As Paul's epistles are a commentary on the doctrines flowing from the death and resurrection of Christ, so James's epistle has a close connection with Christ's teaching during his life on earth, especially his Sermon on the Mount. In both the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of James, the law is represented as fulfilled in love, and the very language is remarkably similar (cf. [Jas 1:2](#) with [Mt 5:12](#); [Jas 1:4](#) with [Mt 5:48](#); [Jas 1:5](#) and [5:14-15](#) with [Mt 7:7-11](#); [Jas 2:13](#) with [Mt 5:7](#) and [6:14-15](#); [Jas 2:10](#) with [Mt 5:19](#); [Jas 4:4](#) with [Mt 6:24](#); [Jas 4:11](#) with [Mt 7:1-2](#); [Jas 5:2](#) with [Mt 6:19](#)). The whole spirit of this epistle breathes the same gospel-righteousness that the Sermon on the Mount inculcates as the highest realization of the law. James's own character as "the Just" suited this coincidence (cf. [Jas 1:20](#); [2:10](#); [3:18](#) with [Mt 5:20](#)). It also fitted him for presiding over a church still zealous for the law ([Acts 21:18-24](#); [Gal 2:12](#)). If any could win the Jews to the gospel, he was the most likely one because he presented a pattern of OT

righteousness, combined with evangelical faith (cf. also [Jas 2:8](#) with [Mt 5:44, 48](#)).

### *Date, Origin, and Destination*

Many scholars confirm an early date for James's epistle, even as early as AD 45–49, because the whole orientation of the epistle fits the early history of the church, an era in which many Jewish Christians had not made a complete severance from Judaism. Thus, James uses the terms "the twelve tribes" ([Jas 1:1](#)) and "the synagogue" ([2:2](#), Greek); he speaks as an OT prophet ([5:1ff.](#)) and as one fond of OT proverbs (cf. [Jas 1:5](#) with [Prv 2:6](#); [Jas 1:19](#) with [Prv 29:20](#); [Jas 3:18](#) with [Prv 11:30](#); [Jas 4:13–16](#) with [Prv 27:1](#); and [Jas 5:20](#) with [Prv 10:12](#)). James's message, as was noted earlier, closely follows Jesus' sermons. His message does not deal with the Jewish/Gentile problems that arose in the 50s and 60s. Moreover, he, unlike Peter, Jude, and John (in their epistles), did not deal with false teachings. All these facts point to an early date. This date is probably before AD 50, when the first Jerusalem Council assembled to discuss the Jewish/Gentile problem ([Acts 15:1ff.](#)). Also, the date is probably after AD 44, the time of the persecution instigated by Herod Agrippa ([12:1](#)). This persecution would have caused many Jewish Christians to leave Jerusalem and thereby be "the dispersed" ([Jas 1:1](#)). Thus, James should be dated AD 45–49. As such, the Epistle of James was the first NT book to be written. If these dates are not accurate, then we are, at least, sure that it was written before AD 61 or 62, the time of James's martyrdom, according to Josephus.

Although a number of suggestions have been made from time to time about the origin of the book, there can be little doubt that the letter was written in Palestine. The author makes allusions that are Near Eastern generally and Palestinian particularly (cf. "the early and late rain," [5:7](#); the spring of brackish water, [3:11](#); the fig, olive, and vine, [3:12](#); and the "scorching heat," [1:11](#)).

The contents of the letter indicate clearly that James was writing to Jewish Christians. They are called "the twelve tribes," a title of Israel ([1:1](#)); their Christianity is assumed in [2:1](#); their place of meeting is called a synagogue ([2:2](#)); and they are told about the compassion of "the Lord Almighty" ([5:4](#))—a name for God used in the OT. In the shorter, disconnected passages of the letter, it is impossible to discover anything about the readers' circumstances. Most of these exhortations are general and relate to social and spiritual conditions

one might find among any group of Christians in any age. The more extended passages that deal with social conditions ([2:1–12; 5:1–11](#)) do provide information about the readers' situation. James is addressing poor Christians who are employed as farm laborers by wealthy landowners. A few rich may be included among his Jewish Christian readers (cf. [4:13–17](#)), but James is primarily concerned with the poor. His statements denouncing the rich are reminiscent of the OT prophets, especially Amos.

### *Purpose of Writing and Theological Teaching*

The letter of James was written (1) to strengthen Jewish Christians undergoing trial ([Jas 1:2–4, 13–15; 5:7–11](#)); (2) to correct a misunderstanding of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith ([2:14–26](#)); and (3) to pass down to first-generation Christians a wealth of practical wisdom.

James's theology is not dogmatic; it omits the great theological themes that dominate Paul's writings and play such an important role in the rest of the books of the NT. James makes no mention of the Incarnation, and the name of Christ appears only twice ([1:1; 2:1](#)). No mention is made of Christ's sufferings, death, or resurrection.

James's theology is practical and has a decided Jewish flavor. The distinctive Christian features, of course, are there. James has simply mingled the two to produce a Jewish-Christian document.

The outstanding theological themes of the letter are as follows:

### **Temptations and Trials**

The typically Jewish teachings—joy in trials and the use of trials for the building and perfecting of character—are both found in the letter ([1:2–4](#)). James also discusses the origin of temptation (vv [13–15](#)). Here the author comes into conflict with contemporary Jewish theology. The rabbinical solution to the problem of the origin of sin was that there was an evil tendency in man that enticed man to sin. The rabbis reasoned that since God is the Creator of all things, including the evil impulse in people, they are not responsible for their sins. No, says James. "And remember, no one who wants to do wrong should ever say, 'God is tempting me.' God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else either. Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires" (vv [13–14](#), nlt).

## Law

The entire letter is concerned with ethical teaching; there is no mention of the central gospel truths of Christ's death and resurrection. James presupposes the gospel and presents the ethical side of Christianity as a perfect law. He seems to be reassuring his Jewish-Christian readers that for them there is still law (the priceless possession of every Jew).

The law (ethical teaching of Christianity) is a perfect law ([1:25](#)) because it was perfected by Jesus Christ. It is also a law of freedom—that is, a law that applies to those who have freedom, not from law, but from sin and self through the "word of truth." Thus "law" is a Palestinian-Christian Jew's way of describing the ethical teaching of the Christian faith, the standard of conduct for the believer in Jesus Christ.

This tendency to describe Christian ethical teaching as law is found in [2:8–13](#), a passage that arises out of a rebuke against the favoritism that James's readers were showing toward the rich. This favoritism was being condoned by an appeal to the law of love to one's neighbor. So James writes, "It is good when you truly obey our Lord's royal command" ([2:8](#), nlt). The "royal command" is for those who are of God's kingdom; it is the rule of faith for those who have willingly subjected themselves to God's rule. The identification of law with the ethical side of Christianity runs through the entire letter.

## Faith and Works

Faith plays an important role in the theology of James. The basic element of piety ([1:3](#); cf. [2:5](#)) is belief in God—not merely belief in his existence but belief in his character as being good and benevolent in his dealings with mankind ([1:6](#)). Faith includes belief in the power of God and in his ability to perform miraculous acts; it is closely associated with prayer ([5:15–16](#); cf. [1:6](#)). James has a dynamic concept of faith and clearly goes beyond Judaism when he speaks of faith directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ ([2:1](#)).

Similarities exist between the concept of faith in James and that concept in the teachings of Jesus. For the Lord Jesus, also, faith meant gaining access to the divine power and is often associated with healing (cf. [Mt 21:22](#); [Mk 5:34](#); [11:24](#)).

The best-known passage in which faith is mentioned is [James 2:14–26](#), where it is contrasted with works. From a close study of this passage, it

can be determined that James is not contradicting Paul. For both James and Paul, faith is directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ; such faith will always produce good works. The faith of which James speaks is not faith in the Hebraic sense of trust in God that results in moral action. This is not recognized as *true* faith by James (cf. "if a man says he has faith," [2:14](#)), and Paul would agree with him.

James's use of the word "works" differs significantly from Paul's. For James, "works" are works of faith, the ethical outworking of true spirituality and include especially the "work of love" ([2:8](#)). (Paul would probably call such works "the fruit of the Spirit.") When Paul uses the word "works," he usually has in mind the works of the law whereby people attempt to establish their own righteousness before God. It is against such theological heresy that Paul's strongest polemics are addressed in the letters to the Galatians and Romans.

## Wisdom

James's concept of wisdom also reveals the Jewish background of the letter. Wisdom is primarily practical, not philosophical. It is not to be identified with reasoning power or the ability to apprehend intellectual problems; it has nothing to do with the questions *how* or *why*. It is to be sought by earnest prayer and is a gift from God ([Ias 1:5](#)). Both of these ideas find their roots in the Wisdom Literature of the Jews (cf. [Prv 2:6](#); [Wisd of Sol 7:7](#); [Ecclus 1:1](#)). The wise man demonstrates his wisdom by his good life ([Ias 3:13](#)), whereas the wisdom that produces jealousy and selfishness is not God's kind of wisdom (vv [15–16](#)).

## Doctrine of the End Time

Three important end-time themes are touched upon in the letter.

### The Kingdom of God

Mention of the kingdom of God grows out of a discussion of favoritism in the first half of chapter [2](#). No favoritism is to be shown to the rich, for James asks, "Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the kingdom God promised to those who love him?" ([2:5](#), nlt). This echoes our Lord's teaching in [Luke 6:20](#): "God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is given to you" (nlt). The kingdom is the reign of God partially realized in this life but fully realized in the life to come (cf. "promised," [Ias 2:5](#)).

## Judgment

This is a dominant end-time theme of the letter. In [2:12](#), the readers are admonished to speak and act, remembering that they will be judged under the law of liberty, and they are reminded that judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. In other words, judgment will be administered according to “works of love.” In [3:1](#), James addresses teachers and reminds them that privilege is another basis on which God judges.

The theme of judgment again appears in [5:1–6](#), and here the author reaches prophetic heights. God’s judgment will fall on the wealthy landowners who have lived self-indulgent, irresponsible lives. Not only have they cheated their poor tenant farmers; they have even “condemned and killed good people who had no power to defend themselves against you [the landowners]” ([5:6](#), nlt). All this has made them ripe for judgment (“your hearts are nice and fat, ready for the slaughter”—v [5](#), nlt).

The final passage on judgment ([5:9](#)) is addressed to those who are exploited or suffering. James’s word of exhortation is that they are not to grumble against each other. Judging is God’s business, and the Judge is close at hand.

## The Second Coming

The hope of Christ’s coming is presented as the great stimulus for Christian living. Every kind of suffering and trial must be endured because the coming of Christ is at hand ([5:8](#)). This expectancy is powerful and immediate—like that found in the Thessalonian letters.

## Content

In the true spirit of Wisdom Literature, James touches upon many subjects. His short, abrupt paragraphs have been likened to a string of pearls—each is an entity in itself. Some transitions exist, but they are often difficult to find and James moves quickly from one subject to another.

The author begins by identifying himself as the “slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and his readers as the “twelve tribes in the dispersion” (see nlt mg)—that is, the Jewish Christians who left Jerusalem and Israel due to persecution.

His first word is one of encouragement. Trials are to be counted as joy because they are God’s way of testing the believer, and they produce spiritual maturity. If the reason for a trial is not clear, God can and will give the answer. He is a lavish giver of wisdom to those who really want it ([1:5–8](#)).

A poor Christian should be proud of his exalted position in Jesus Christ, and a rich Christian should be glad that he has discovered there are more important things than wealth. Riches are transitory, like quickly wilting flowers under the hot Palestine sun ([1:9–11](#)).

God promises life to those who endure trials. One must not blame God for temptation, for it is contrary to his very nature either to be tempted or to tempt people. Temptation has its origin in people’s selfish desire—a desire that, when brought to full fruition, produces death ([1:12–15](#)). God is not the origin of temptation but the source of all good. He has given people his best gift, the gift of new life, and this has come through the gospel (vv [16–18](#)).

The proper attitude toward the Word of Truth is receptivity, not anger, and effective listening to that word involves spiritual preparation of heart and mind. Such a reception of the word brings salvation ([1:19–21](#)). The word is to be acted upon, not merely listened to. To be a passive hearer is to be like a man who sees himself in a mirror, and because he takes such a fleeting glance, forgets what he sees. An active hearer, one who takes a long look in the mirror of God’s Word, will become a doer, and God will bring great blessing into his life (vv [22–25](#)).

True religion is an intensely practical thing. It involves such things as controlling one’s tongue, looking after the needs of orphans and widows, and adopting a nonworldly lifestyle ([1:26–27](#)).

Favoritism and faith in Jesus Christ do not go together. It is wrong to show favoritism to a rich man when he comes into the assembly and to ignore a poor man. God has chosen poor people to be heirs of his kingdom. Furthermore, to show favoritism to the rich does not make sense, since they are the very ones who drag Christians into court and blaspheme the name of Christ ([2:1–7](#)). If, by showing deference to the rich, the royal law—to love one’s neighbor as oneself—is fulfilled, well and good. But to show favoritism is sin, and such sin will be judged by God. In order to be a lawbreaker one has only to break a single law (vv [8–13](#)).

Can a faith that does not produce works save a person? What good is a faith that does not respond to human need? Such a faith is dead. Someone will object by saying that there are “faith Christians” and there are “works Christians.” But this is not so. True faith is always demonstrated by works. It is

not enough to have orthodox beliefs. Even the demons are theologically orthodox! Abraham, by offering up Isaac, is an example of how true faith and works go together. Even Rahab the prostitute demonstrated her faith by protecting the spies at Jericho. So faith and works are inseparable ([2:14-26](#)).

Not many people should become spiritual teachers, because of the awesome responsibility involved. All of us are subject to mistakes, especially mistakes of the tongue, because the tongue is almost impossible to control. It is like a destructive blaze set by hell itself. The tongue is also inconsistent; it is used both to praise God and to curse men. Such inconsistency ought not to be ([3:1-12](#)).

True wisdom will always evidence itself in ethical living, whereas false wisdom produces jealousy and selfish ambition ([3:13-18](#)).

Strife and conflict arise out of illegitimate desires. Failure to have what one wants arises either from not asking God for it or from asking for the wrong thing. To be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God, for God is a jealous God and will brook no rivals. He also opposes the proud but offers abundant grace to the humble ([4:1-10](#)).

To speak against a brother or sister, or to judge them, is to speak against God's law and to judge it. The Christian's proper role is to be a doer of the law, not a judge. The role of judge belongs to God alone ([4:11-12](#)).

Life is uncertain. Therefore, plans for traveling or doing business should be made with the realization that all are subject to the will of God. To do otherwise is to be boastful and arrogant. When what is right is clearly known and one fails to do it, that is sin ([4:13-17](#)).

Judgment is coming to the rich because they are hoarding their wealth instead of using it for good purposes. God is not unmindful of the cries of the poor whom the rich have cheated and unjustly condemned. He is preparing the selfish, unscrupulous rich for a day of awful judgment ([5:1-6](#)).

In the midst of suffering and injustice, the poor are to be patient for Christ's coming, as the farmer must be patient as he waits for God to send the rains to cause his crops to grow and ripen. The return of Christ is at hand and therefore complaining and judging one another must cease. Job is a good example of patience and endurance in

suffering. One need not use oaths to guarantee the truthfulness of his statements. A single yes or no is sufficient ([5:7-12](#)).

Suffering should elicit prayer, cheerfulness, and praise. When believers are sick, they should call the elders of the church to pray for them and anoint them with oil. God has promised to answer such prayers. If the sickness is due to personal sin, and if that sin is confessed, God will forgive. Elijah is a classic example of how the prayer of a righteous man has powerful results ([5:13-18](#)).

If a Christian sees that another Christian has strayed from the truth and is able to bring him or her back into fellowship with Christ and his church, the consequences will be (1) that the sinner will be saved from death, and (2) that God will forgive the erring Christian ([5:19-20](#)).

*See also* Brothers of Jesus; James (Person).

## Jamin

1. Simeon's son ([Genesis 46:10](#); [Exodus 6:15](#); [1 Chronicles 4:24](#)) and founder of the Jaminitie family ([Numbers 26:12](#)).
2. Ram's son from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 2:27](#)).
3. One of the men (perhaps a Levite) who taught and explained the law to the people following Ezra's public reading ([Nehemiah 8:7](#)).

## Jaminitie

Any descendant of Jamin from the tribe of Simeon ([Numbers 26:12](#)).

*See* Jamin #1.

## Jamlech

Leader in Simeon's tribe ([1 Chr 4:34](#)).

## Jamnia

Alternate name for Jabneh in [Judith 2:28](#). *See* Jabneh.

## Janai

Gadite chief who settled, along with his kinsmen, in the land of Bashan ([1 Chr 5:12](#)).

## Janim

City in the hill country of the territory assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:53](#)). Its location is presumably southwest of Hebron.

## Jannai

An ancestor of Jesus mentioned in [Luke 3:24](#).

*See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.*

## Jannes and Jambres

Two Egyptian magicians who worked for Pharaoh. They tried to match the miracles that Moses performed in Egypt ([Exodus 7-9](#)). Although these chapters in Exodus do not mention their names, Jewish stories from later times tell us more about them.

According to Jewish legend, Jannes and Jambres were the sons of Balaam, who was a prophet from Midian ([Numbers 22-24](#)). The only time the Bible mentions their names is in the New Testament, where the apostle Paul writes about them. Paul compared Jannes and Jambres to false teachers in his time who opposed the truth ([2 Timothy 3:6-8](#)).

Scholars have studied these names carefully. The names appear to come from Semitic languages (languages related to Hebrew), but their exact meaning is not clear. Several ancient documents mention these magicians, though sometimes with different spellings of their names:

- The Dead Sea Scrolls (found at Qumran) call them "Yohanneh and his brother."
- The Babylonian Talmud (a collection of Jewish teachings) refers to them as "Yohane and Mamre."
- Some old Greek and Latin copies of [2 Timothy 3:8](#) spell the second name as "Mambres."

Other ancient writers also wrote about them. Pliny (who lived in the first century AD) mentioned them. Two writers from the second century AD, Apuleius and Numenius, also wrote about them, though they did not always mention both names.

Origen, an important early Christian teacher from Alexandria, wrote about a book called "The Book of Jannes and Jambres." He suggested that Paul may have gotten their names from this book when writing 2 Timothy. Another ancient church document (written in Latin) from around the fifth or sixth century AD, called the Gelasian Decree, mentions a book titled "Penitence of Jannes and Jambres." This might be the same book Origen wrote about.

## Janoah

1. City defining the eastern border of Ephraim's territory, located southeast of Shechem and northeast of Shiloh ([Jos 16:6-7](#)). It has been identified with modern Khirbet Yanun.

2. Town (modern Yanuh) of Naphtali's tribe captured by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, during the reign of King Pekah of Israel in 732 BC ([2 Kgs 15:29](#)).

## Janohah

KJV spelling of Janoah, a town in Ephraim's territory, in [Joshua 16:6-7](#). See Janoah #1.

## Janum

KJV spelling of Janim, a town in Judah's territory, in [Joshua 15:53](#). See Janim.

## Japheth

One of Noah's three sons ([Gn 5:32; 7:13; 9:18, 23, 27; 10:1-5; 1 Chr 1:4-5](#)) who, along with his wife, was among the eight human survivors of the great Flood. Because Japheth and his brother Shem acted with respect and modesty in covering their father's nakedness while he was in a drunken condition ([Gn 9:20-23](#)), they were both blessed in Noah's prophetic pronouncement of [Genesis 9:26-27](#). Of Japheth, Noah said, "God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave" (rsv). There are two interpretations of the meaning of this prophecy. Some understand the enlargement of Japheth to be a reference to a great increase in numbers of descendants. "To dwell in the tents of Shem" is understood as Japheth's sharing in the blessing of Shem. According to this view, there is to be a time when God will work primarily with Shem (the people of Israel), but then, at a later time, Japheth will be brought into connection with the faith of Israel and share in its promises. In this view fulfillment is found in the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles at the inception of the NT church. Others understand the "enlargement of Japheth" to refer to territorial enlargement, and the "dwelling in the tents of Shem" as the conquest of Shemite territory by Japhethites. In this view, fulfillment is found in the Greek and Roman conquests of Palestine.

In the "table of nations" in [Genesis 10:2](#), Japheth is listed as the father of Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. These are the ancestors of peoples who lived to the north and west of Israel and who spoke what today are classified as Indo-European languages.

*See also* Nations; Noah #1.

## Japhia (Person)

1. A king of the city of Lachish. He joined with four other Amorite kings to attack Gibeon because Gibeon had made a peace treaty with the Israelites. Joshua led the Israelites to defeat these five kings completely at the battle of Beth-horon. During this battle, God helped the Israelites by sending large hailstones and by making the sun stand still. Japhia and the four kings hid in a cave at Makkedah. But Joshua discovered them. He then had them killed and hung on trees ([Joshua 10:3-27](#)).
2. A son born to David while he was king in Jerusalem ([2 Samuel 5:15](#); [1 Chronicles 3:7](#); [14:6](#)).

## Japhia (Place)

Town described as part of the southern border of Zebulun's territory ([Jos 19:12](#)). It has been identified with modern Yafa, about two miles (3.2 kilometers) southwest of Nazareth.

## Japhlet

Heber's son and chief in Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:32-33](#)).

## Japhletites

People occupying an area that marked part of the southern border of Ephraim's territory in the vicinity of Beth-horon ([Jos 16:3](#)).

## Japho

KJV form of Joppa in [Joshua 19:46](#). See Joppa.

## Jar

A container made of clay, used to store liquids or dry goods.

*See Pottery.*

## **Jarah**

Descendant of King Saul ([1 Chr 9:42](#), nlt mg).

## **Jareb**

Name used by Hosea to designate an Assyrian king ([Hos 5:13](#)). Because no such name is to be found in the Assyrian king lists, some have conjectured that it designated Sargon, but this is mere speculation. In all probability Hosea chose this name (which in Hebrew means “contentious”) to describe the opposition that Ephraim and Judah would encounter from a contentious king in Assyria because of Israel’s sin ([10:6](#)).

## **Jared**

Mahalalel’s son and a descendant of Seth. He was the father of Enoch ([Genesis 5:15–20](#); [1 Chronicles 1:2](#); [Luke 3:37](#)).

*See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.*

## **Jaresiah**

KJV rendering of Jareshiah, Jeroham’s son, in [1 Chronicles 8:27](#). *See Jareshiah.*

## **Jarha**

Egyptian servant of Sheshan, Jerahmeel’s descendant, who was given his master’s daughter in marriage. Sheshan did this because he had no sons ([1 Chr 2:34–35](#)).

## **Jarib**

1. Alternate name for Jachin, Simeon’s son, in [1 Chronicles 4:24](#). *See Jachin #1.*
2. Man who assisted Ezra in securing temple servants before the return to Palestine from exile ([Ezr 8:16](#)).

3. From Jeshua’s family, a priest who obeyed Ezra’s exhortation to divorce his pagan wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:18](#)).

## **Jarmuth**

1. Fortified city in the northern part of the Shephelah given to Judah’s tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:35](#)). It was one of five Amorite cities that banded together to attack Gibeon after they had made peace with Joshua and Israel ([10:3–5](#)). Jarmuth was re inhabited after the exile by people of Judah ([Neh 11:29](#)), and possibly maintained a population throughout the Dispersion. It is identified with Khirbet Yarmuk, 18 miles (29 kilometers) southwest of Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence suggests that the area of the Bronze Age city was six to eight acres (2.4 to 3.2 hectares) and had a population of about 1,500 to 2,000 people. It is mentioned in the Amarna letters as receiving aid from Lachish.

2. One of four cities of Issachar given to the Levites for their inheritance ([Jos 21:28–29](#)). It is apparently identifiable with Ramoth in [1 Chronicles 6:73](#) and Remeth in [Joshua 19:21](#). A stele of Pharaoh Seti I was found at Beth-shan, referring to the whole area as Mt Jarmuth.

*See also Levitical Cities.*

## **Jaroah**

Gilead’s son from Gad’s tribe ([1 Chr 5:14](#)).

## **Jashen**

One of the 30 mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:32](#)). The Hebrew text is translated “the sons of Jashen.” In [1 Chronicles 11:34](#), the text is translated “the sons of Hashem the Gizonite.”

Scholars agree in general that the phrase “the sons of” is an error of double writing (or dittography). It repeats the last three letters of the preceding word. The original text probably was either “Jashen the Gizonite” or “Hashem the Gizonite.” This means that Jashen himself, not his son, was the mighty warrior in David’s army.

## Jashobeam

1. The son of Zabdiel who was the leader of David's "Three" strongest warriors ([1 Chronicles 11:11](#)). He was also appointed as the chief of a division of 24,000 soldiers who served during the first month of the year ([1 Chronicles 27:2](#)). He is the same person as Josheb-basshebeth, the Tahkemonite ([2 Samuel 23:8](#)). Jashobeam became famous by killing 300 men ([1 Chronicles 11:11](#)). [2 Samuel 23:8](#) numbers it at 800.
2. A warrior who could fight with both his right and left hands who joined David's army at Ziklag ([1 Chronicles 12:6](#)).

## Jashub

1. Issachar's third son ([1 Chr 7:1](#); alternately called Iob in [Gn 46:13](#)), and founder of the Jashubite family ([Nm 26:24](#)).
2. Bani's descendant, who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his pagan wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:29](#)).

## Jashubi-Lehem

Mentioned along with Moab in [1 Chronicles 4:22](#).

## Jashubite

Any descendant of Jashub, the third son of Issachar ([Numbers 26:24](#)).

*See* Jashub #1.

## Jasiel

KJV form of Jaasiel the Mezobaite in [1 Chronicles 11:47](#). *See* Jaasiel #1.

## Jason

1. Jewish high priest (174–171 BC) who brought about the decline of the priesthood by Hellenizing Jerusalem, making her inhabitants "citizens of Antioch" ([2 Macc 4:9ff](#)). He was deposed by his cousin Onias Menelaus, but when a false report told of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, Jason attacked Jerusalem without mercy for his own people. Antiochus, returning from an aborted attack on Egypt, retook Jerusalem and Jason was forced to flee to Transjordan and thence from city to city. Second Maccabees reports that at his death, "[Jason] who had cast out many to lie unburied had no one to mourn for him; he had no funeral of any sort and no place in the tomb of his fathers" ([5:10](#), rsv).
2. Jewish Christian at Thessalonica who hosted Paul and Silas ([Acts 17:1, 5–9](#)). He and others were called before the city officials on charges of harboring seditionists. He was released when he put up bail.
3. Christian at Corinth who, along with Paul, sent greetings to the church at Rome ([Rom 16:21](#)).

## Jasper

Variety of green quartz. *See Stones, Precious.*

## Jathan

One of the sons of Shemaiah, who had accompanied Tobit to Jerusalem to worship ([Tb 5:14](#), nlt mg).

## Jathniel

Fourth son of Meshelemiah the Korahite and doorkeeper of the temple in David's time ([1 Chr 26:2](#)).

## Jattir

Town in the hill country of Judah given to the Levites ([Jos 15:48; 21:14; 1 Chr 6:57](#)). David sent spoils from his victory over the Amalekites to Jattir ([1 Sm 30:27](#)). It is identified with modern Khirbet 'Attir, 13 miles (21 kilometers) southeast of Hebron.

## Javan (Person)

Japheth's son whose seafaring descendants migrated to the north and west of Canaan ([Gn 10:2-4; 1 Chr 1:5-7](#)).

## Javan (Place)

A location commonly identified with Greece. The name Javan is linguistically associated with Ionia, a region in westernmost Asia Minor that was colonized by Greeks. Over time, people started using the name Javan to mean all of Greece. In many places in the Greek translation of the Bible, Javan appears as "Hellas," which is another name for Greece.

Some hints as to its location are given as early as the "table of nations," where Javan appears as the fourth son of Japheth ([Genesis 10:2](#); compare [1 Chronicles 1:5](#)). Moving west from Gomer, this tends to place it in Europe. Japheth is also said to be the father of:

- Elishah
- Tarshish
- Kittim
- Dodanim or Rodanim ([Genesis 10:4; 1 Chronicles 1:7](#))

The connections of these areas or peoples is well known.

Most of the references to Ionia (Greece) are in the prophetic books. [Isaiah 66:19](#) lists Javan with Tarshish, Put, Lud, and Tubal. The Lord's glory will be declared in those places. These are taken as a representative of the distant nations.

In a long prophecy against Tyre, Ezekiel names Javan, Tubal, and Meshech. They traded slaves and bronze vessels for Tyre's goods ([Ezekiel 27:13](#)). [Joel 3:6](#) condemns Tyre for selling the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks.

[Ezekiel 27:19](#) in Hebrew text reads "Vedan and Javan from Uzal." Certain translations handle this differently:

- "Greeks from Uzal"
- "Vedan and Javan paid for your wares from Uzal" (New American Standard Bible)
- "Dan also and Javan" (King James Version)
- "wine from Uzal" (Revised Standard Version)

The references to Javan in Daniel clearly mean Greece. The he-goat who represents the king of Greece ([Daniel 8:21](#)) is Alexander the Great. His empire was divided among his four generals upon his death. The prince of Greece in [Daniel 10:20](#) is compared to the prince of Persia in [Daniel 10:13, 20](#). It has been suggested that "prince" means guardian angel. But, the prince of Persia's opposition to the archangel Michael shows that "prince" is a high-ranking demonic spirit. (compare [Ephesians 6:12](#)). [Daniel 11:2](#) predicts a conflict between Persia and Greece. The next verse tells of Alexander the Great's success and his empire's breakup.

*See also* Greece, Greek.

## Javelin

Light, short, spearlike weapon. *See* Armor and Weapons.

## Jazer

Jazer was a town east of the Jordan River in the region of Gilead.

The Israelites took Jazer and its nearby villages when Moses was their leader ([Numbers 21:32](#)). The tribes of Gad and Reuben wanted to live there because the land was good for raising animals. They had many flocks and herds ([32:1-5](#)). They promised to build protection for their women and children. Then they would go with the other tribes to fight in Canaan (verses [6-27](#)).

Jazer marked part of the border of the land given to the tribe of Gad ([Joshua 13:25](#)). It was also given to the Levites ([Joshua 21:39; 1 Chronicles 6:81](#)). Later, Joab came to Jazer when King David sent him to count the people of Israel ([2 Samuel 24:5](#)). Jazer is also mentioned when David looked for "capable men" to serve ([1 Chronicles 26:31](#)).

About 200 years later, the nation of Moab took control of Jazer ([Isaiah 16:6-9](#); [Jeremiah 48:32](#)).

## Jaziz

One of David's royal stewards in charge of the flocks ([1 Chr 27:30-31](#)).

## Jearim, Mount

Mountain on the northwest border of Judah's territory between Beth-shemesh and Kiriath-jearim. Kesalon was located on its northern slope ([Jos 15:10](#)). It is associated with Mt Seir and Mt Ephron.

*See also* Kesalon.

## Jeaterai, Jeatherai

Zerah's son, a Gershonite Levite ([1 Chr 6:21](#)), called Ethni in [1 Chronicles 6:41](#).

## Jeberechiah, Jeberekiah

Father of Zechariah the scribe. Zechariah, with Uriah the priest, witnessed Isaiah's prophecy of the Assyrian conquest of Israel ([Is 8:2](#)).

## Jebus, Jebusite

A walled city that was located on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin. David conquered it, and afterward it became known as the "city of David," or ancient Jerusalem. The people who lived there were called Jebusites ([Joshua 18:16](#)). They were one of several groups collectively known as Canaanites ([Genesis 10:15-16](#)).

God repeatedly promised the land of the Jebusites and their neighbors to the Israelites ([Exodus 3:8; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11](#); [Numbers 13:29; Deuteronomy 7:1; 20:17](#)). This promise was partly fulfilled early in the campaign led by Joshua ([Joshua 3:10; 12:8; 18:16](#); compare [24:11](#)). The Bible says that the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it ([Joshua 18:28](#)). "The Benjamites, however, failed to drive out the Jebusites living in Jerusalem. So to this day the Jebusites live there among the Benjamites" ([Judges 1:21](#)). It seems the city was

captured by the men of Judah, but its people were not destroyed and they later moved back to the site.

Jebus (or Jerusalem) was on the border between two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. This may explain why it survived until the time of David. The borders of Judah and Benjamin are described this way: "the border went up the Valley of Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusites (that is, Jerusalem) and ascended to the top of the hill that faces the Valley of Hinnom on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim" ([Joshua 15:8](#)). It then "ran down the Valley of Hinnom toward the southern slope of the Jebusites and downward to En-rogel" ([Joshua 18:16](#)). Both descriptions agree that Jebus was on the southern slope of the "mountain" north of the valley of Hinnom. This is where East Jerusalem is today.

The city survived because it had a constant water supply from the spring of Gihon. It also had strong natural defenses. It was easy to defend because of steep valleys on three sides: the Kidron to the east and the Hinnom to the south and west. The Jebusites thought their city could not be captured. This made them proud and self-satisfied. After Saul died, when David was trying to unite the kingdom, the Jebusites mockingly challenged David to capture their stronghold ([2 Samuel 5:6](#); compare [1 Chronicles 11:5](#)). As the last remaining Canaanite stronghold in the area, it presented a unique challenge. Joab apparently led the attack up the water shaft and succeeded where previous attempts had failed ([2 Samuel 5:8](#)).

For both political and strategic reasons, David decided to move his capital from Hebron to Jebus. Politically, it was in neutral territory between Judah and Benjamin so it did not cause jealousy among the tribes. Strategically, it was easy to defend and more centrally located. The choice proved to be wise. Despite the fact that Jebus-Jerusalem is not on any waterway or major road, it has become through the centuries the spiritual capital of the world. Under David and Solomon, it became Israel's religious center, and today it is very important to the three major religions that believe in one God (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

*See also* Jerusalem.

## Jecamiah

KJV spelling of Jekamiah, King Jehoiachin's son, in [1 Chronicles 3:18](#). See Jekamiah #2.

## Jecholiah

The King James Version spelling of Jecoliah in [2 Kings 15:2](#). Jecoliah was the mother of King Azariah.

*See* Jeholiah.

## Jechoniah

An alternate form of Jehoiachin, a Judean king, in [Matthew 1:11-12](#).

*See* Jehoiachin.

## Jechonias

The King James Version form of Jechoniah, an alternate name of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in [Matthew 1:11-12](#).

*See* Jehoiachin.

## Jecoliah

The mother of King Azariah, who was also known as Uzziah ([2 Kings 15:2](#); [2 Chronicles 26:3](#)).

## Jeconiah

Alternate name for King Jehoiachin of Judah, who was carried into Babylonian exile ([1 Chr 3:16-17](#); [Jer 24:1](#)). See Jehoiachin.

## Jedaiah

1. Shimri's son and the father of Allon. He is listed in the genealogical tables of the Simeonites who settled in the valley of Gedor in Hezekiah's time ([1 Chr 4:37](#)).

2. Harumaph's son, who helped repair the Jerusalem wall after the exile ([Neh 3:10](#)).

3. Aaron's descendant and head of the second of the 24 priestly divisions for temple service in David's time ([1 Chr 24:7](#)). His descendants are listed among the returned exiles ([1 Chr 9:10](#); [Ezr 2:36](#); [Neh 7:39](#)). The individuals and families listed below are probably a part of this priestly line, but their exact relationships are difficult to determine.

4. Provincial priest who agreed to resettle in postexilic Jerusalem ([Neh 11:10](#); cf. v 2).

5. Priest who returned with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Neh 12:6-7](#)). In the next generation this was the name of a family (v 21).

6. One of the exiles taken by Zechariah as witness to the symbolic crowning of Joshua (nlt "Jeshua"). He may be the same as #4 or #5 above. He came back from captivity bringing gifts for the temple in the days of the high priest Joshua ([Zec 6:10-14](#)).

## Jediael

1. Benjamin's son ([1 Chr 7:6, 10-11](#)), whose descendants were warriors, numbering 17,200 by David's time. Some suggest that he is identifiable with Ashbel, also Benjamin's son ([Gn 46:21](#)).

*See also* Ashbel, Ashbelite.

2. Shimri's son, listed among David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:45](#)).

3. One who deserted Saul to join David at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:20](#)). He may be the same as #2 above.

4. Member of the Levitical family of Korah, appointed a doorkeeper of the temple during David's reign ([1 Chr 26:2](#)).

## Jedidah

Adaiah's daughter, the wife of King Amon of Judah and the mother of King Josiah ([2 Kgs 22:1](#)).

## Jedidiah

A name meaning "beloved of the Lord [Yahweh]." God told Nathan the prophet to give Solomon this name soon after his birth. Solomon was the second son of King David by Bathsheba ([2 Samuel 12:24-25](#)).

## Jeduthun

Member of the Levitical family of Merar who, along with Asaph and Heman, presided over the music in the sanctuary in David's reign ([1 Chr 25:1](#); [2 Chr 5:12](#); called "Ethan" in [1 Chr 6:44](#); [15:17](#)). Jeduthun is mentioned in the titles of [Psalms 39](#), [62](#), and [77](#). Some of his sons were set apart to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals ([1 Chr 25:1-3](#)), apparently following the example of their father, who was called "the king's seer" ([2 Chr 35:15](#)). In [1 Chronicles 16:38](#) and [42](#), he is listed as Obed-edom's father.

## Jeezer, Jeezerite

Jeezer and Jeezerite are names used in the King James Version of the Bible. These names are shortened forms of Abiezer and Abiezerite. Abiezer was a son of Gilead, and the Abiezerites were his descendants ([Numbers 26:30](#)).

*See* Abiezer #1.

## Jegar-Sahadutha

Aramaic name given by Laban to the heap of stones that he and Jacob piled up as a memorial to their covenant; Jacob called it "Galeed" ([Gn 31:47](#)). The name means "heap of witness."

*See also* Galeed.

## Jehallelel

1. Descendant of Judah who had four sons ([1 Chr 4:16](#)).
2. Levite of the family of Merari whose son Azariah participated in the cleansing of the temple in Hezekiah's time ([2 Chr 29:12](#)).

## Jehdeiah

1. Shubael's son, a Levite in David's time ([1 Chr 24:20](#)).
2. Royal steward from Meronoth who was in charge of David's donkeys ([1 Chr 27:30](#)).

## Jehezkel

Levite assigned to temple duty in David's time; leader of the 20th division ([1 Chr 24:16](#)).

## Jehiah

Levite who, along with Obed-edom, was appointed as doorkeeper for the ark when David brought it to Jerusalem ([1 Chr 15:24](#)).

## Jehiel

1. KJV spelling of Jeiel, King Saul's ancestor, in [1 Chronicles 9:35](#). *See* Jeiel #2.
2. KJV spelling of Jeiel, Hotham's son, in [1 Chronicles 11:44](#). *See* Jeiel #3.
3. A Levite musician who, along with other Levites appointed by David, played a psaltery at the removal of the ark to Jerusalem ([1 Chr 15:18-20](#)). Afterward, he was appointed to a permanent ministry of music in the sanctuary ([1 Chr 16:5](#)).
4. Levite of the family of Gershon; a chief of the house of Ladan ([1 Chr 23:8](#), nlt mg). He was in charge of the temple treasury during David's reign—an office that seems to have continued in the family ([29:8](#))—and founder of a priestly family called Jehieli or Jehielites ([26:21-22](#)).
5. Hacmoni's son who, with David's uncle Jonathan (a counselor and a scribe), was appointed to take care of the king's sons as a tutor and adviser ([1 Chr 27:32](#)).
6. Son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, placed by his father over one of the fortified cities of Judah ([2 Chr 21:2](#)). He and five brothers were slain by Jehoram when Jehoram became king.
7. One of the Kohathite Levites from the family of Heman who assisted in King Hezekiah's reforms ([2 Chr 29:14](#), rsv "Jehuel"). He may be the same Levite who was assigned to oversee the reception and distribution of the sacred offerings ([2 Chr 31:13](#)).
8. One of the chief officers of the temple at the time of Josiah's religious reformation ([2 Chr 35:8](#)); he contributed many sacrifices for the great Passover service.
9. Father of Obadiah from Joab's house; he returned with Ezra from Babylon ([Ezr 8:9](#)).

10. One of the sons of Elam and father of Shecaniah. He was associated with Ezra's marriage reforms ([Ezr 10:2](#)) and was perhaps the same Jehiel who was among those who divorced their foreign wives (v [26](#)).

11. Priest who was among those Ezra persuaded to divorce their foreign wives ([Ezr 10:21](#)).

## **Jehieli, Jehielite**

Alternate spelling of Jehiel, a Levite and founder of the Jehielite family, in [1 Chronicles 26:21-22](#). See Jehiel #4.

## **Jehizkiah**

Shallum's son and a chief of Ephraim during the reign of Ahaz in Judah. He opposed the enslavement of the men of Judah by victorious Israel ([2 Chr 28:12](#)).

## **Jejoadah, Jejoaddah**

Ahaz's son and a descendant of King Saul through Jonathan's line ([1 Chr 8:36](#)); alternately called Jarah in [1 Chronicles 9:42](#).

## **Jejoaddan, Jejoaddin**

The mother of Amaziah, king of Judah ([2 Kings 14:2](#); [2 Chronicles 25:1](#)).

## **Jejoahaz**

1. Twelfth king of Israel, succeeding his father, Jehu, and ruling from 814 BC to 798 BC. Because he was an evil king, God punished Israel by subjecting them to the Aramean kings Hazael and his son Ben-hadad. The military force in Israel was reduced to 50 cavalrymen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 infantrymen. The oppression became so severe that Jejoahaz prayed to God, who listened to him and delivered Israel from the Arameans, but not until the reign of Joash (Jejoash) ([2 Kgs 13:2-7, 25](#)). During Jejoahaz's reign, relations between Judah and Israel seem to have been fairly good, since Jejoahaz ([14:1](#), "Joahaz") named his son

Joash after his contemporary, Joash king of Judah ([2 Kgs 13:1, 9; 14:1](#)).

2. Seventeenth king of Judah, ruling three months in 609 BC. The people chose him to succeed his father, Josiah, who was killed in the battle of Megiddo. His mother's name was Hamutal. Jejoahaz was 23 years old at his coronation. He is also called Shallum ([1 Chr 3:15](#)), and Jejoahaz may well be a throne name. He is characterized as an evil king before God. His rule ended when Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in Hamath. Later he was taken to Egypt, where he died ([2 Kgs 23:30-34](#)). Jeremiah prophesied that Jejoahaz would never return to Israel but would die in the land of his captivity ([Jer 22:11-12](#)).

3. Another form of the name of Ahaziah, the sixth king of Judah, who ruled in 841 BC ([2 Chr 21:17](#); cf. [22:1](#)). Both forms of the name have the same meaning. The difference is the placement of the divine name. In Jejoahaz it comes first, "Jeho-" and in Ahaziah it comes last, "-iah" (-yah). See Ahaziah #2.

4. Full name of Ahaz, the 12th king of Judah, according to an inscription of Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III. See Ahaz #1.

*See also* Israel, History of.

## **Jejoash**

Name of two OT kings, occurring only in the book of 2 Kings. The name means "the Lord is strong" or "the Lord hath bestowed." Joash, the shorter form of the name, frequently appears in the Kings and Chronicles narratives.

1. Son of Ahaziah and seventh king of Judah (835-796 BC). Jejoash ascended the throne after the wicked Athaliah had been killed at the command of Jehoiada the priest. As an infant, he was hidden by his aunt Jehosheba in the temple and thus survived the slaughter of the king's household by Athaliah ([2 Kgs 11:1-3; 2 Chr 23:10-12](#)). After remaining six years within the temple precinct, Jejoash was declared king at the age of seven and ruled for 40 years ([2 Kgs 11:21-12:1; 2 Chr 24:1-3](#)).

His major activity during his reign was the renovation of the temple ([2 Kgs 12:4-5; 2 Chr 24:4-5](#)). When, by his 23d year, little progress had been made ([2 Kgs 12:6](#)), he revised the taxation schedule, commanded the people of Judah to bring their contributions directly to the Jerusalem

temple, and soon restored the Lord's house to its proper condition ([2 Chr 24:13](#)).

After the death of the priest Jehoiada, Jehoash and Judah forsook the Lord and served the Asherim and the idols ([2 Chr 24:15-18](#)). Not heeding the prophetic warning of divine judgment (v [20](#)), Jehoash and his people were conquered by the Arameans. Though Jehoash had once been able to avert a siege of Judah by paying tribute to Hazael ([2 Kgs 12:17-18](#)), the same strategy did not work a second time. The Arameans plundered Judah and Jerusalem, sending the spoil to Hazael in Damascus ([2 Chr 24:23-24](#)). Jehoash was assassinated by his servants Jozacar (Jozabad/Zabad) and Jehozabad while recuperating from wounds incurred in battle with the Arameans ([2 Kgs 12:20-21; 2 Chr 24:25-26](#)).

2. Son of Jehoahaz and 13th king of Israel (798–782 BC). Jehoash enjoyed a measure of military success that had eluded his father. No longer subject to punitive military exploits from Hazael of Aram, he was able to establish political stability in the northern kingdom. In fact, he subjugated the southern kingdom of Judah while Amaziah was king in Jerusalem (796–767 BC). The conflict between Amaziah and Jehoash was precipitated mainly by Amaziah. Overconfident with his victories in Edom, Amaziah initiated a military conflict with Israel ([2 Chr 25:17-19](#)). The battle was fought near Beth-shemesh in the Judean Shephelah. King Jehoash routed the army of Judah, captured Amaziah, and moved on to Jerusalem. Destroying the outer wall from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, he entered the capital city and plundered the treasures of both the palace and the temple (vv [21-24](#)). He was apparently used as an instrument of the Lord to subdue Judah (v [20](#)).

A contemporary of Jehoash was Elisha the prophet. In spite of the pervasive wickedness in Israel and the apostasy of the king himself ([2 Kgs 13:10-11](#)), Jehoash still sought the counsel of this prophet of the Lord. While Elisha was on his deathbed, Jehoash sought the prophet's blessing (v [14](#)). Elisha assured the king that the Arameans would be defeated by Israel at Aphek and that Israel would enjoy three decisive victories over this same enemy (vv [15-19](#)). During his 16-year reign, Jehoash achieved political stability in the northern kingdom. Though considered an evil king, he was used as an instrument of judgment against Amaziah of Judah and enjoyed the blessing of Yahweh against Aram.

*See also Israel, History of.*

## Jehohanan

1. Korahite Levite who was a gatekeeper of the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chr 26:3](#)).
2. Commander of thousands in King Jehoshaphat's army ([2 Chr 17:15](#)).
3. Father of Ishmael, commander of a unit of soldiers who helped the priest Jehoiada overthrow the wicked queen Athaliah of Judah ([2 Chr 23:1](#)).
4. Eliashib's descendant who owned a chamber into which Ezra retired to pray, fast, and mourn for his people ([Ezr 10:6](#)). He is possibly the same as Johanan, a grandson of Eliashib the high priest ([Neh 12:22-23](#), nlt), and Jonathan (a textual variant), Joiada's son, in [Nehemiah 12:11](#).
5. One of Bebai's four sons, who was exhorted by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife ([Ezr 10:28](#)).
6. Son of the Ammonite official Tobiah and a contemporary of Nehemiah. He married a Jewish woman whose father, Meshullam, had helped repair the Jerusalem wall ([Neh 6:18](#); kjv "Johanan").
7. Priest and family leader in postexilic Jerusalem during the time Joiakim was high priest ([Neh 12:13](#)).
8. One of the priests who participated as a singer in the dedication of the rebuilt Jerusalem wall ([Neh 12:42](#)).

## Jehoiachin

Jehoiachin was the king of Judah for a very short time, ruling from 598 to 597 BC. He was the son of Jehoiakim and Nehushta, who was the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem (possibly the same Elnathan mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, see [Jeremiah 26:22; 36:12, 2](#)). The name Jehoiachin means "Yahweh will uphold." He is also known by other names like:

- Coniah ([Jeremiah 22:24, 28; 37:1](#))
- Jeconiah ([1 Chronicles 3:16–17](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Jeremiah 24:1](#); [27:20](#); [28:4](#); [29:2](#))
- Jechoniah ([Matthew 1:11–12](#)).

Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king after his father's death, but he ruled for only three months and ten days in Jerusalem ([2 Kings 24:8](#); compare [2 Chronicles 36:9](#)). At that time, Judah was under control of Babylon, but rebelling against them. When the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, Jehoiachin had to surrender because the odds were overwhelming. According to the Babylonian Chronicle, which is based on the official records of the Babylonian kings, Nebuchadnezzar entered the region in December 598 BC and captured Jerusalem on March 16, 597 BC. The Babylonians empties the palace and temple treasuries. The Babylonians took many prisoners to Babylon:

- Jehoiachin
- His family
- Military leaders
- Royal officials
- Skilled workers

Before returning to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, who was renamed Zedekiah, on the throne in Jerusalem ([2 Kings 24:12–17](#); compare [2 Chronicles 36:10](#)).

The prophet Jeremiah observed that despite the traumatic invasion by Babylon and the political chaos, the people of Judah did not experience much spiritual change ([Jeremiah 37–38](#)). Jeremiah also predicted that Jehoiachin would go into exile and that none of his descendants would succeed him as king ([Jeremiah 22:24–30](#)). In contrast, a false prophet named Hananiah predicted that Jehoiachin would be restored to the throne within two years ([Jeremiah 28:3–4, 11](#); compare veres [12–17](#)).

Jehoiachin remained the legitimate king of Judah, which is reflected in the fact that the prophet Ezekiel dated his messages according to the years of Jehoiachin's exile, not by Zedekiah's reign ([Ezekiel 1:2](#); [8:1](#); [20:1](#)). Babylonian records also acknowledge Jehoiachin's royal position. These records show that he retained his title as king and received favorable treatment from the Babylonians. One cuneiform tablet even lists

"Yaukin, king of the land of Yahuda," along with his five sons, as receiving rations of oil and barley. This suggests they were not imprisoned but lived relatively normal lives in Babylon. However, at some point, Jehoiachin was imprisoned. He was later released during the reign of Evil-merodach around 562 BC and was given the privilege of dining with the Babylonian king ([2 Kings 25:27–30](#); [Jeremiah 52:31–34](#)). It's unclear whether his imprisonment was due to an escape attempt or because of Judah's rebellion against Babylon under Zedekiah.

Jehoiachin's name appears in the family list of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew ([Matthew 1:11–12](#)). Some people believe this contradicts Jeremiah's prophecy that none of Jehoiachin's descendants would sit on the throne ([Jeremiah 22:30](#)). However, others suggest that the blessing of Zerubbabel (a descendant of Jehoiachin) by the prophet Haggai ([Haggai 2:20–23](#)) reversed Jeremiah's curse and reintroduced Jehoiachin's line into the Davidic and ultimately messianic line (see [Isaiah 56:3–5](#)).

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Diaspora of the Jews; Israel, History of.

## Jehoiada

1. Father of Benaiah, a high military officer during the reigns of David and Solomon. Jehoiada was a priest ([1 Chr 27:5](#)) who joined forces with David at Hebron and was identified with the house of Aaron ([12:27](#)). See Benaiah #1.

2. High priest in Jerusalem who organized and led the coup that overthrew Queen Athaliah of Judah, together with the Baal cult she supported, and established his nephew Joash (Jehoash) on the throne ([2 Kgs 11:4–21](#); [2 Chr 23:1–15](#)). As long as he lived, Jehoiada kept the king true to the Lord ([2 Kgs 12:1–16](#); [2 Chr 23:16–24:14](#)). He died at the age of 130 and was buried in the city of David among the kings.

3. Benaiah's son, who succeeded Ahithophel as King David's counselor ([1 Chr 27:33–34](#)); he was probably a grandson of #1 above, although some believe these to be the same.

4. KJV spelling of Joiada, Paseah's son, in [Nehemiah 3:6](#). See Joiada #1.

5. Alternate name for Joiada, son of Eliashib the high priest, in [Nehemiah 13:28](#). See Joiada #2.

6. Priest during the time of Jeremiah who was succeeded by Zephaniah as overseer of the temple ([Jer 29:26](#)).

## Jehoiakim

Second son of Josiah by Zebidah ([2 Kgs 23:36](#); [1 Chr 3:15](#); [2 Chr 36:4](#)) who became king of Judah in 609 BC. He replaced his younger brother Jehoahaz as king when he was deposed and exiled by Pharaoh Neco after a three-month reign ([2 Kgs 23:31–35](#)). Jehoiakim was installed as king at age 25, and he ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem. His given name, Eliakim, means “God will establish.” Upon enthroning him, Neco changed his name to Jehoiakim, meaning “Yahweh will establish” ([2 Kgs 23:34](#)), perhaps seeking to claim Yahweh’s support for his action.

Neco laid a heavy tribute on Judah, which Jehoiakim raised by levying a tax on the whole land ([2 Kgs 23:35](#); cf. [Jer 22:13–17](#), where the woe oracle against Jehoiakim implies that he appropriated some of these funds for personal use). Jehoiakim remained subservient to the Egyptians until the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonians routed Neco. Judah then became a vassal state of Babylon for three years ([2 Kgs 24:1–2](#)). After Nebuchadnezzar’s failure to completely subdue Neco in a second fierce battle in 601 BC, Jehoiakim seized the opportunity to throw off the Babylonian yoke when the Babylonian king returned home to reorganize his army. This ill-advised decision proved costly, as Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah in 598 BC to punish the rebellious vassal king ([2 Kgs 24:3–7](#)). The expected help from Egypt never came, and the Babylonians destroyed the important Judahite cities of Debir and Lachish, seized control of the Negev, and deported several thousand of Judah’s ablest citizens. This no doubt crippled the economy and left Judah virtually leaderless. Jehoiakim died during the Babylonian siege (probably late in 598 BC). His son Jehoiachin was placed on the throne.

Although the details of Jehoiakim’s death are not reported, the biblical historian does pass judgment on this reign as one that perpetuated the evils of his fathers (see [2 Kgs 23:37](#); [2 Chr 36:5, 8](#); cf. [Jer 22:18–19](#) and [36:27–32](#), which predicted that Jehoiakim’s dead body would be cast on the ground outside of Jerusalem without proper burial and he would have no descendants upon the throne). Presumably the reference to “fathers” is to his

predecessors Manasseh, Amon, and Jehoahaz. Jeremiah specifies the evils that characterized Jehoiakim’s rule, including idolatry, social injustice, robbery of the wage earner, greed, murder, oppression, extortion, and forsaking of the covenant of the Lord ([Jer 22:1–17](#)). Despite Jeremiah’s extensive activity during his reign (chs [25–26](#), [36](#)), Jehoiakim remained disobedient, unrepentant, smug, and self-sufficient in his ill-gotten prosperity ([22:18–23](#)).

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Diaspora of the Jews; Israel, History of.

## Jehoiarib

1. Alternate form of Joiarib, a priestly family in Jerusalem, in [1 Chronicles 9:10](#). *See* Joiarib #1.
2. Priest in the time of King David, assigned to head the first of 24 divisions of priests for annual temple duty ([1 Chr 24:7](#)).

## Jehonadab

Alternate name for Jonadab, Recab’s son. *See* Jonadab #2.

## Jehonathan

1. KJV spelling of Jonathan, Uzziah’s son, in [1 Chronicles 27:25](#). *See* Jonathan #7.
2. One of the Levites appointed by Jehoshaphat to travel about Judah teaching the law to the people as part of his national religious reform ([2 Chr 17:8](#)).
3. Head of Shemaiah’s priestly house in postexilic Jerusalem during the days of Joiakim the high priest ([Neh 12:18](#)).

## Jehoram

1. The son of Jehoshaphat and the fifth king of Judah. He was king from 853 to 841 BC. He was also called Joram. The rule of the dynasty of Omri in the northern kingdom of Israel was from 885 to 841 BC. Before this time, the relationship between Judah and Israel was not good. The political power and economic strength of the united kingdom had disappeared long ago. Power and wealth had decreased because of Egyptian control under Shishak and because of civil war ([2 Chronicles 12](#)). These wars included:
  - the failed meeting at Shechem (chapter [10](#))
  - King Rehoboam of Judah fighting against King Jeroboam of Israel ([12:15](#))
  - King Abijah of Judah fighting against King Jeroboam of Israel ([13:1-22](#))
  - King Asa of Judah fighting against King Baasha of Israel ([16:1-4](#)).

Yet, the dynasty of Omri in the mid-ninth century BC put aside family rivalry. They tried to make a new alliance between the two nations.

The two kingdoms of Judah and Israel were facing growing threats from nearby peoples. These included the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Syrians, Philistines, Arabs, and Assyrians. King Ahab, the second king of the dynasty of Omri, formed diplomatic ties with Phoenicia and Judah ([1 Kings 16:31](#); [22:4](#)). During this time, Israel and Judah often joined together for military campaigns ([1 Kings 22](#); [2 Kings 3](#); [8:28](#)). But these political alliances also caused problems. The worship of Baal and Asherah (false gods) spread into Judah and Israel and led many people away from worshiping the true God ([1 Kings 16:31-33](#); [2 Kings 3:2](#); [2 Chronicles 21:11](#)). This was the political and religious situation when Jehoram ruled over Judah.

Jehoram may have served alongside his father as co-ruler as early as 853 BC. But Jehoram was the only ruler for eight years (from 848 to 841 BC). His

time as king was filled with unnecessary fighting against his own family and turning away from God. His father had given generous gifts to Jehoram's six brothers, but Jehoram quickly changed this after he became king ([2 Chronicles 21:2-3](#)). He not only ordered that his brothers be killed, but also several Israelite princes. This removed anyone who might challenge his power (verse [4](#)). He also brought back idol worship that his father had tried to stop by rebuilding the forbidden worship places called "the high places" (verse [11](#)).

Jehoram was likely influenced by his wife, Athaliah, who was the daughter of Jezebel ([2 Kings 8:18](#)). As her mother had done in Israel, Athaliah brought Baal worship into Judah. As a result, Elijah the prophet announced God's judgment on Jehoram and the people of Judah. This curse brought a great plague upon the Jehoram's people, children, wives, and possessions. Jehoram himself suffered from a terrible intestinal disease. Even though wickedness spread throughout Judah, the Lord did not destroy the southern kingdom. This was because of his promise to David ([2 Kings 8:19](#); compare [2 Samuel 7:12-16](#)).

Politically, Judah became weak during Jehoram's rule. The kingdom lost control of Edom ([2 Chronicles 21:9](#)). The kingdom was attacked by the Philistines and the Arabs. These attacks left Jehoram with almost nothing. He lost his possessions, his wives, and all his sons except for Jehoahaz (also called Ahaziah), his youngest son (verses [16-17](#)). When Jehoram died, the people did not honor him. He was not buried in the royal tomb in the city of David where the other kings were buried (verses [19-20](#)).

*See also Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Israel, History of.*

1. The son of Ahab and Jezebel. He was the tenth king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He was king from 852 to 841 BC. He was also called Joram. He became king after his brother Ahaziah. Ahaziah died unexpectedly, which led to Jehoram becoming king in Samaria ([2 Kings 1:2, 17](#)). He ruled at the same time as these kings of Judah: Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah.

Jehoram spent much of his time dealing with the growing power of two neighboring kingdoms: Moab and Syria. When Moab stopped paying its yearly tax to Israel, Jehoram asked for help from both Jehoshaphat and from Edom, which was controlled by Judah at that time. Jehoram and Jehoshaphat joined their armies with the king of Edom's army. However, they had to stop their attack on Moab when they ran out of water.

They were unsure whether they should advance with their troops. So, they summoned Elisha the prophet. They asked him to find out what God wanted them to do about their military campaign. Because Elisha respected Jehoshaphat greatly, the prophet asked God for guidance. God blessed them and provided plenty of water. The Bible tells us that Israel's army defeated the Moabites in the battle. It also describes a terrible incident where the Moabite king sacrificed a human being. After winning the battle, Israel's army went back home ([2 Kings 3:4-27](#)).

The fight against Syria was less successful. Jehoram was wounded in battle. He had to leave Ramoth-gilead in Transjordan (east of the Jordan River) and go back to his palace in Jezreel to recover ([2 Kings 8:29](#)).

While he was there, one of his generals named Jehu rebelled against him. God had chosen Jehu and declared him to be the new king of Israel. Jehu confronted Jehoram and

his nephew, Ahaziah, who was king of Judah. This meeting ended with both the kings of Israel and Judah being killed ([2 Kings 9:14–24, 27](#)).

Ahaziah was buried in the tomb of the kings in Jerusalem (verse [28](#)). But Jehoram's body was thrown into the field of Naboth outside the city of Jezreel. This was the appropriate judgment against the last king of the wicked dynasty of Omri (verses [25–26](#)).

2. A Levite member of a traveling group of scholars. This group of scholars taught the people of Judah from the Book of the Law during the rule of King Jehoshaphat ([2 Chronicles 17:7–9](#)).

*See also* Timeline of the Bible (Old Testament); Israel, History of.

## **Jehoshabeath**

Alternate name for Jehosheba, daughter of Judah's King Jehoram, in [2 Chronicles 22:11](#). *See* Jehosheba.

**Jehoshaphat (Person)**

1. The fourth king of Judah, reigning from 872 to 848 BC. He was the son and successor of King Asa, who ruled from 910 to 869 BC.

Jehoshaphat became king at the age of 35, and he ruled for 25 years. During his reign, he worked to maintain the stability of the Davidic dynasty, the royal family line of King David ([1 Kings 22:41-42](#)). Jehoshaphat was a contemporary of King Ahab of Israel, who reigned from 874 to 853 BC.

Jehoshaphat's first year as king was the fourth year of Ahab's reign. He also lived during the reigns of Ahab's son Ahaziah who ruled from 853 to 852 BC and Ahab's younger son Jehoram who reigned from 852 to 841 BC, who became king after Ahaziah died without children ([2 Kings 1:17](#)).

The Chronicler, the person who wrote the books of Chronicles, holds Jehoshaphat in high regard, comparing him to other good kings like Hezekiah and Josiah.

Jehoshaphat's success as a king was largely due to his religious policies. He continued the religious reforms started by his father, Asa. Because of this, the Lord strengthened the kingdom under his rule. The people of Judah brought him gifts, and he became very wealthy and honored ([2 Chronicles 17:1-5](#)). The Chronicler also praised Jehoshaphat's courage for removing the high places (sites of pagan worship) and the Asherim (wooden symbols of the Canaanite goddess Asherah) from Judah ([2 Chronicles 17:6](#)). Additionally, Jehoshaphat shut down all the temples used for prostitution ([1 Kings 22:46](#)).

Jehoshaphat changed his father Asa's foreign policy. Asa had fought against Baasha, the king of Israel, who had taken control of the throne after wiping out the family of Jeroboam I (the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel). The two

kingdoms, Israel and Judah, had fought over their border. But Jehoshaphat ended this conflict and made peace with the king of Israel ([1 Kings 22:2](#)). To secure this peace, he allied with Ahab, the king of Israel, by arranging the marriage of his son, Jehoram, to Ahab's daughter, Athaliah ([2 Kings 8:18](#); [2 Chronicles 18:1-2](#)). Because of this alliance, Jehoshaphat joined Ahab in battle against Aram at Ramoth-gilead ([1 Kings 22](#); [2 Chronicles 18](#)). He also allied with Ahab's younger son Jehoram in a campaign against Mesha, the king of Moab ([2 Kings 3:4-27](#)).  
Jehoshaphat also made domestic reforms. He sent officials—Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah—to teach the law in the cities of Judah ([2 Chronicles 17:7-9](#)). He organized how the tribute (tax or gifts) from surrounding nations was used to strengthen Judah. These nations recognized Jehoshaphat's strength and God's presence with him. They did not attack Judah but instead brought him tribute. He used these resources to fortify (strengthen) the cities of Judah ([2 Chronicles 17:10-13](#)).  
Jehoshaphat also reorganized the army and made plans to defend the kingdom. He had a standing army in the capital and placed soldiers in the fortified cities. His organization focused on the tribes of Judah and Benjamin ([2 Chronicles 17:14-19](#)).  
A prophet named Jehu criticized Jehoshaphat for making alliances with Ahab ([2 Chronicles 19:1-3](#)).  
Jehoshaphat took this rebuke seriously and ruled wisely afterward. He removed most of the Asherim from the land and dedicated himself to seeking God. He regularly traveled through the land, from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, encouraging the people to follow the Lord.  
Jehoshaphat appointed judges in each fortified city of Judah and instructed

them to judge fairly as representatives of the Lord. He also appointed Levites, priests, and family leaders to handle cases related to worship and to resolve disputes among the people ([2 Chronicles 19:4–11](#)).

Jehoshaphat plucked military forces in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured ([2 Chronicles 17:1–2](#)). The prophets did not approve of his alliances with Phoenicia and Israel and they were ultimately dangerous. But they brought a period of peace and prosperity to his kingdom. Jehoshaphat was respected by the neighboring Philistines and Arabs ([2 Chronicles 17:10–13](#)), and the nation of Edom also submitted to him. He won a significant victory over the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites at En-gedi ([2 Chronicles 20:1–30](#)). In an attempt to be like Solomon, Jehoshaphat built ships at Eziongeber to trade with Tarshish, but this venture was not successful ([2 Chronicles 20:35–37](#)).

Jehoshaphat died at around 60 years old and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David. His son Jehoram became king after him ([2 Chronicles 21:1](#)). Jehoshaphat's name is listed in the family list of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew ([Matthew 1:8](#)). See also Israel, History of.

2. The son of Ahilud who was David and Solomon's "recorder" (a term that may mean an official historian or a spokesman for the king) ([2 Samuel 8:16; 20:24](#); [1 Kings 4:3](#); [1 Chronicles 18:15](#)).
3. The son of Paruah and one of Solomon's 12 officials who collected food from the people for the king's household. Each of them collected enough food for one month of the year. Jehoshaphat was the officer over the tribe of Issachar ([1 Kings 4:7, 17](#)).

4. The son of Nimshi and the father of Jehu, who destroyed the dynasty of Omri and became king of Samaria from 842 to 815 BC ([2 Kings 9:2, 14](#)).
5. The King James Version spelling of Josaphat in [1 Chronicles 15:24](#), a priest during David's reign. See #2 (above).

## Jehoshaphat, Valley of

A valley mentioned in prophecy as the place of future judgment ([Joel 3:2, 12](#)). It is sometimes called the valley of decision ([Joel 3:14](#)). People disagree on its exact location. Some, like Jerome, identify it with the Kidron Valley, east of Jerusalem. They point to early Christian tradition. Others prefer the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. This tradition may be traced back through Eusebius to the book of 1 Enoch (1 Enoch 53:1). Still others say the name is symbolic and refers only to coming judgment, not to a specific place.

## Jehosheba

Daughter of King Jehoram of Judah (853–841 BC) and Queen Athaliah, sister of King Ahaziah (841 BC), and wife of Jehoiada the high priest. Upon Ahaziah's death, Athaliah attempted to kill all the remaining royal heirs to the throne; Jehosheba, however, hid young Joash, Ahaziah's son, in a temple bedroom for the duration of Athaliah's reign (841–835 BC; [2 Kgs 11:2](#)). Jehosheba is alternately spelled Jehoshabeath in [2 Chronicles 22:11](#).

## Jehoshua, Jehoshuah

Jehoshua and Jehoshuah are different ways to spell the name of Joshua, the son of Nun, in the King James Version of [Numbers 13:16](#) and [1 Chronicles 7:27](#).

See Joshua (Person) #1.

## Jehovah

Name for God formed by adding the vowels of the Hebrew word 'Adonai to the consonants of the

Hebrew divine name, YHWH. Out of their respect for God and their fear of defiling his name, the postexilic Jews refused to pronounce the divine name when reading Scripture. Instead, they substituted 'Adonai, a word meaning "my Lord." Prior to the sixth century AD, the Hebrew text had no vowels. These were supplied during the reading of the Scripture by one who was familiar with the language. When vowel points were added to the text (AD 660–700), the vowels of 'Adonai were placed below the consonants of YHWH to indicate that 'Adonai should be read.

It is thought that about AD 1520 Petrus Galatinus conceived the idea of combining the two names, thus creating the new form *YeHoWaH*, from which the English term Jehovah comes. Although this form was foreign to the Hebrew language, it gained wide acceptance and was included as the translation for God's name in various verses in the kJV and ASV. Biblical scholars now agree that the original pronunciation of the divine name was Yahweh or Jahveh.

*See also* God, Names of.

## Jehovah-Tsidkenu

A special name that means "The Lord (Yahweh or Jehovah) is our righteousness." This name was given to a future righteous king that God promised would come from King David's family ([Jeremiah 23:5–6](#)). This same name was also used to describe the people who would live under this king's rule ([33:16](#)). Christians believe this promise came true when Jesus Christ came. They believe Jesus is the Lord who rules over everything and helps his followers live in a right relationship with God.

## Jehozabad

1. Shomer's son, who was a servant of King Joash and later, with another assailant, murdered the king at Millo ([2 Kgs 12:21](#)). In a parallel passage, Jehozabad is called the son of Shimrith the Moabitess ([2 Chr 24:26](#)). King Amaziah, Joash's son, eventually executed Jehozabad for the murder ([25:3](#)).

2. Obed-edom's second son and a member of a Levitical Korahite family appointed by King David to be gatekeepers in the temple ([1 Chr 26:4](#)).

3. Benjamite military commander who served under King Jehoshaphat of Judah and commanded 180,000 men in his army ([2 Chr 17:18](#)).

## Jehozadak

Another name for "Jozadak," a son of Seraiah.

*See* Jozadak.

## Jehu

1. Prophet and son of the "seer" Hanani ([2 Chr 16:7](#)), who denounced Baasha for following in the ways of Jeroboam ([1 Kgs 16:1–7](#)). In addition to continuing the heretical worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, Baasha also assassinated Nadab, the son of Jeroboam ([15:25–32](#)).

Jehu later rebuked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, for helping Ahab the king of Israel in his wars against the Arameans ([2 Chr 19:1–2](#)). The writings of this prophet were included in one of the records of the reign of Jehoshaphat, *The Book of the Kings of Israel* ([2 Chr 20:34](#)).

2. Important army officer during the reigns of Ahab and Jehoram ([2 Kgs 9:25](#)), who in reaction to the economic and religious abuses of the house of Omri was anointed as king of the northern kingdom of Israel ([1 Kgs 19:16–17](#)). In the following revolution he exterminated the royal house of Israel, the king of Judah, and a royal party from the south ([2 Kgs 9–10](#)). He executed the worshipers of Baal in order to revive true worship in Israel. As king, he ruled in Samaria 28 years (841–814 BC) and began a dynasty that lasted some 100 years.

In the time of Jehu the prophets were engaged in a religious equivalent of war with the adherents of the Tyrian Baal. Elijah met and defeated the Canaanite priests on Mt Carmel ([1 Kgs 18:17–40](#)). Later he and then Elisha were commissioned to anoint Jehu as king. The prophets waited until the time was right ([2 Kgs 9:1–10](#)), at which time Elisha sent a "son of the prophets" to Ramoth-gilead to designate Jehu as the monarch.

Jehu left his siege of Ramoth-gilead in northern Transjordan to meet the king of Israel in Jezreel. There he killed King Jehoram and Ahaziah, the king of Judah ([2 Kgs 9:17–28](#)). His bloody ways continued as he extinguished the royal house of Ahab ([10:1–17](#)) and 42 ambassadors of goodwill from Judah (apparently without provocation, vv

[12-14](#)). Israel's bloodbath finally ended in Samaria. There Jehu cunningly vowed to serve Baal with a zeal greater than that of Ahab. Unsuspecting devotees of Baal gathered in great numbers to join in a festival sacrifice. Instead, the devotees themselves became the sacrifice, and the house of Baal in Samaria was destroyed and desecrated by turning its ruins into a latrine (vv [18-27](#)).

Political and economic problems also contributed to the unrest. Under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, justice was corrupted. The poor lost their land in the drought and their property rights were ignored ([1 Kgs 18:5-6](#)). Jehu threw the body of Jehoram into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite ([2 Kgs 9:25-26](#)) as justice for the crime of Ahab and Jezebel ([1 Kgs 21:19](#); cf. v [13](#)). But religious passions dominated the cause. Jehu called his slaughter of the house of Omri his "zeal for the Lord." Jehonadab, a Recabite, joined Jehu as he traveled toward Samaria ([2 Kgs 10:15-17](#)). Recabites opposed social and economic developments that took place in the northern kingdom under Ahab. They followed a strict moral code and lived a simple life ([Jer 35](#)). Since Recabites represented the most conservative elements of Yahwism, they became natural allies for the reform of Jehu.

Jehu's revolution seriously weakened the worship of Baal. Although not all of the adherents were eliminated, Baalism no longer remained the official religion of the state ([2 Kgs 10:28](#)). Rather, Baalism united with Yahwism to form the sinister syncretistic religion that was denounced by Hosea.

Politically, the revolt of Jehu was disastrous. The triple alliance between Tyre, Israel, and Judah was shattered by the atrocities. Israel, now isolated, became easy prey for Assyria and Syria. Jehu attempted to buy some help from Assyria by paying tribute to Shalmaneser III. That event is pictured on the Black Obelisk in a relief from the campaign of 841 BC. An inscription names "Jehu, son of Omri," as the one kneeling before Shalmaneser.

After the Assyrian threat dissipated in 838 BC, Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, conquered all of Israelite Transjordan as far as the Arnon ([2 Kgs 10:32-33](#)). In a second campaign in 815 BC, Hazael moved across the Jordan River, through the Jezreel plain, and down the coast, conquering the land as far as Gath in the northern Shephelah. There the son of Jehu, Jehoahaz, paid tribute to Hazael ([12:18](#)). The revolution weakened Israel both politically and economically.

Later generations spoke of the massacre of the house of Omri with horror ([Hos 1:4](#)). Jehu did not destroy the golden calves of Jeroboam, and so continued the syncretistic worship at Bethel and Dan. In the final analysis the revolution, which was meant to purge Israel of oppression and false religion, succeeded in doing neither.

3. Member of Judah's tribe, the son of Obed and Azariah's father ([1 Chr 2:38](#)).

4. Prince of Simeon's tribe, and the son of Joshibiah, who, along with others, migrated from the approaches to the valley of Gedor eastward in search of good pasture ([1 Chr 4:35](#)).

5. One of the skilled warriors who joined David at Ziklag. Interestingly, he was of Saul's tribe, Benjamin, and from Anathoth, to which Abiathar of the priests of Eli was later banished ([1 Chr 12:3](#)).

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Israel, History of.

## Jehubbah

Shemer's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:34](#)).

## Jehucal

A son of Shelemiah who King Zedekiah sent to request prayer for Judah from the prophet Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 37:3; 38:1](#)). Later he tried to kill Jeremiah. This was because Jeremiah continued to prophesy that the Babylonians would invade Jerusalem. Jehucal thought the prophesying of Jeremiah discouraged the people and the army ([38:1-6](#)).

## Jehud

One of the towns given to Dan's tribe after the Conquest ([Jos 19:45](#)). It has been variously identified with the village of el-Yehudiyeh, about seven miles (11.3 kilometers) southeast of Joppa, and with Yazur, about five miles (8 kilometers) southeast of Joppa.

## Jehudi

A son of Nethaniah and a messenger of King Jehoiakim of Judah. Some officials sent Jehudi to

summon the prophet Baruch to read the scroll of Jeremiah in private to them. Later, Jehoiakim ordered Jehudi to read the same scroll in public in front of him and all the court. Then he burned the writing ([Jeremiah 36:14–23](#)).

## **Jehudijah**

Not a proper name; kJV mistranslation for “Jewish,” a descriptive term distinguishing Mered’s Jewish wife from his other wife, who was an Egyptian princess ([1 Chr 4:18](#)).

## **Jehush**

KJV spelling of Jeush, Eshek’s son, in [1 Chronicles 8:39](#). See Jeush #3.

## **Jeiel**

1. Chief in Reuben’s tribe ([1 Chr 5:7](#)).
2. Benjaminite who lived at Gibeon and an ancestor of Israel’s first king, Saul ([1 Chr 8:29](#); [9:35](#)).
3. One of David’s mighty men ([1 Chr 11:44](#)). He is perhaps identical with #1 above.
4. Levite gatekeeper in the sanctuary. He seems to have served as a musician also ([1 Chr 15:18, 21](#); [16:5b](#)). The Jeiel of [1 Chronicles 16:5a](#) is probably a different musician.
5. Levite descended from Asaph and an ancestor of a prophet named Jahaziel ([2 Chr 20:14](#)).
6. Secretary for King Uzziah’s army, who kept or made military “rolls” or “musters” of the king’s troops ([2 Chr 26:11](#)).
7. KJV and nlt spelling of Jeuel, Elizaphan’s descendant, in [2 Chronicles 29:13](#). See Jeuel #2.
8. Levite leader who contributed Passover offerings during King Josiah’s reign ([2 Chr 35:9](#)).
9. KJV spelling of Jeuel, Adonikam’s descendant, in [Ezra 8:13](#). See Jeuel #3.
10. Nebo’s descendant who was encouraged to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic era ([Ezr 10:43](#)).

## **Jekabzeel**

Another name for “Kabzeel,” a city in southern Judah ([Nehemiah 11:25](#)).

See Kabzeel.

## **Jekameam**

Hebron’s son from the Kohathite division of Levi’s tribe ([1 Chr 23:19](#); [24:23](#)).

## **Jekamiah**

1. Shallum’s son from Judah’s tribe ([1 Chr 2:41](#)).
2. One of King Jehoiachin’s sons ([1 Chr 3:18](#)).

## **Jekuthiel**

Zanoah’s father from Judah’s tribe ([1 Chr 4:18](#)).

## **Jemimah**

First of the three daughters born to Job when he was restored after his affliction ([Jb 42:14](#)).

## **Jemuel**

Simeon’s first son ([Genesis 46:10](#); [Exodus 6:15](#)). He is called Nemuel in [1 Chronicles 4:24](#) and is the founder of the Nemuelite family ([Numbers 26:12](#)).

## **Jephthah**

Illegitimate son of Gilead ([Jgs 11:1](#)) and a leader in the period of the judges. The son of a harlot, Jephthah was dispossessed by his father’s other sons and refused a share in their father’s home. He moved to the land of Tob, a small Aramean state east of the Jordan River ([Jgs 11:3–5](#)), and became leader of a band of malcontents and adventurers who went raiding with him.

When war broke out between the Israelites and the Ammonites, the leaders of Gilead begged Jephthah to return and lead their army. At first he refused because of their previous mistreatment of him. When they promised to make him Gilead’s ruler, he

accepted and became commander in chief and ruler ([Jgs 11:4–10](#)). The agreement was ratified before the Lord at a general assembly of the people at Mizpah (v [11](#)) in Gilead, probably just south of the Jabbok River.

After diplomatic negotiations with the king of Ammon failed, Jephthah waged war against the Ammonites. Before the fighting started, he vowed to the Lord that if he was victorious, on his return home he would sacrifice to God whoever met him at the door of his house. Then he successfully led his army against the Ammonites, destroying them with a terrible slaughter ([Jgs 11:29–33](#)).

When Jephthah returned home, he was shocked to find that the first person to meet him was his only child, his daughter, playing a tambourine and dancing for joy. When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow” ([Jgs 11:35](#), rsv). She submitted to her destiny but begged that it might be postponed for two months so that she and her companions could retreat to the mountains and lament that she must die a virgin (vv [34–38](#)). A woman in ancient Israel could suffer no greater disgrace than to die unmarried and childless. When she returned, her father fulfilled his vow (vv [38–39](#)).

Jephthah also led Gilead against the Ephraimites, who were resentful that they had not been included in the fight against Ammon. They had been given a previous chance to ally with Gilead but had refused. Jephthah captured the fords of the Jordan behind the Ephraimites and prevented their escape by an ingenious strategy. Gileadite guards put fugitives to a test, demanding that they say “Shibboleth.” If they could not pronounce the “sh,” they were revealed as Ephraimites and killed. The account says that 42,000 Ephraimites died at that time ([Jgs 12:1–6](#)).

Jephthah was judge over Gilead for six years ([Jgs 12:7](#)), and when he died, he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. In the Letter to the Hebrews, Jephthah is named with Gideon, Barak, and others as a hero of faith ([Heb 11:32](#)).

*See also* Judges, Book of.

## Jephunneh

1. The father of Caleb. Caleb was one of the 12 spies sent by Moses to explore the land of Canaan ([Numbers 13:6; 14:6; 26:65](#); [1 Chronicles 4:15; 6:56](#)). The Bible refers to Jephunneh as a Judahite and a Kenizzite ([Joshua 14:6](#)).
2. A son of Jether from the tribe of Asher ([1 Chronicles 7:38](#)).

## Jerah

Son of Joktan and nephew of Peleg, during whose lifetime the earth was divided, probably a reference to the dispersion following Babel. Jerah is likely also the name of an Arabian tribe or district ([Gn 10:25–26](#); [1 Chr 1:20](#)).

## Jerahmeel

1. Firstborn of Hezron’s three sons, the father of six sons and a descendant of Judah through Perez’s line ([1 Chr 2:9–42](#)). He was the founder of the family of Jerahmeelites, who in David’s time lived in the Negev region and occupied a number of cities ([1 Sm 27:10; 30:29](#)).
2. Kish’s son and a Levite family leader who served in the sanctuary during David’s reign ([1 Chr 24:29](#)).
3. Son of King Jehoiakim of Judah and one who, with Shelemiah and Seraiah, was ordered by the king to seize Baruch and Jeremiah ([Jer 36:26](#)).

## Jerahmeelite

Jerahmeel’s descendant from Judah’s tribe ([1 Sm 27:10; 30:29](#)). See Jerahmeel #1.

## Jered

1. KJV spelling of Jared in [1 Chronicles 1:2](#). See Jared.
2. Ezrah’s son from Judah’s tribe ([1 Chr 4:18](#)).

## Jeremai

Hashum's son who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his foreign wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:33](#)).

## Jeremiah (Person)

1. Prophet to Judah before its fall in 586 BC; his name is also spelled "Jeremias" ([Mt 16:14](#)) and "Jeremy" ([Mt 2:17](#); [27:9](#)) in the kjv.

Jeremiah was born in the village of Anathoth, about three miles (4.8 kilometers) northeast of Jerusalem. His father's name was Hilkiah, and he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. His call came in the 13th year of King Josiah (640–609 BC). He refers to himself as "a child" when called ([Jer 1:6](#)), but the Hebrew word is not the same as used in [Jeremiah 30:6](#) and [31:8](#) and cannot be limited to preadolescence. He was probably referring to his inexperience rather than to his age. Jeremiah was born about 657 BC during the reign of the wicked king Manasseh, while the great Ashurbanipal, who had shaken the world by sacking the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes in 663 BC, ruled a world empire from Assyria.

God informed Jeremiah that he had consecrated and appointed him before birth ([Jer 1:4–5](#)). Jeremiah first shrank with a sense of inadequacy and fear: "O Sovereign Lord, . . . I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" (v [6](#), nlt). God would not allow Jeremiah to excuse himself. He was assured that words would be given him to speak, and guidance given for the way (v [7](#)). He was promised protection (v [18](#)) and deliverance (v [8](#)) despite opposition (v [19](#)). God touched his mouth, signifying divine inspiration of his words, and gave the sign of a branch from an almond tree, explaining that the Lord is watching (see nlt mg). The third sign was the boiling pot (v [13](#)) facing from the north, picturing the source and fury of impending disaster.

Thus the tone of Jeremiah's life ministry was set: judgment, disaster, danger, defeat, and impending death for the nation.

### Early Ministry

The messages given by Jeremiah during his first five years of ministry may have been instrumental in the great revival of 622 BC. Those cooperating with King Josiah in the reformation and friendly with Jeremiah included Ahikam and his father, Shaphan ([Jer 26:24](#)); Gedaliah, Ahikam's son

([39:14](#)), who later became governor; Acbor, son of Micaiah, also called Abdon, whose son Elnathan joined the opposition ([26:22](#)) but later repented ([36:25](#)); and Asaiah ([2 Chr 34:20](#)). The prophets Nahum and Zephaniah also influenced the reform movement, which must have climaxed under the preaching of Habakkuk and Jeremiah, the priestly ministry of Hilkiah, and the prophecies of Huldah the prophetess. During the reign of King Josiah, Jeremiah spoke without the fear of persecution that plagued his later ministry. Though the content of the book of Jeremiah sometimes appears to be fragmentary, most of chapters [1–19](#) date to the time of Josiah.

The finding of the lost Book of the Covenant in the temple debris may be the reason for the words in [Jeremiah 15:16](#): "Your words are what sustain me. They bring me great joy and are my heart's delight" (nlt). The words "So be it, Lord" ([Jer 11:5](#)) in a context recalling the words of Moses in the Torah may be Jeremiah's response after hearing King Josiah read the newly found book.

Small towns and rural areas, including his hometown, heard Jeremiah's denunciation of high places and idolatry. They sought to kill the young prophet, or at least to intimidate him ([11:21](#)). Instead of being silent, Jeremiah asserted that his motivation was for their good and condemned their resistance to the truth as their greatest danger.

Shortly after Jeremiah began his ministry, a number of world-changing events took place. Ashurbanipal died and the Assyrian Empire rapidly declined. Nabopolassar began a 21-year reign in Babylon, leading an expansion that culminated in his son Nebuchadnezzar's subjugation of the known world. As the world news filtered in, Jeremiah turned more toward Jerusalem. His first temple speeches (chs [7–10](#)) may have been uttered at this time.

Nabopolassar felt his strength sufficient to launch an attack against Assyrian territory in 616 BC, but he advanced cautiously because Psamtik I (Psammetichus) of Egypt appeared ready to aid Assyria. Cyaxares of Media pounced on Assyria when Babylon hesitated and took its most sacred city, Asshur, in 614 BC. Babylon joined Media, along with Scythia, and waged an assault against Nineveh, which fell late in the summer of 612 BC. The Assyrian Empire had shriveled to two small holdings, Haran and Carchemish.

Nabopolassar took Haran in 610, and Ashuruballit, having escaped, appealed to Egypt for help at Carchemish. Neco, who had become pharaoh within the year, responded immediately. He marched through Judah without giving Josiah prior notice and asked that the Jews not bother him in view of his haste to go northward ([2 Chr 35:21](#)). Ignoring the request, Josiah pursued them to Megiddo and was wounded in the ensuing battle; he died in Jerusalem.

#### Ministry during the Reign of Jehoiakim

In place of Jehoahaz, Josiah's fourth son, who reigned only three months, Pharaoh Neco enthroned Jehoiakim (Eliakim). Neco demanded heavy indemnity payments from Judah and took Jehoahaz prisoner as collateral to assure payment ([2 Kgs 23:31-33](#)).

Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah, moved by God's Spirit, delivered his third temple speech ([Jer 26](#)) on the occasion of one of the annual Jewish feasts. He called for the people to repent and to act on the basis of the revelation they had heard repeatedly from the Book of the Law. The barb of the sermon came in the warning: "This is what the Lord says: If you will not listen to me and obey the law I have given you, and if you will not listen to my servants, the prophets—for I sent them again and again to warn you, but you would not listen to them—then I will destroy this Temple as I destroyed Shiloh, the place where the Tabernacle was located. And I will make Jerusalem an object of cursing in every nation on earth" ([26:4-6](#), nlt). Shiloh had been the heart of Jewish worship from Joshua to Samuel, but after being destroyed by the Philistines, it never revived. It served as an example of complete desolation following God's judgment in the days of Eli.

Crowds gathered rapidly and reacted angrily against Jeremiah. Priests and princes hurried to the New Gate, where a court was established to bring order and to control violence. Jehoiakim would be no help to Jeremiah, for he had refused to listen to God's messages ([Jer 22:21](#)). The priests and false prophets spoke against Jeremiah, calling him a traitor. Then some of the elders spoke to the people about Uriah, who had prophesied the same message. Rather than risk disaster, Ahikam persuaded the court to spare Jeremiah.

Egypt controlled Palestine and Syria after the decay of the Assyrian Empire. In 606 BC Egypt succeeded in annihilating a garrison city of Babylonian soldiers south of Carchemish and then reoccupied

Carchemish to await the return blow from Babylon. This Egyptian victory meant persecution for Jeremiah, who was often accused of false prophecy (cf. [Jer 20](#)).

Jeremiah never had confidence in Egypt. Each time a Jewish leader would call for a new alliance with Egypt, Jeremiah repeated God's message against it. Whenever a Jewish group fled to Egypt for security, Jeremiah warned of worse things in that land of false refuge (see [Jer 44:26-27](#)). Jeremiah's ode and prophecy in chapter [46](#) poetically describe Egypt's defeat at Carchemish, when Nabopolassar sent his son Nebuchadnezzar to destroy them (605 BC). After smashing the Egyptian army at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar pursued the enemy through Judah. "Not a single man escaped to his own country," reads the exaggerated Babylonian record. His father's death, however, prevented him from invading Egypt, and he returned to Babylon to assume the throne. The following year Nebuchadnezzar, now king of Babylonia, returned to accept the homage of the rulers of Judah, Syria, and Phoenicia. On this occasion God gave Jeremiah his great 70-year prophecy ([Jer 25:11-12](#)), which became the basis of [Daniel 9:2, 24-27](#).

A year after the decisive battle at Carchemish, Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, finished recording all the dictated words of Jeremiah and was reading from this scroll at the temple. A report reached the king, who sent Jehudi, a servant, to fetch the scroll and read it to him. When this was done, Jehoiakim burned the scroll in spite of his counselors, who pleaded that the king not do it ([Jer 36:23-25](#)). God's message, soon rewritten, added a promise of fearful judgment on Jehoiakim (vv [27-31](#)).

Ambitious young Nebuchadnezzar determined to add Egypt to his dominion. In 601 BC he led his forces through Judah again, but Neco had advance warning and was prepared for the onslaught. In the desert of Shur, Nebuchadnezzar suffered defeat. Encouraged by this display of Egyptian defensive strength, the pro-Egyptian parties in Judah asserted themselves, persuading Jehoiakim to lead them to freedom from Babylon by making an alliance with Egypt ([2 Kgs 24:1](#)). But help from Egypt did not come (v [7](#)).

In 599 BC, Nebuchadnezzar armed those surrounding the rebel Jewish kingdom to harass the Jews, which they willingly did ([2 Kgs 24:2](#)). Evidently Jehoiakim lost his life in one of these raids. Since the people despised him, his body was thrown out without honorable burial, as Jeremiah had predicted ([Jer 22:19](#)).

### Ministry during the Reign of Zedekiah

Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in 598 BC lasted only a short time because the new king, Jehoiachin, crowned at age 18, knew resistance was useless. He gave himself up, with all his family and court, in March of 597 BC, after serving as king about three months. The Babylonian Chronicle reads: "He [Nebuchadnezzar] seized the city and captured the king."

Jehoiachin was carried to Babylon along with 8,000 ([2 Kgs 24:16](#); cf. v 14) officers, artisans, and executives (Ezekiel among them) and much booty. In his place Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, to rule. Zedekiah proceeded to organize his government with the less capable and inexperienced help left after the deportation.

Jeremiah took up his thankless ministry, calling on the Jews to believe God, obey the laws of Babylon, and reject false hopes in Egypt. Zedekiah turned a deaf ear to these appeals, listening rather to the unwise advice of his counselors ([Jer 37:1-2](#)). During the first year of Zedekiah's rule, Jeremiah received the vision of the two baskets of figs. The Jews carried to Babylon were like good figs, while Zedekiah and those who trusted in Egypt were like rotten figs ([24:1-8](#)). The reason for this reproachful description was that the Jews began plotting rebellion against Babylon along with Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon from the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah ([27:1-3](#)), thus breaking their oath of loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar and repudiating God's message through Jeremiah.

In Egypt the pharaoh began to renew plans to organize dissidents within the Babylonian Empire to revolt. He hired Jewish soldiers to aid him in protecting his southern border. The Jewish soldiers settled on a Nile island called Elephantine, or Yeb (593–410 BC). Jeremiah addressed an oracle to these Jews (ch [44](#)). The treaty for Jews to help in Egypt evidently also assumed that Egyptians would aid Israel. When the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem in 589, Pharaoh Hophra came to the aid of Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar, ruling from Riblah, commanded that the siege against Jerusalem be lifted in order to make a surprise attack on Hophra ([37:5](#)). The release gave Jeremiah an opportunity to journey to Anathoth to secure some family property (v [12](#)). However, Irijah, captain of the guard, arrested Jeremiah in the Gate of Benjamin for defecting to the enemy, and he was beaten and flung into a dungeon. King Zedekiah brought him out after many days to obtain a prognostication. With characteristic boldness, Jeremiah told the

king he would shortly become a captive. At the same time, Jeremiah requested relief from injustice for himself. He gained part of his request but continued as prisoner in the court of the guard.

The Babylonian army chased Pharaoh Hophra back to Egypt and returned to crush Jerusalem without further mercy. The siege, which began in 589 BC, was restored with rigor in January of 588, Zedekiah's ninth year ([39:1](#)). During this time, the Lord gave Jeremiah foreknowledge of a visit from a cousin who wished to sell a field near Anathoth ([32:7-9](#); cf. [37:12](#)). Jeremiah bought the field as an object lesson to verify the message of restoration after a captivity of 70 years ([29:10](#)).

The armies of Babylon cut off all supplies from Jerusalem and were able to destroy the last two outlying Jewish fortresses of Lachish and Azekah ([34:7](#)). Food became scarce. Disease spread. Undisposed-of sewage and impure cistern water caused pestilence. With increased distress came Jeremiah's increased appeal for the city to surrender.

Jeremiah remained in the prison court until the Babylonians breached the city wall in July of 586 BC. The king escaped by night and succeeded in reaching the plains of Jericho but was captured there and taken to Riblah. Zedekiah's family and counselors were killed; he himself was blinded and taken in chains to Babylon, where he died soon after ([39:6-7](#)).

Back in Jerusalem, Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian general, sent most of the Jews into captivity. Jeremiah, however, was granted special consideration; after being released from prison, he was placed under the care of Gedaliah, son of Ahikam.

### After the Fall of Jerusalem

A month after the fall of Jerusalem, the city was burned and the walls broken down. Gedaliah was appointed governor of the remaining agricultural community, with headquarters at Mizpah. Jeremiah returned to Jerusalem, where, according to tradition, he took up his abode in a grotto near what is now known as Gordon's Calvary. There he wrote the book of Lamentations.

The Ammonite king Baalis, plotting rebellion against Babylon, instigated the murder of Gedaliah ([40:13](#)). In the reaction that followed, the remaining people followed the leader Johanan ben Kareah to a camp near Bethlehem, intending to go to Egypt. They asked Jeremiah, at Jerusalem, to give

guidance from the Lord, promising obedience. Jeremiah's message required that they remain in Israel and not go to Egypt. Disobedience was complete and immediate. Fearing Babylon, they departed from Judah, taking Jeremiah with them, and entered Egypt ([41:16–43:7](#)).

Jeremiah did not stop his ministry in Egypt. His message at Tahpanhes ([43:8–12](#)) assured a victorious conquest of the land by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place in 568–567 BC.

Jews from all parts of Egypt gathered to discuss their future as exiles. Jeremiah took the opportunity to denounce their idolatry. Jewish women as well as men argued that they had enjoyed prosperity while serving idols but had suffered since stopping. Jeremiah condemned their obdurate blindness to reality and gave God's indictment. For a verifying sign, Jeremiah predicted that Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt would be assassinated ([44:30](#)), which happened in 466 BC. No later record of Jeremiah's acts exists in the Bible. Tradition says Jeremiah was stoned to death by the people of the Jewish exile settlement in Tahpanhes.

Though Jeremiah suffered continued rejection during his life, he has been honored by numerous apocryphal and traditional embellishments to his history. Jesus could well have had Jeremiah in mind when he said, "You build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed and decorate the graves of the godly people your ancestors destroyed. . . . [You are] the descendants of those who murdered the prophets" ([Mt 23:29–31](#), nlt). See Israel, History of; Jeremiah, Book of; Prophet, Prophetess.

2. Family head in the Transjordan portion of Manasseh whom Tiglath-pileser took captive ([1 Chr 5:23–26](#); cf. [2 Kgs 15:29](#)).
3. Father of Hamutal, a wife of King Josiah ([2 Kgs 23:31](#); [24:18](#)).
4. Ambidextrous Benjamite Bowman and slinger who joined David at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:4](#)).
- 5, 6. Two Gadite soldiers who joined David's army ([1 Chr 12:10, 13](#)).
7. Postexilic priest who with Nehemiah set his seal to the covenant, renewing the people's promise to obey God's laws ([Neh 10:2](#)). He is mentioned again ([12:34](#)) as part of the procession for the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem.

8. Priest who returned from exile with Zerubbabel ([Neh 12:1](#)) and became head of a family of priests (v [12](#)).

9. Father of Jaazaniah, a Recabite who refused to drink wine ([Jer 35:3](#)).

## Jeremias

The King James Version spelling of Jeremiah in [Matthew 16:14](#).

*See Jeremiah (Person) #1.*

## Jeremoth

1. One of Beker's nine sons and a leader in Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 7:8](#)). His name is rendered Jerimoth in some versions.

2. Benjamite, the son of Beriah and head of his family living in Jerusalem ([1 Chr 8:14](#)).

3. Levite of the family at Merari and one of Mushi's three sons registered during David's reign ([1 Chr 23:23](#)). His name is alternately spelled Jerimoth here and in [1 Chronicles 24:30](#).

4. Heman's son and the leader of the 15th of 24 divisions of musicians trained for service in the house of the Lord ([1 Chr 25:22](#), nlt mg). Here and also in [1 Chronicles 25:4](#) his name is spelled Jerimoth.

5. Azriel's son and the chief official of Naphtali's tribe during David's reign ([1 Chr 27:19](#)). His name is spelled Jerimoth in some texts.

6. One of Elam's descendants who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic period ([Ezr 10:26](#)).

7. One of Zattu's descendants who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife ([Ezr 10:27](#)).

8. One of Bani's descendants who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife ([Ezr 10:29](#)). He is named "Ramoth" in the kjv.

## Jeremy

The King James Version spelling of Jeremiah in [Matthew 2:17](#) and [27:9](#).

*See Jeremiah (Person) #1.*

## Jeriah

Levite of the family of Kohath and head of Hebron's house ([1 Chr 23:19; 24:23](#)). David organized Jeriah and other Levites to manage the religious and civil affairs of the kingdom ([26:31](#)).

## Jeribai

Elnaam's son and one of David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:46](#)).

## Jericho

Ancient city on the west side of the Jordan River. The name Jericho may be connected to the ancient name of the Canaanite moon god. The Hebrew words for moon, month, new moon, and Jericho are very similar. Others associate it with the word for spirit or smell, assuming that the pleasant fragrances of the fruits and spices that grew in this oasis occasioned the name of the place. The OT occasionally calls it "the city of palm trees" (e.g., [Dt 34:3](#); [2 Chr 28:15](#)).

Jericho was located on the west side of the Jordan River about five miles (8 kilometers) from the southernmost fords and about ten miles (16 kilometers) northwest of the Dead Sea. Being in the broad part of the plain of the Jordan, it lies nearly 1,000 feet (305 meters) below sea level and about 3,500 feet (1,067 meters) below Jerusalem, which was a mere 17 miles (27 kilometers) away. This simple topographical fact explains the incidental words in Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan, "down from Jerusalem to Jericho" ([Lk 10:30](#)).

### History

#### Prebiblical Record

Jericho was a large and thriving city for centuries, even millennia, before the Bible first mentions it in connection with the exodus from Egypt. In fact, Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world, with remains dating to and before the Neolithic Age 10,000 years ago.

For three reasons primitive people would have chosen this site, first as a settlement and eventually as a key city: (1) It has a copious spring, now called Elisha's Fountain (cf. [2 Kgs 2:18-22](#)). (2) It has a

warm climate in the winter, although "hot" describes it in the summer. (3) It is strategically located at a Jordan ford and at the base of several routes leading westward to the foothills.

The comings and goings of various populations can be reconstructed only sketchily from noninscriptional archaeological data. The civilizations grew more complex over the years, going from a simple food-gathering economy at first to the relatively complex urban society, complete with king, soldiers, and guest houses, that Joshua encountered. The first certain identification of its inhabitants occurs in [Numbers 13:29](#): "The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan" (rsv).

#### In the Old Testament

The Jericho of the OT is best known as the first city taken by the invading Israelites through the miracle of the falling walls. Having spent some time on the east bank of the Jordan in the plains of Moab ([Nm 22:1; 26:3, 63](#)), the Israelites targeted it as the first military objective in the Conquest. Joshua sent spies to reconnoiter the land and the city. Rahab the harlot took them in and later engineered their escape. For her cooperation, she and her family were spared when Israel destroyed the city ([Jos 2, 6](#)). The fall of the city itself occurred after the Israelites had marched around it in silence, except for the continual blowing of trumpets, once a day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. Then, as the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted and the walls collapsed.

Joshua laid a curse on anyone who might rebuild Jericho ([Jos 6:26](#)). The curse was fulfilled about 500 years later when Hiel rebuilt the city at the cost of two of his sons ([1 Kgs 16:34](#)).

Jericho was in the territory of Benjamin but right on the border with the territory of Ephraim to the north ([Jos 16:1, 7; 18:12, 21](#)) and appears in scattered incidents throughout the rest of the OT. In [2 Samuel 10:5](#) (see also [1 Chr 19:5](#)) David had his humiliated ambassadors wait there until their beards grew back. It served as a kind of headquarters for Elisha and apparently was where a "company of the prophets" lived ([2 Kgs 2:5](#); cf. [1 Sm 10:5](#)). During the time of Ahaz, a return of prisoners took place there ([2 Chr 28:15](#)). When Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, the reigning king, Zedekiah, fled to near Jericho but was caught by the Babylonians, who later put out his eyes at Riblah in Syria ([2 Kgs 25:5; Jer 39:5; 52:8](#)). The last OT

references to Jericho are in the census lists of Ezra ([Ezr 2:34](#)) and Nehemiah ([Neh 7:36](#)). Men from Jericho also helped rebuild the Jerusalem wall ([3:2](#)).

### **In the New Testament**

First, it must be understood that the Jericho of NT times was built by Herod more than a mile to the south of the OT site, at the mouth of the Wadi Qilt. It is possible to sort out the healing of the blind men episodes in the synoptic Gospels by understanding that Jesus was passing from the site of ancient Jericho ([Mt 20:29](#); [Mk 10:46](#)) and approaching Herodian Jericho ([Lk 18:35](#)). The modern city of Jericho includes both these sites. As Jesus passed through Jericho ([19:1](#)) he met and ate with Zacchaeus, the wealthy chief tax collector of the new Roman Jericho. The city also figures in the parable of the Good Samaritan ([10:30-37](#)).

### **Postbiblical Record**

While ancient Jericho was of small consequence after its destruction under Joshua, the Jericho of Herod was a city of beauty and importance. But even this city fell into decay with the decline of Roman influence in the Middle East. Most of what we know of the city until modern times comes from the writings of pilgrims to the Holy Land. They usually report seeing certain things of biblical significance, such as the tree that Zacchaeus climbed, but they also report that Jericho was a squalid, wretched Muslim village. And such it has been until relatively recent times, when it grew in size and importance as a major West Bank city.

### **Jeriel**

Tola's son from Issachar's tribe ([1 Chr 7:2](#)).

### **Jerijah**

Alternate spelling of Jeriah, a Kohathite Levite, in [1 Chronicles 26:31](#) (nlt mg). See Jeriah.

### **Jerimoth**

1. One of Bela's five sons and a leader in the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chr 7:7](#)).

2. Alternate spelling of Jeremoth, Beker's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:8](#). See Jeremoth #1.

3. Benjaminite and one of the ambidextrous warriors who came to David's support at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:5](#)).

4. Alternate spelling of Jeremoth, Mushi's son, in [1 Chronicles 23:23](#) and [24:30](#). See Jeremoth #3.

5. Alternate spelling of Jeremoth, Heman's son, in [1 Chronicles 25:4](#) and [25:22](#). See Jeremoth #4.

6. Alternate spelling of Jeremoth, Azriel's son, in [1 Chronicles 27:19](#). See Jeremoth #5.

7. David's son and Mahalath's father. Mahalath was married to King Rehoboam of Judah ([2 Chr 11:18](#)).

8. One of the Levites who assisted with the administration of the temple contributions during King Hezekiah's reign ([2 Chr 31:13](#)).

### **Jerioth**

One of Caleb's wives, according to [1 Chronicles 2:18](#).

### **Jeroboam**

Name of two kings who reigned in the northern kingdom of Israel: Jeroboam I (930–909 BC), the originator and first monarch of the 10 tribes of Israel, and Jeroboam II (793–753 BC), the 14th king of the northern kingdom.

1. Jeroboam I was the son of Nebat from Ephraim's tribe. He also served King Solomon ([1 Kgs 11:26](#)) and his efforts had been rewarded by his placement as the supervisor of an Ephraimite work force. Jeroboam, therefore, helped rebuild an important section of the defenses of Jerusalem (vv [27-28](#)). This efficient and energetic young man did not remain in the employ of Solomon for long, however. Jeroboam's background, his tribe's pride, and the oppression of Solomon had produced a young rebel. Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, met Jeroboam outside Jerusalem one day and did a startling thing—he tore a new garment he was wearing into 12 pieces and gave 10 of them to Jeroboam ([1 Kgs 11:29-30](#)). Ahijah had symbolically shown Jeroboam that God would give him 10 tribes and would leave the Davidic line intact (vv [31-39](#)). Solomon's idolatry had brought this judgment upon the Davidic line (v [33](#)). Although precise details of a revolt are not given (v

[7](#)), Jeroboam fled to Egypt in order to save his life ([v 40](#)).

After Solomon's death, Jeroboam returned to Palestine and approached Rehoboam, Solomon's son, with a request that his program of oppression cease ([1 Kgs 12:1-4](#)). Rehoboam asked for three days to consult with his advisers before answering ([vv 5-11](#)). The counsel of the older advisers was toward clemency, but younger hotheads prevailed with their counsel of increased taxation and forced labor ([vv 12-14](#)).

The Israelites responded by rejecting Rehoboam. Jeroboam was quickly elected king of the northern tribes ([1 Kgs 12:20](#)), and an uneasy cease-fire temporarily stabilized relationships between the two kingdoms at their division (930 BC).

Being ambitious and skillful, Jeroboam built two capital cities, one at Shechem (cf. [Gn 12:6-8; Jos 8:30-35](#)), in the territory west of the Jordan, and one at Penuel (cf. [Gn 32:30; Igs 8:17](#)), east of the Jordan ([1 Kgs 12:25](#)). He reinstated the cult of the golden calves, substituting an ancient religion for the worship of Jehovah. He changed the centers of worship, the object of worship, the priesthood, and the time of worship. The new centers became Bethel and Dan ([v 29](#)); Bethel was a place of patriarchal worship ([Gn 28:10-22; 31:13; 35:1-7](#)), and Dan was the site of a renegade Levitical worship established for the tribe of Dan in the days of the judges ([Igs 18](#)).

The object of worship became the idol calf ([1 Kgs 12:28](#)). The worship was based upon Aaron's participation in the first instance of this idolatry in Israel. Aaron had presented the golden calf at Sinai as a visible representation of the invisible Yahweh who had brought Israel out of Egypt ([Ex 32:4-5](#)). This compromise religion would yet have an appeal to Yahweh worshipers. Aaron's prior establishment of this worship added to the appeal for those who were reluctant to separate from Levitical methodology. The Levites in Dan would also add to the authentication of the calf worship.

Doubtless, the Egyptian sojourn of Jeroboam contributed to this turn of events. The Egyptians' worship of Amon-Re, the sun god, included his representation as a bull. The bull in Egyptian worship was intended to visibly represent an invisible deity. This concept could have easily been transferred by the Israelites to their worship of the invisible Yahweh.

Jeroboam's idolatry would result in the ultimate destruction of his line ([1 Kgs 13:33-34](#)). An

immediate result was the death of his son Abijah ([14:1-18](#)). Jeroboam's plan to deceive the prophet Ahijah failed and became the means of pronouncing judgment upon the house of Jeroboam and the northern kingdom ([vv 7-16](#)). One manifestation of the gradual decline of Israel was the defeat Jeroboam suffered at the hand of Abijah of Judah ([2 Chr 13:1-20](#)).

Jeroboam I died after reigning 22 years over Israel ([1 Kgs 14:19-20](#)). His remaining son, Nadab, ruled for only two years before he was assassinated by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar ([1 Kgs 14:20; 15:25-31](#)). The whole household of Jeroboam was then killed by Baasha, fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah concerning the end of the dynasty of Jeroboam. Yet even Baasha walked in the footsteps of Jeroboam's apostasy ([1 Kgs 15:34](#)).

2. Jeroboam II, the son of Joash (or Jehoash, 798-782 BC), reigned over Israel longer than any other northern king even though he followed the evil example of his ancestral namesake, Jeroboam I ([2 Kgs 14:23-24](#)). His reign of 41 years included an 11-year co-regency with his father. Evidently, Joash had taken steps to ensure the stability of his kingdom before meeting Amaziah of Judah in battle ([2 Kgs 14:8-14; 2 Chr 25:5-24](#)).

Jeroboam II ruled in the city of Samaria ([2 Kgs 14:23](#)). The archaeological evidence at Samaria indicates a reconstruction program in the royal palace during the prosperous reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II. In 1910 excavators found over 60 inscribed potsherds that were invoices or labels for oil and wine sent to the royal stores for use in the king's service. The limited number of place-names (27) on the potsherds indicates that the shipments of these commodities were not a nationwide levy of taxes but were probably all from properties belonging to the royal house. These illustrate the extensive holdings and opulence of the royal house in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II.

Large numbers of carved decorative plaques and panels of ivory were also found in the ruins of Samaria, a reminder of the wealth of the northern kingdom in its latter days. The influence of the pagan societies of Syria, Assyria, and Egypt can be seen by the various figures of deities on the ivories.

The prophet Jonah, son of Amitai, had prophesied the acquisition of power by Jeroboam II ([2 Kgs 14:25](#)). Although Jeroboam's reign was late in the history of the northern kingdom, God still desired to exhibit his long-suffering and faithful covenant-

keeping love, offering Israel repentance (vv [26–28](#)).

The northern kingdom reached its greatest extension since the time of Solomon as the result of God's care for Israel during Jeroboam's reign. The boundaries stretched from Hamath on the Orontes River in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba, with its cities of Elath and Ezion-geber, in the south. Prosperity did not suffice to deliver Israel from internal and external problems, however. The extensive corruption in government and the degenerate spiritual state of the people propelled Israel into the tumultuous days that would end in the utter destruction of the northern kingdom. Jeroboam's own life must have been in danger from conspirators. Amaziah, a priest at Bethel, even accused the prophet Amos of conspiring to assassinate Jeroboam ([Am 7:8–17](#)). Amos had actually prophesied the captivity of Israel and the fall of Jeroboam's dynasty. The word of God had become a threat to Jeroboam because of the hardness of the hearts of all in Israel, including the king.

Economic depression, moral deterioration, political weakness, and governmental corruption served to hasten the fall of Israel. The rich landowners, including Jeroboam II, had oppressed the less wealthy citizens and had forced small landowners to migrate from their farms to the cities.

Within six months of the death of Jeroboam II, the prophecy concerning the end of the dynasty of Jehu (Jeroboam was the fourth king of that line) was fulfilled ([2 Kgs 14:29](#); [15:8–12](#); cf. [10:12–31](#)). As the son of Jeroboam I, Nadab, was assassinated, so the son of Jeroboam II, Zechariah, was assassinated. Thirty-one years after the death of Jeroboam II, the prophecies concerning the captivity of Israel were fulfilled (722 BC; [2 Kgs 17:5–41](#)).

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Israel, History of.

## Jeroham

1. Levite of the family of Kohath, father of Elkanah and a forefather of the prophet Samuel and Heman the singer. Heman was a musician in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Sm 1:1](#); [1 Chr 6:27, 34](#)).

2. Benjamite whose sons lived in Jerusalem and were leaders among their people ([1 Chr 8:27](#)). He is perhaps identical with #3 below.

3. Benjamite and Ibneiah's father. Ibneiah, head of his family, returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon ([1 Chr 9:8](#)).

4. Descendant of Pashhur and the father of Adaiah the priest. Adaiah returned to Jerusalem after the exile ([1 Chr 9:12](#); [Neh 11:12](#)).

5. Benjamite from Gedor whose two sons, Joelah and Zebadiah, came to David's support at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:7](#)).

6. Father of Azarel, the chief official of the Danites during David's reign ([1 Chr 27:22](#)).

7. Father of Azariah, one of the commanders who was instrumental in removing Queen Athaliah from Judah's throne to make way for Joash (Jehoash), the rightful claimant ([2 Chr 23:1](#)).

## Jerubbaal

Name given to Gideon after he destroyed an altar to Baal ([Jgs 6:32](#)). The name means "let Baal contend against him." *See* Gideon.

## Jerubbesheth

Another name for the Israelite judge Gideon ([2 Samuel 11:21](#))

*See* Gideon.

## Jeruel

Wilderness lying southeast of Tekoa near En-gedi, just above and west of the cliff of Ziz ([2 Chr 20:16](#)). Some identify it with el-Hasasah.

## Jerusalem

A historic city that is sacred to Christians, Jews, and Muslims. It was the main city of ancient Palestine and is now a key city in modern Israel.

## Preview

- What Does the Name "Jerusalem" Mean?
- Where Is Jerusalem Located?
- History of Jerusalem

### What Does the Name "Jerusalem" Mean?

#### Egyptian Meaning

The earliest mention of the name appears in the Egyptian Execration Texts from the 19th and 18th centuries BC. It is likely written in English as *Urusalimum*.

#### Semitic Meaning

In the 14th century BC, the name appears in the Abdi-Hepa correspondence from Tell el-Amarna, written as *Urusalim*. Later, it is found in the inscription of the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib, written as *Ursalimu*. The two clear Semitic elements, *uru* (city) and *salim* (a divine name), create the meaning "the city of [the god] Salim." Hyphenating geographic names to include divine elements was common in the ancient Near East. The deity Salim, or Shalem (Akkadian, *Shulmanu*; compare Solomon), was part of the Amorite pantheon (compare [Ezekiel 16:3](#)).

Since the oldest texts—Egyptian, West Semitic, and Akkadian—only support *urusalim*, and since the Old Testament shows that Jerusalem was not originally a Hebrew city, it is likely that the Semitic origin of this name means "the city of [the god] Salim."

#### Hebrew/Aramaic Meaning

In the Hebrew Old Testament, Jerusalem is written as *yerushalayim*, and in the Aramaic sections, it is *yerushalem*. The name combines *yarah* (meaning "to found," see [Job 38:6](#)) and *shalem* (a divine name). This gives the meaning "the foundation of [the god] Shalem." The *sh* in Hebrew and Aramaic is similar to the Akkadian *s*.

#### Greek Meaning

In the New Testament, Jerusalem translates the two Greek words *Ierousalem* and *Hierosoloma*. *Ierousalem* is the Greek version of the Old Testament Aramaic form. *Hierosoloma* uses the Greek word *hieros* (holy) and is a Hellenized play

on words. It does not match the Semitic root of the name or the city's historical reality.

#### Where Is Jerusalem Located?

Jerusalem is located at  $31^{\circ} 46' 45''$  north latitude and  $35^{\circ} 13' 25''$  east longitude. The city is over 762 meters (2,500 feet) above sea level. It is about 22.5 kilometers (14 miles) west of the northern end of the Dead Sea and around 53 kilometers (33 miles) east of the Mediterranean coast.

Jerusalem has a Mediterranean climate. From October to May, it rains, with about 63.5 centimeters (25 inches) of rain each year. In January and February, strong winds often accompany the rain, and temperatures drop to near freezing (see [Ezra 10:9](#)). The coldest weather happens during the heaviest rain. Snow falls in two out of every three years. From May to September, it does not rain, and high solar radiation causes intense heat.

Like Rome, Jerusalem is a city on hills. Five hills form the bare landmass, about 1.6 kilometers (one mile) long and 0.8 kilometer (half a mile) wide. Deep ravines surround it on all sides except the north. It sits on the crest of Palestine's central plateau. It is at the crossroads of the route connecting Hebron, Bethlehem, Shechem (Nablus), and points north with the route from the Jordan Valley and roads to the Mediterranean. This makes Jerusalem central to the country's commerce.

The highway through the Judean mountains and eastward could not pass south of Jerusalem due to the Dead Sea and its steep cliffs. The city likely became occupied because of its strategic commercial location, despite lacking a significant water supply.

Water, essential for civilization, has always been scarce in Jerusalem. The only permanent natural water source was the spring at Gihon, now sometimes called the Virgin's Fountain, located in the Kidron Valley just east of the ancient fortress that David conquered. Tunnels were dug to access the Gihon when Jerusalem was under siege. Later, the Siloam Tunnel was cut through nearly 548.6 meters (1,800 feet) of limestone, allowing Gihon's waters to flow through the hill of Zion to the pool of Siloam.

Farther south, where the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys meet, there was another spring called En-rogel in the Bible (now Bir Eyyub). Because the water table lowered, this water source stopped flowing and was later turned into a well.

These two sources could not support a large population and were too deep in the Kidron Valley for irrigation. Therefore, people created a large network of cisterns, reservoirs, and water conduits for extra water supply since ancient times.

### *History of Jerusalem*

#### **The Pre-Israelite Period**

Paleolithic and Mesolithic flint tools of an Acheulian type found in the Rephaim plain are the earliest evidence of humans in Jerusalem. Near the start of the fourth millennium BC, a settled group first occupied the southeastern hill. This is shown by artifacts found in three graves and pottery discovered on bedrock. By 1800 BC, a basic wall surrounded the crest of the southeastern hill.

In the Bible, Abraham gives tithes to Melchizedek, the king of Salem ([Genesis 14:17-20](#)). Later ([Genesis 22](#)), the great patriarch visits an area that becomes part of Jerusalem, Mount Moriah, where Isaac was almost sacrificed. [Second Chronicles 3:1](#) identifies Mount Moriah as the temple hill.

In the 15th century BC, the Hurrians, possibly the biblical Horites, entered Palestine. Around the same time in Jerusalem, significant building activities began, and improved defensive methods were added. Most writers attribute these projects in Jerusalem to the Hurrian movement into the area.

#### **Conquest and Settlement Period**

When Gibeon made peace with Joshua's army ([Joshua 9](#)), Adoni-zedek, the king of Jerusalem, allied with the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon to attack Gibeon. Joshua then gathered his forces and defeated the coalition, killing all five kings at Makkedah ([Joshua 10:16-27](#)).

The tribe of Judah temporarily took control of Jerusalem and burned it after this victory ([Judges 1:8](#)). However, the Jebusites returned to the city ([Joshua 15:63](#); [1 Chronicles 11:4-5](#)). The Jebusites mostly controlled Jerusalem until David's time.

The city serves as a boundary between the tribal lands of Judah and Benjamin, marking the southern border of Benjamin's territory. The term "southern slope of the Jebusites" likely refers to the southwestern hill ([Joshua 15:8](#); [18:16](#)). The Jebusites probably controlled it at that time.

#### **David's Jerusalem**

The Philistines won at Mount Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan died in battle ([1 Samuel 31](#)). Then David ruled the tribe of Judah from Hebron. Meanwhile, Saul's surviving son, Ishbosheth, led the northern tribes from Mahanaim.

During the two-year conflict that followed, David's house grew stronger while Ishbosheth's forces weakened significantly ([2 Samuel 3:1](#)). This conflict ended with Ishbosheth's death and decapitation, leading to the scattering of his forces. David then became the unchallenged ruler of all the tribes of Israel.

However, the new monarch realized the need to create a national capital that both the north and south would accept. Jerusalem had stayed neutral during the conflict because it was surrounded by Jebusite territory. It was also a strategically important location and commercially central to the young nation, making it an ideal choice.

During David's 33-year reign in Jerusalem, he transformed the city into the center of an empire that stretched from Egypt to the Euphrates River. He undertook significant building projects and expanded the city. He strengthened the Canaanite walls and planned to extend the city, possibly along the eastern slope of Zion.

David built a royal residence with technology and materials from Hiram, king of Tyre ([2 Samuel 5:11](#)). [Nehemiah 12:37](#) suggests this palace might have been near the east side of the southeastern hill. From a window of this house, Michal saw David dancing in a way she found shameful ([2 Samuel 6:16-23](#)). From the roof of this palace, David saw Bathsheba bathing ([2 Samuel 11:2-5](#)), and from this residence, he planned the murder of her husband, Uriah ([2 Samuel 11:14-25](#)).

By bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem, David showed great leadership ([2 Samuel 6:1-15](#)). This act suggested that Yahweh would live there. For the first time in Israel's history, he united its political and religious centers. Jerusalem became both a holy and royal city. As a result, people called it the "City of David" ([2 Samuel 5:7](#)) and the "City of God" ([Psalm 46:4](#)). Adult male Jews traveled to Jerusalem for feasts and offerings. David needed to make this arrangement permanent by building a temple for Yahweh. David wanted to do this ([2 Samuel 7](#)), but God said this task was for the king's son.

## The First Temple Period

Solomon used the growing national awareness of the Davidic empire's size and influence to his advantage. As an innovative and dynamic leader, he transformed Jerusalem into a cosmopolitan hub. Caravans from Egypt to Babylonia and Phoenician trade with Elath, the Red Sea, and Ophir passed through his capital. Solomon's naval fleet traveled as far as Tarshish, likely on an island off Spain's western coast. These trips returned every three years with exotic goods like:

- Apes
- Peacocks
- Silver
- Iron
- Tin
- Ivory
- Gold

Many people moved to the capital or came to visit. Solomon's fame became legendary ([1 Kings 10](#)).

Solomon was a major builder in Old Testament Jerusalem. His most important project was the first temple. Built on the temple hill's summit, it took seven years to complete, from April or May 966 BC to October or November 959 BC ([1 Kings 6:1; 38](#)). Hiram supplied both the technology and the cedar beams.

In [1 Kings 10:27](#), we see a clear picture of the wealth Solomon brought to Jerusalem: silver was as common as stones, and cedar was as plentiful as sycamore. It is estimated that Jerusalem received up to \$17 million each year (a very large amount of money).

Ironically, this wealth became a burden for Solomon's rule. He spent too much, and his economic and political plans needed heavy taxes and forced labor from the Israelites ([1 Kings 4:7-19; 5:13-18](#); see also [1 Kings 9:20-23](#)). These issues led to a split in Israel's government after Solomon's death, resulting in a divided kingdom by 930 BC.

When the Babylonian army laid siege to Jerusalem in 588 BC, they captured it after many months. The city was destroyed. They burned the temple and Solomon's palace and demolished the city walls. They plundered the temple treasures and deported many citizens.

## The Second Temple Period

Jeremiah predicted Jerusalem's destruction and 70-year captivity ([Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10](#); see also [2 Chronicles 36:21](#); [Daniel 9:2](#)). In 538 BC, after Babylon fell, Cyrus, king of Persia, made a famous decree ([2 Chronicles 36:22-23](#); [Ezra 1:1-4](#); see also [Isaiah 44:28; 45:1](#)).

A small group of Jews then returned to Jerusalem with Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah, and Zerubbabel ([Ezra 1:8-11; 2:2](#)). In 515 BC, the second temple officially opened, and the Passover feast was celebrated again in Jerusalem ([Ezra 6:15-18](#)).

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes ([Ezra 7:7](#)). Assuming this refers to Artaxerxes I, Ezra returned in 458 BC. Only a small group felt the strong urge to make that difficult journey (see Josephus's *Antiquities* 11.1.3).

Moved by reports of difficult conditions ([Nehemiah 1:3-4](#)), Nehemiah, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (445 BC), left his job as the king's cup-bearer to go to Jerusalem. While earlier returnees focused on the temple, Nehemiah focused on the city walls. He provides the most detailed description of Jerusalem's city walls and layout after the exile ([Nehemiah 2:11-16](#)). Driven by his energetic enthusiasm, the people rebuilt the walls in 52 days ([Nehemiah 6:15](#)).

## The Roman Period

In 40 BC, with help from the Parthians, Antigonus attacked and took over Jerusalem, forcing Herod to escape at night. He traveled to Rome, where the Senate named him "king of the Jews" (see [Matthew 2:1](#)).

With this new power, Herod gathered two Roman legions, and in 37 BC, he permanently expelled the Parthians. This marked the start of Herod's long and infamous rule in Jerusalem, which lasted 33 years, from 37 to 4 BC.

Jerusalem experienced prosperous and peaceful years during Herod's reign. He changed the appearance of the city. He moved the government center to the southwestern hill. There, he built a grand palace, an arena for sports, a theater, and a large aqueduct system.

Other building projects focused on the temple hill. Herod expanded the old Maccabean fortress into a much larger structure and named it Antonia, in honor of Mark Antony. In the temple area, he made the walking path on the north and south sides

much larger, giving it a rectangular shape. Herod began reconstructing the temple in 20 BC, and it was not finished until around AD 64, just six years before Titus destroyed it (see [John 2:20](#)).

*See also Israel, History of; Jerusalem, New; Judaism; Zion; Zion, Daughter of.*

## Jerusalem Council

The Jerusalem Council was a large Christian meeting held about AD 50 ([Acts 15:6-29](#)). According to the book of Acts, the meeting was held to answer one important question: Do gentile (non-Jewish) believers need to be circumcised and follow the law of Moses to be saved?

Some Jewish believers from Judea brought this question to Antioch ([14:26-15:1](#)). Later, the church took the matter to the leaders in Jerusalem to resolve ([15:3-5](#)). The apostles and the elders considered the matter for a long time (verse [6](#)). This included the apostles Peter and Paul and Barnabas (verses [7-11](#); [12, 22-26](#)). James, the brother of Jesus, seems to have been the moderator of the meeting (verses [13-21](#)).

### What Did the Council Decide?

The leaders at the Jerusalem Council agreed on four main points:

1. God makes no distinction between believers in Christ, whether Jewish or gentile ([Acts 15:9](#)).
2. Salvation comes through the grace of the Lord Jesus by faith (verses [9-11](#)).
3. God confirmed his acceptance of gentiles through signs and wonders (verses [8, 12](#)).
4. Inclusion of the gentiles among the people of God was part of the divine plan revealed in the Old Testament (verses [15-18](#); quoting [Amos 9:11-12](#)).

The assembly also issued a list (sometimes called “the decree”) instructing gentile Christians to abstain from:

- idol worship,
- sexual sin,
- eating strangled animals, and
- consuming blood.

(These last two items were about food. These food practices were a major difference between Jews and gentiles.) The leaders wrote a letter with these instructions and sent it to the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia ([Acts 15:23](#); compare [16:4](#)).

### Who Belongs to the People of God?

This story is a key moment in the book of Acts. It shows how the early church was learning what it meant to be the people of God. Many early Jewish believers still understood their faith as obedience to the law, including ceremonies and rituals. They believed that following the law and religious customs was necessary for salvation and to remain in God’s favor. They also believed that only the people of Israel had a special place with God. Jews regarded their nation alone as “the people of God” and expected converts to be circumcised, follow the law of Moses, and offer the required sacrifices. Even after believing in Jesus as the Messiah, some early Christians in Jerusalem still held these beliefs.

The book of Acts shows how God corrected some wrong ideas in the early church. Some Jewish believers thought God only cared about Israel. They believed people had to follow all the Jewish laws to be accepted by God. But God used several events to show that this was not true.

Stephen challenged the idea that God was only present in Jerusalem ([Acts 7](#)). Then Philip preached to Samaritans and to an Ethiopian official, people who were not fully connected to Judaism ([Acts 8](#)).

God directly told Peter to visit Cornelius. He was a God-fearing man but an uncircumcised gentile ([Acts 10](#)). Peter told Cornelius that Jesus is the Messiah and Lord. Through this event, Peter realized that God does not show favoritism. God accepts people from every nation who honor him and do what is right ([10:34-35](#)).

The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household while Peter was still speaking ([10:44](#)). This was clear and surprising proof that God had accepted these gentile believers. Even the Jewish believers who were very strict about circumcision could not deny what they saw (verses [45-48](#)). Likewise, those who later heard the story could not

deny it ([11:1–18](#)). Peter used this same example when he spoke at the Jerusalem Council ([15:7–11](#)).

Some strict Jewish believers may have thought that God's acceptance of Cornelius was a special case. But this view became impossible as more gentiles believed in Jesus.

In Antioch, Greek-speaking gentiles also became followers of Jesus ([11:20](#)). A new church started there, made up of both Jews and gentiles. The church leaders came from many different backgrounds ([Acts 13:1](#)). Later, during Paul's first missionary trip, many more gentiles believed in Jesus in the region of south-central Asia Minor (chapters [13–14](#)).

At this point in the story, some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem came to Antioch. They caused a crisis by saying that gentile believers had to be circumcised and follow the law of Moses. This was like saying gentiles had to become Jews in every way (by nation, culture, and religion) before they could follow Jesus.

This forced the early church to answer two big questions:

- Was Christianity just a part of Judaism, or something different?
- And was salvation based on law and national identity, or was it by God's grace through faith?

### *What Did the Council's Decision Mean?*

The Jerusalem Council made it clear that salvation is a free gift from God. People receive it by faith, not by their own efforts. The council rejected the idea that anyone can earn salvation by keeping laws or following religious ceremonies.

This also showed that Christianity is not limited to any one race, nation, culture, or social group. All people can follow Jesus.

At the same time, the council reminded believers to live in a way that pleases God. Christians should act with care, respecting God's moral standards and being thoughtful about how their actions affect others in the church.

*See also* Acts of the Apostles, Book of the; Galatians, Letter to the; Judaizers; Paul, The Apostle.

### **Jerusalem, New**

Phrase appearing only twice in the Bible, once near the beginning and once near the end of the book of Revelation ([Rv 3:12](#); [21:2](#)). In the first of the great visions of that book, the risen Christ speaks to his people in the midst of their conflict in this world. Among his promises to those who conquer is that they will one day be citizens of the new Jerusalem. The last of the book's visions shows the fulfillment of this promise. There we see not only the victorious people of God but also the city that is to be their home in a new world.

This does not, of course, answer the question "What is the new Jerusalem?" A description of what it is like would be relatively simple. An explanation of what it *is* would be more complicated.

### *Description of the City*

An angel takes John to a mountaintop to show him the new Jerusalem. In the account that follows ([Rv 21:10–22:5](#)), the first thing John notes is the light, like a great jewel-like lamp, that lights the city ("the glory of God," [21:11](#)). Then he describes its walls and gates ([21:12–14](#)). The 12 gates bear the names of the tribes of Israel, and the wall between each gate and the next forms a single "foundation," or block, bearing the name of one of the 12 apostles of Christ. Next, the measurements of the city are given (vv [15–17](#)). It is 1,400 miles (2,220 kilometers) each way—not only in breadth and in length but also in height—and its wall is 216 feet (65.8 meters) thick (or high?). By working out these equivalents in miles and feet, however, we miss what John would probably have thought much more important. According to the biblical units of measurement, the city is 12,000 stadia broad and its wall is 144 cubits thick. These numbers are symbolic; as multiples of 12, they signify perfection, as do other occurrences of 12 in Revelation (e.g., [7:4–8](#)).

After this, John describes the materials of which the new Jerusalem is built ([21:18–21](#)). The wall is of jasper; its foundation layers are encrusted with other precious stones; its gates are pearls; and the streets and buildings within are made of "transparent gold." As for the city itself, John notes a series of things that it does *not* have (vv [22–27](#))—no temple, no sun or moon, no night, no closing of its gates, and no evil. Finally, there are the three wonderful things that it *does* have ([22:1–5](#))—the river of the water of life, the tree of life, and the throne and presence of God himself.

Such is the new Jerusalem as John describes it. But he wants us not so much to picture what the city looks like as to understand what it means.

### *Background of the City*

OT history presents the city of David, old Jerusalem, as the place where God's rule over his people and his presence among them was centered. In that Jerusalem stood both the temple, where the priests served, and the throne of the kings who governed as God's deputies. It was the metropolis, or "mother city," of Israel, the people of God. But the whole Bible is about God's redeeming a people for himself, out of all nations, in all ages—a greater Israel of which OT Israel is only the vanguard. So it is natural that the last revelation the Bible gives should be a vision of that greater people—home at last in the true mother city, a new and greater Jerusalem.

The OT prophets witnessed the decline of old Jerusalem. They watched with grief and anger as it disappointed the hope that it would live up to its high destiny. As it became infected with sin and folly, and as its kings and priests increasingly betrayed their calling, two of these prophets in particular began to look forward to a Jerusalem that one day would be what it was meant to be. Ezekiel (chs 40–48) foresaw the city and its temple reconstructed in detail; Isaiah (chs 52, 60–66) described this latter-day Jerusalem in even more glowing terms. The vision of both prophets tie in closely with the vision John records in [Revelation 21–22](#).

In the period between the OT and NT, Jewish writers became yet more disillusioned with the way things were going, and they encouraged their readers not so much with hopes of the renewal of the earthly Jerusalem as with imaginative descriptions of the heavenly one. This, they reckoned, existed already; at the end of the age it would come down from God out of heaven, the metropolis of his people, populous and beautiful, the place of his temple and throne. In fact, what was imagined by these apocalyptic writers is in many respects very like what would in due course actually be seen by John.

Jesus develops all these lines of thought in quite a remarkable way. It is not simply that he foretells the final destruction of Jerusalem and its temple ([Mk 13](#); [Lk 19:41–44](#)). If that were all, it would leave a great question unanswered. For old Jerusalem existed for a purpose, as we have seen; and if it is to be destroyed, how can that purpose

then be fulfilled? Where will God's people then find his throne and his temple?

Jesus' answer is that, since the Incarnation, God's rule and God's presence are to be found *in him* ([Mt 28:18](#); [In 14:9](#)). He himself is the "new Jerusalem"—an entirely new kind of Jerusalem. This is borne out by the word for "new" that John uses in Revelation. There are two distinct Greek words translated in English Bibles as "new." Sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the emperor Hadrian built a "new" Jerusalem; that was the kind of "new" that simply meant the latest in a series of cities on the same site. But John's vision is of a Jerusalem that is "new" in the sense of being fresh, clean, and different. The NT speaks in the same way of the new covenant and the new commandment ([Jn 13:34](#); [Heb 8:8](#)), the new creation and the new man ([2 Cor 5:17](#); [Eph 2:15](#)). John's vision brings out the same truth by telling of seven things that will exist "no more" in the new heaven and earth: no more sea, death, sorrow, crying, pain, curse, or night ([Rv 21:1, 4](#); [22:3–5](#)). In these respects all will be new and different.

There are five passages elsewhere in the NT that help to fill in the background to [Revelation 21](#). In [Galatians 4:26](#) Paul speaks of "Jerusalem above," the mother city of all who receive salvation by faith, as opposed to the old Jerusalem, where those belong who seek to please God by trying to obey the law (v 25). In [Ephesians 5:25–32](#) he speaks of the bride of Christ, by which he means the church; in John's vision the "bride" is the "city" ([Rv 21:9–10](#)). In [Philippians 3:20](#) we are told that the heavenly city is not simply the future home of believers but also the place of their present "citizenship." [Hebrews 12:22](#) makes the same point: those who believe have arrived already at the "heavenly Jerusalem." In other words, *this* Jerusalem is the home of all God's believing people, Jew and Gentile, from OT and NT times, and it seems not only to be future but also to exist already, in some sense, in the present. What, then, are we to make of John's vision?

### *Meaning of the City*

Some of those who expect a future Millennium (1,000-year earthly reign of Christ, between his second coming and final defeat of Satan) believe that the new Jerusalem belongs to the Millennium, because of certain indications that they think suit that period better than the eternal state that will follow it ([Rv 21:24–26](#); [22:2](#)). They visualize it as a

literal, material city. It will presumably, then, be in the shape of a cube, or perhaps a pyramid, and some even picture it hovering like an immense spaceship above the surface of the earth.

Most millenarians, however, and also many who do not believe in a millennium in the sense just mentioned, think that John is describing the city as it will be in eternity. They, too, may take it literally, or they think that giving the literal details in these chapters—the city's measurements, materials, and so on—is the only way in which John could describe something that is in fact indescribable (though nonetheless real).

In line with the message of the entire book of Revelation, many take the new Jerusalem to be the ideal city of God, which belongs not only to the future but also to the present. It exists here and now because it is a spiritual truth, not a material one. It is always “coming down . . . out of heaven” precisely because it comes to men “from God” ([21:2](#)). The fact remains, of course, that everything John records in the last two chapters of Revelation belongs to a world that will only appear after the first heaven and the first earth have passed away—a world that is (to us, at any rate) still future.

Taking into account all these Scriptures, we may come closest to understanding the new Jerusalem if we see it as the community of Christ and his people, which will appear in its perfection only when this age has come to an end. Yet, in another sense, Christians belong to it already, and it gives them both an ideal to strive for in this world and a hope to anticipate in the next.

*See also* Bride of Christ; Church; Jerusalem.

## Jerusha, Jerushah

Zadok's daughter, wife of King Uzziah of Judah and mother of King Jotham ([2 Kgs 15:33](#); [2 Chr 27:1](#), alternately spelled “Jerushah”).

## Jeshaiah

1. Hananiah's son; the father of Rephaiah and a descendant of David through Zerubbabel's line, who lived in postexilic Palestine ([1 Chr 3:21](#)).
2. Jeduthun's son and the leader of the eighth of 24 divisions of musicians trained for service in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chr 25:3, 15](#)).

3. Rehabiah's son and one of the Levites in charge of the temple treasury during David's reign ([1 Chr 26:25](#)).

4. Son of Athaliah from the house of Elam, who returned with Ezra to Judah following the Babylonian captivity ([Ezr 8:7](#)).

5. Levite of the family of Merari, who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem after the exile ([Ezr 8:19](#)).

6. Benjamite, Ithiel's father, and an ancestor of Sallu. Sallu resettled in Jerusalem during the postexilic era ([Neh 11:7](#)).

## Jeshanah

Border city in the hill country of Ephraim that King Abijah of Judah (913–910 BC) seized from King Jeroboam I (930–909 BC) and the northern kingdom during a civil war ([2 Chr 13:19](#)). The Greek and Syriac reading of “Jeshanah” as one of the towns between which Samuel erected the Ebenezer stone may be preferred to the Hebrew “Shen” in [1 Samuel 7:12](#). Its location is perhaps near Burj el-Isaneh, four miles (6.4 kilometers) north of Bethel.

## Jesharelah

A variant for Asharelah or Asarelah, the name of a Levite musician, in [1 Chronicles 25:14](#) (kjv; niv “Jesarelah”). See Asharelah.

## Jeshebeab

Levite family leader assigned to temple duty during David's reign ([1 Chr 24:13](#)).

## Jesher

Caleb's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:18](#)).

## Jeshimon

1. An extremely dry, empty wilderness at the end of the Dead Sea, not far from Pisgah and Peor ([Numbers 21:20; 23:28](#)). In these Bible passages, the Berean Standard Bible renders the word as “wasteland” in the main text. But it has “Jeshimon” in the margin notes. This allows readers to understand it as either a general description or as a specific named area. The Revised Standard Version uses “desert.”
2. A wilderness to the north of the hill of Hakilah and of Maon ([1 Samuel 23:19, 24: 26:1-3](#)). This location was probably just a few miles south of the city of Hebron.

## Jeshishai

Descendant of Gad in the days of Jotham, king of Judah ([1 Chr 5:14](#)).

## Jeshohaiah

One of the 13 Simeonite princes in the days of Hezekiah who participated in the invasion of the valley of Gedor; they killed the inhabitants of the territory and took the land for the pasture of their sheep ([1 Chr 4:36](#)).

## Jeshua (Person)

1. Levite and head of the ninth of 24 divisions of priests formed during David's reign ([1 Chr 24:11](#)). He was perhaps the forefather of 973 descendants who returned with Zerubbabel to Judah following the exile ([Ezr 2:36; Neh 7:39](#)).
2. One of the Levites assisting Kore in the distribution of the offerings among his fellow priests living in the priestly cities of Judah during the days of King Hezekiah ([2 Chr 31:15](#)).
3. Son of Jozadak (alternately “Jehozadak”) the high priest. Jozadak was deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon ([1 Chr 6:14-15](#)). Jeshua, Jozadak's successor as high priest, returned with Zerubbabel

to Jerusalem after the exile ([Ezr 2:2; Neh 7:7; 12:1](#)). Upon arrival, he led his fellow priests in making the altar of God ([Ezr 3:2; 5:2](#)) and eventually headed up a construction program to rebuild the temple ([3:8](#)). Confirmed as God's leader by Haggai and Zechariah ([Hg 1:1-14; 2:2, 4; Zec 3:1-9; 6:11](#)), Jeshua (alternately “Joshua” in these passages) resolutely resisted attempts by adversaries to infiltrate his people and hinder the work on the temple ([Ezr 4:3](#)). Joiakim was Jeshua's son and successor as high priest, serving in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra ([Neh 12:12, 26](#)).

4. Descendant of Pahath-moab and the forefather of a family of Jews who returned with Zerubbabel to Judah following the Babylonian captivity ([Ezr 2:6; Neh 7:11](#)).
5. Father of a family of Levites who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:40; Neh 7:43; 12:8](#)). He and his sons were responsible for overseeing the workmen building the temple ([Ezr 3:9](#); this Jeshua may be identical with #3 above).
6. Levite and Jozabad's father. Jozabad assisted Meremoth, Eleazar, and Noadiah with taking inventory of the temple's precious metals and vessels during the days of Ezra ([Ezr 8:33](#)).
7. Ezer's father. Ezer was ruler of Mizpah, who repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 3:19](#)).
8. Azaniah's son and a leader of the Levites in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Jeshua assisted Ezra with teaching the people the law ([Neh 8:7](#)) and later set his seal on Ezra's covenant ([10:9](#)).
9. Alternate spelling of Joshua, the son of Nun, in [Nehemiah 8:17](#). See Joshua (Person) #1.

## Jeshua (Place)

Town in the Negev listed before Moladah among the towns where Judeans returned after exile ([Neh 11:26](#); cf. v 20). It may be identical with the Shema mentioned next to Moladah in [Joshua 15:26](#). The name is perhaps preserved in Tell es-Sa'weh, northeast of Beersheba.

## Jeshuah

KJV spelling of Jeshua, a priest during David's time, in [1 Chronicles 24:11](#). See Jeshua (Person) #1.

## Jeshurun

A poetical name for Israel. It is possibly derived from the Hebrew root meaning "upright." According to many scholars, it is a diminutive of Israel. A diminutive is a version of a word or an ending added to a word to make it smaller, such as "little Israel."

The name Jeshurun is used in [Deuteronomy 32:15](#) and [33:5, 26](#). In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word is not translated as a proper name but as an adjective, "beloved." In [Isaiah 44:2](#), Jacob is described as "Jeshurun, whom I have chosen." This links the name with the idea of election or choosing.

In [Deuteronomy 33:5](#) Israel is reminded that "the LORD became king in Jeshurun." Verse [26](#) says, "There is none like the God of Jeshurun." If we follow the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), there is a link with the term "beloved" used of Christ in [Matthew 3:17](#), [Mark 1:11](#), and [Ephesians 1:6](#), and of the church in [Colossians 3:12](#), [1 Thessalonians 1:4](#), [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#), and [Iude 1:1](#).

## Jesiah

1. KJV rendering of Isshiah, one of David's ambidextrous archers, in [1 Chronicles 12:6](#). See Isshiah #2.

2. KJV rendering of Isshiah, Uzziel's son, in [1 Chronicles 23:20](#). See Isshiah #3.

## Jesimiel

One of the 13 Simeonite princes who participated in the invasion of the valley of Gedor in King Hezekiah's day, killing the inhabitants and taking the land for the pasture of their sheep ([1 Chr 4:36](#)).

## Jesse (Person)

Son of Obed and grandson of Ruth and Boaz ([Ru 4:17, 22](#)). Jesse was a shepherd from Bethlehem. He had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest. He had at least two daughters, Zeruiah and Abigail, who became mothers of famous warriors.

When Samuel went to Jesse's home to search for and anoint a king, Jesse did not at first feel it

worthy to call David for examination ([1 Sm 16:11](#)). Later he sent David to play the lyre for Saul (vv [19-21](#)). After David became a fugitive from Saul, Jesse and others of the family came to David in the cave of Adullam. David then brought his father and mother to Mizpah in Moab ([22:3](#)). Nothing further is heard of Jesse.

After Saul broke with David, he commonly spoke of David derisively as a "son of Jesse" to underscore his humble origins ([1 Sm 20:31](#); [22:7](#)). This same emphasis on Jesse's modest station in life is found in such messianic references as [Isaiah 11:1](#) and [10](#), which speak of the "shoot from the stump of Jesse" and "the root of Jesse" (rsv).

*See also* David; Jesse, Root of.

## Jesse, Root of

A figure of speech used by Isaiah ([Isaiah 11:10](#)) to express the hope of a messianic king from the line of David. The "root" of a family is its first member. Jesse, David's father, is an ancestor of the Messiah ([Isaiah 11:1, 10](#); [Matthew 1:5-6](#); [Luke 3:32](#); [Acts 13:22-23](#)). Isaiah describes God's judgment upon Assyria as the cutting down of a forest ([Isaiah 10:33-34](#)). Judah will also be cut down and the proud "tree" of David's kingship will fall. But, a small piece will remain, which Isaiah describes as a shoot from a stump ([Isaiah 6:13](#)). The messianic shoot will grow out of the the stump of Jesse as a branch from his roots. The Spirit of the Lord will live in this one who will be a sign to the people, so everyone will seek the Lord's glory ([Isaiah 11:1-10](#); see [Isaiah 53:2](#); [Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15](#); [Ezekiel 17:22-23](#); [Zechariah 3:8; 6:12](#)).

The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah's prophecy and said Jesus was "the root of Jesse" in whom the Gentiles have hope ([Romans 15:12](#)). Christ is not only "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" ([Isaiah 11:1](#)) but is himself the "root of Jesse" ([Isaiah 11:10](#); [Romans 15:12](#); see [Revelation 5:5; 22:16](#), "root of David"). This means that Jesus did not only come from Jesse's line but that Jesse (and David) came from Jesus. In other words, the image of a root of Jesse points to Jesus' divinity. While Jesus was the son of David, Jesus was also David's "Lord." This is the point Jesus made in his debate with the religious leaders of his day who thought that the Messiah was only a human descendant of David. [Matthew 22:42-45](#) reads: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?" "David's," they answered. Jesus said to them, "How then does

David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord’? For he says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.”’ So if David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how can He be David’s son?”

*See also* Christology; David; Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Jesse (Person); Jesus Christ, Teachings of.

## Jesui, Jesuite

Jesui and Jesuite are names used in the King James Version of the Bible. These names refer to Ishvi and Ishvite, who were one of Asher's descendants and his family ([Numbers 26:44](#)).

*See* Ishvi #1.

## Jesurun

The King James Version spelling of Jeshurun, a poetic name for Israel in [Isaiah 44:2](#).

*See* Jeshurun.

## Jesus

1. A name meaning “savior” or “Jehovah [Yahweh] is salvation” given to the Messiah.  
*See* Jesus Christ.
2. The King James Version translation of Joshua, son of Nun ([Acts 7:45](#) and [Hebrews 4:8](#)).  
*See* Joshua (Person) #1.
3. A Jewish Christian, also called, “Justus.” He sent his greetings to the Christians at Colossae in the letter of the apostle Paul ([Colossians 4:11](#)).

## Jesus Christ

Messiah, Savior, and founder of the Christian church.

We should remember that each of the gospels has its own distinctive purpose. Matthew presents Jesus as the messianic King, whereas Mark reveals Jesus as the servant of all. Luke particularly shows Jesus's amazing compassion for the poor, the rejected, and the broken, whereas John takes the

reader into a deeper and more spiritual understanding of Jesus. These different aims caused the four Evangelists to select and arrange the events of Jesus's life differently. That is why the Christian church preserved four gospels instead of only one.

The following sections present the main events of the life of Jesus. There is a clear progression from Christ's incarnation to his cross. The amount of space devoted to each stage in each of the gospels is dictated by theological rather than biographical interest. The whole presentation of Christ's life centers on the cross and the triumphant resurrection that followed. It is more an account of God's message to humanity than a plain historical account of the life of Jesus.

### Preview

- The Incarnation
- The Birth of Jesus
- Life in Nazareth
- Preparatory Events
- The Early Ministry of Jesus in Judea and Samaria
- The Period of the Galilean Ministry
- On the Way to Jerusalem
- The Final Days in Jerusalem
- The Betrayal and Arrest
- The Trial
- The Crucifixion
- The Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension

### The Incarnation

The major event of this initial stage was the Incarnation. Only Matthew and Luke give accounts of Jesus's birth. John goes back and reflects on what preceded the birth.

It may seem strange that John began his Gospel with a reference to the Word ([John 1:1](#)), but it delivers to the reader an exalted view of Jesus. John saw Jesus as existing even before the creation of the world ([verse 2](#)). In fact, he saw him as having a part in the act of creation ([verse 3](#)). Therefore, when Jesus was born, it was both an act of humiliation

and an act of illumination. The light shone, but the world preferred to remain in darkness (verses [4–5](#), [10](#)). In John's records, we know right away that Jesus is no ordinary man, even before being introduced to his name. This background of Jesus's preexistence is essential to properly understand John's account of his life and teachings.

### *The Birth of Jesus*

John simply wrote that the Word became flesh and lived among us. Matthew and Luke fill in some of the details of how this happened. There is little in common between the two accounts. Each approaches the subject from a different point of view, but the supernatural is evident in both. The coming of Jesus is announced beforehand, through dreams to Joseph in Matthew's account ([Matthew 1:20–21](#)) and through an angel to Mary in Luke's account ([Luke 1:26–33](#)). Matthew leaves his readers in no doubt that the one to be born had a mission to accomplish—to save people from their sins ([Matthew 1:21](#)). Luke sets his story of Jesus's coming in an atmosphere of great rejoicing. ([Luke 1:46–55, 68–79](#)). The worship of the wise men in [Matthew 2:1–12](#) is significant because it links the beginning of the Gospel to its ending, showing that salvation is for all the nations (compare [Matthew 28:19–20](#)). A similar emphasis is introduced in the angel's announcement to the shepherds in [Luke 2:14](#) and in Simeon's song ([Luke 2:32](#)) where he predicts that Jesus would be a light for Gentiles as well as a glory for Israel. The flight into Egypt for safety ([Matthew 2:13–15](#)) shows how a gentile nation provided protection for a Jewish child.

The birth stories in Matthew and Luke both include genealogies. It is difficult to harmonize these genealogies since they appear to have come from different sources, but the purpose in both cases is to show that Jesus was descended from Abraham and David. This gave rise to Jesus's title of Son of David.

Luke was the only Gospel writer who attempted to link the coming of Jesus with events in secular history. Although problems arise over the dating of Quirinius's census ([Luke 2:1–2](#)), the firm setting of the scene with the people of Jesus's time is extremely meaningful. That's because the Christian faith is a historic faith centered on a historic person.

### *Life in Nazareth*

Jesus's childhood and early life are given only a few lines in the gospels. We only have details of the

discussion he had as a 12-year-old with the Jewish teachers in the temple ([Luke 2:41–50](#)). This points to one of the most characteristic features of Jesus's later ministry: his Jewish contemporaries could not refute his wisdom. It also reveals that at an early age, Jesus knew of a divine mission. Luke notes that Jesus was obedient to his parents while growing up (verse [51](#)). It is assumed that during 30 years at Nazareth Jesus learned the carpenter's trade from Joseph and became the village carpenter after Joseph's death. However, there is no account of this period in the gospels. This has led to many creative stories about Jesus's childhood in apocryphal gospels, but Luke's account is unembellished, which is a strong indication of its historical reliability.

### *Preparatory Events*

All four gospels refer to a brief period of preparation that took place right before Christ's public ministry. This period focused on three important events.

### **The Preaching of John the Baptist**

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness and caused an immediate stir in Judea, particularly as a result of his call to repentance and baptism ([Matthew 3:1–6](#)). John was like one of the Old Testament prophets, but he did not claim any importance in his office except as the herald of a greater person to come. His stern appearance and uncompromising message effectively prepared the way for the public appearance of Jesus ([Luke 3:4–6](#)). It is important to note that Jesus started his ministry with the same message of the coming kingdom that John the Baptist announced ([Matthew 3:2; 4:17](#)). This shows that John the Baptist's work was an integral part of the preparation for the public ministry of Jesus. The same may be said of the rite of baptism, although John recognized that Jesus would add a new dimension in that he would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire ([3:11](#)). As the forerunner of Jesus Christ, John proclaimed that the one to follow would not only be greater than he but would also come with high standards of judgment (verse [12](#)). The stage was therefore set in stern terms for the initial public act of Jesus—his willingness to be baptized ([Matthew 3:13–15; Luke 3:21](#)).

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. But since Jesus had never sinned, he had no need to

repent. The NT supports this claim. So, why was he baptized? Jesus had come on a mission to others, and it is possible that he deliberately submitted to John's baptism to show that he was prepared to take the place of others. This explanation is in line with Paul's later understanding of the work of Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Matthew is the one Evangelist who records John's hesitation to baptize Jesus ([Matthew 3:14–15](#)).

The most important part of Jesus's baptism was the voice that came from heaven, which declared pleasure in the beloved Son ([Matthew 3:17](#)). This God-given announcement was the real starting point of Jesus's public ministry. It revealed that the ministry was no accident or sudden inspiration on the part of Jesus. He went into his work with the full approval of the Father. A further important feature is the part played by the Holy Spirit in this scene, appearing as a dove (verse [16](#)), which was not just an inner experience for Jesus. The baptism of Jesus shows the importance of the Spirit in his ministry. The general lack of emphasis on the Spirit in the gospels does not change this.

### **The Temptation of Jesus**

Jesus's baptism showed the nature of his mission. The temptation showed the nature of the environment in which he was to minister ([Matthew 4:1](#); [Luke 4:1–2](#)). Jesus confronted adverse spiritual forces throughout his ministry. Only Matthew and Luke record the details of how the devil tempted Jesus. All these temptations present shortcuts that, if pursued, would have deflected Jesus from his mission. Both gospels show that Jesus clearly gained the victory, and that he did so by using Scripture. In this event, Jesus is also seen as a genuine human who, like all other humans, was subject to temptation. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews notes this as the fact that qualified Jesus to act as High Priest and to intercede on behalf of his people ([Hebrews 2:18; 4:15](#)).

### *The Early Ministry of Jesus in Judea and Samaria*

Only John's Gospel tells of the work of Jesus in Judea after his baptism. It first describes how he called his disciples John and Andrew ([John 1:35–39](#)). The context for this was John the Baptist's announcement of Jesus as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world (verse [29](#)). These first two disciples were soon joined by three others: Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (verses [41–51](#)). These five formed part of the nucleus of Jesus's

followers who came to be known as the Twelve. One feature of John's account is the early recognition by the disciples of Jesus as Messiah ([John 1:41](#)) and Son of God (verse [49](#)).

Soon after Jesus began his ministry in Jerusalem, John relates an incident at Cana in Galilee in which water was turned into wine ([John 2:1–10](#)). This event is important in John's account because it is the first of the signs that he records (verse [11](#)). He saw Jesus's miracles as "signs" of the truth of the gospel rather than as mere wonders.

John sets two incidents at Jerusalem in this initial period. The first is the cleansing of the temple ([John 2:13–16](#)). Matthew, Mark, and Luke all place this event just before Jesus's trial, but John places it at this early stage. Jesus confronts and drives out the money changers who were profiting from worshipers more than was appropriate. This seemed acceptable to Judaism but not to Jesus. The other Evangelists imply that this authoritative act was the event that sparked the final hostility of his opponents. But John tells the story for a theological reason: to him, the cleansing of the temple was a parable telling of what Jesus had come to do.

The other incident in Jerusalem is the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus ([John 3](#)). Nicodemus was closely associated with Judaism, yet he was also searching for truth. He was unable to understand, however, the spiritual truth about being born again through the Spirit.

John's story then moves from Judea to Samaria and the story of the Samaritan woman at the well ([John 4:1–42](#)). Jesus used her physical thirst to point to her deeper spiritual thirst. She realized that Jesus had something to offer her that she had not previously known. As a result of this woman's experience and testimony, many of the Samaritan people came to believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world (verse [42](#)). In this case, John wants his readers to appreciate the fuller meaning of Jesus's words in light of the resurrection.

### *The Period of the Galilean Ministry*

Almost all the information on this period is found in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke.) It may be conveniently divided into three sections. The first briefly outlines the events leading up to the choosing of the Twelve; the second deals with Jesus's withdrawal from northern Galilee; and the third deals with his departure for Jerusalem. While the Synoptic Gospels concentrate exclusively on the events in Galilee, John's account indicates that

Jesus visited Jerusalem from time to time during this period. Also, John records another incident at Cana, where the son of a Capernaum official was healed. This is noted as the second of Jesus's signs ([John 4:54](#)). It is mainly important because of the extraordinary faith of the father, who was prepared to take Jesus at his word.

### The Calling of the Disciples

The Synoptic Gospels tell us of the initial call to four of the disciples to leave their fishing boats and to become fishers of men ([Matthew 4:18–22](#); [Mark 1:16–20](#); [Luke 5:1–11](#)). They had already met Jesus and must have had some idea of what was involved in following him. Jesus did not at this time appoint them to be apostles, but this call was a necessary step toward establishing the Twelve as a group. Setting apart a particular number of disciples formed an important part of the ministry of Jesus. The miraculous catch of fish, which preceded the call of the disciples in Luke's account, highlighted the superiority of the spiritual task of catching people rather than fish.

Another significant call came to Levi, also known as Matthew ([Matthew 9:9](#); [Mark 2:13–14](#); [Luke 5:27–28](#)). As a tax collector, he was different from most of the other disciples. He would certainly have been despised by his Jewish contemporaries because of his profession. But his inclusion among the disciples shows the broad basis on which these men were chosen. One of the others, Simon the Zealot, may have belonged to a group of religious and political revolutionaries. Even a man like Judas Iscariot was numbered among the Twelve, and he would later betray Jesus to his enemies for a small sum of money. Jesus accepted them as they were and molded them into men who later became totally dependent on God and the power of his Spirit.

### Sermon on the Mount

The Gospel of Matthew presents a large sample of Jesus's teachings commonly called the Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5:1–7:29](#)). Some of the same material is found in Luke in a different context and a different arrangement. It is possible that Jesus often repeated his teachings on different occasions and with different combinations. Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount presents an impressive body of teaching, mainly covering ethical questions. In these teachings, Jesus upholds the law of Moses, and at the same time goes beyond it. The beginning of this sermon has been called the

Beatitudes ([5:3–12](#)). It commends moral and spiritual values. The teachings recorded in this section were radical, but not in a political sense. The Sermon on the Mount gives us a good idea of the kind of discourses that must have abounded in the ministry of Jesus.

### Jesus as Healer

Throughout the gospels there are records of miracles involving Jesus healing people. There are more of these miracles than any other type. A section in Matthew is devoted to a sequence of healings ([Matthew 8:1–9:34](#)): a leper, a centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, a demon-possessed man, a paralytic, a woman with a loss of blood, blind men, and a man who was mute. In addition, Jairus's daughter was raised from the dead. This large number of healings focuses on Jesus as a miracle worker, but throughout the gospels there is no suggestion that Jesus healed by magical means. In some cases an individual's faith was acknowledged ([8:10; 9:22](#)). In at least one incident, the healing was accompanied by an announcement of the forgiveness of the sins of the one healed ([Matthew 9:2](#); [Mark 2:5](#)). This shows that Jesus considered spiritual needs to be of greater consequence than the physical problems.

Since there was a widespread belief in the powerful influence of evil spirits over human lives, it is very significant that Jesus is seen exercising his power of exorcism over demons. Jesus's ministry was set in an atmosphere of spiritual conflict, so the confrontations between the forces of darkness and the Light of the World were to be expected. Those who explain away these cases of demon-possession in psychiatric terms miss this key feature of Jesus's ministry. Each time he exorcised a demon, he was demonstrating victory, which reached its most dramatic expression in his victory over death at his resurrection.

In addition, one nature miracle is recorded when he calmed the storm ([Matthew 8:23–27](#); [Mark 4:35–41](#); [Luke 8:22–25](#)). This miracle focused both on the lack of faith in the disciples and the mysterious power of the presence of Jesus.

### The Reaction to Jesus by His Contemporaries

In the early stages of his ministry, Jesus was very popular with the ordinary people ([Matthew 4:23–25](#); [Mark 3:7–8](#)). However, those people did not grasp the spiritual purpose of Jesus's mission ([Luke 13:17](#)). Nevertheless, it stands in stark contrast to the nit-picking opposition of the religious leaders,

who even plotted to kill Jesus in the early period of his ministry ([Mark 3:6](#)).

Jesus and the religious leaders often clashed over the observance of the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:1–14](#); [Luke 13:10–17](#); [John 5:9–18](#)). Jesus adopted a more liberal view than the rigid and often illogical interpretation of some of his religious contemporaries—for example, when he was criticized for healing on the Sabbath even though the Jewish law allowed the rescuing of trapped animals on the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:11](#); [Luke 13:15](#)). To the Pharisaic mind, Jesus was a lawbreaker. The Pharisees feared that it would undermine their authority if his teaching were permitted to fill popular opinion.

### Preparing the Twelve

The Synoptic Gospels supply lists of the names of the 12 apostles ([Matthew 10:2–4](#); [Mark 3:16–19](#); [Luke 6:14–16](#)). Both Matthew and Mark name them in the context of their exercising authority over evil spirits, thereby showing that these men were being called to enter the same spiritual conflict as Jesus.

The Synoptic Gospels also give details of the instructions Jesus gave to these disciples before sending them to minister in Israel ([Matthew 10:5–42](#); [Mark 6:7–13](#); [Luke 9:1–6](#)). Matthew included material in his discourse that appears in a different context in Mark and Luke, but the discourse still shows the concern of Jesus to prepare his disciples for their future work. They were to proclaim the kingdom as he had done, but they were not to think that all would respond to it. They were warned about coming hostility and even persecution. It is important to note that Jesus warned his disciples not to burden themselves with material possessions. Although the instructions were given in the context of an imminent ministry tour, he was laying the foundation for the future work of the church.

### The Relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist

For a while, John the Baptist and Jesus preached and baptized in parallel with their respective disciples ([John 4:1–2](#)). John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod because of his uncompromising condemnation of Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife ([Matthew 14:3–4](#)). In prison, John began to have doubts about Jesus ([Matthew 11:1–19](#); [Luke 7:18–35](#)). He may have been expecting Jesus, if he really was the

Messiah, to come to his rescue. When John sent his disciples to Jesus to express his doubts, Jesus took the opportunity to tell the crowds of the greatness of John the Baptist. He said there was none born of women who was greater than John.

### Various Controversies

Jesus was willing to confront those around him about moral or religious questions. For example, in John's Gospel, a controversy arose when Jesus healed a lame man on the Sabbath ([John 5:1–18](#)). This shows that Sabbath rituals were seen as more important than having compassion for a lame man. Many hated Jesus for it, especially because he claimed to be doing the work of God.

A similar conflict arose after Jesus's disciples had plucked grain in the fields on the Sabbath day ([Matthew 12:1–8](#)). The Pharisees assumed that this act constituted work and saw it as a sufficient reason to plot how to destroy Jesus. After this event, he healed a paralytic on the same Sabbath day (verses [9–14](#)). The Jewish leaders clearly regarded him as a direct threat to their position among the people.

The rising opposition did not deter Jesus from healing more people ([Matthew 12:15–32](#)), which Matthew depicts as the fulfillment of Scripture. But when Jesus healed a man who was blind and mute because of a demon, the Pharisees accused him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Jesus told them that to blaspheme the Holy Spirit was an unforgivable sin. This incident not only brings out the perversity of the religious leaders but also shows that the ministry of Jesus was under the direct control of the Spirit. Other notable miracles were the healing of the centurion's servant, as recorded by Luke ([Luke 7:1–10](#)), and the raising from the dead of the widow's son at Nain (verses [11–17](#)). The first one is notable because of the remarkable faith of a Gentile.

Another example of the Pharisees' criticism was when Jesus attended a meal in the house of Simon the Pharisee ([Luke 7:36–50](#)). Simon had not washed Jesus's feet as was the custom in those days, and yet was critical of Jesus for allowing a sinful woman to wash his feet with tears, dry them with her hair, and anoint them with perfume. There is no doubt that most of Simon's colleagues would have shared his reaction, but Jesus did not stop the woman because he knew her heart, and how loving she was. He told Simon a parable to press home his point.

John records that Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles ([John 7:2](#)) and the Feast of Dedication ([10:22](#)) in Jerusalem, probably during the early period of the ministry. At these times Jesus taught in the temple area and spoke with the religious leaders. The chief priests were troubled and sent officers to arrest him ([7:32](#)), but the officers didn't arrest him. They were amazed by his teachings. More discussions followed, and the Jewish leaders claimed Jesus was demon-possessed ([8:48](#)). Both in this case and when Jesus healed the blind man, their hostility grew (chapter [9](#)). When Jesus spoke of himself as being the Shepherd they got very angry, and took up stones to kill him ([10:31](#)).

### Teaching in Parables

Matthew's Gospel gives a sample of a continuous discourse by Jesus ([Matthew 5:1–7:29](#)), but Jesus more often spoke in parables. Matthew grouped together some of the parables that concern the theme of the kingdom (chapter [13](#)). Luke kept parables of a different kind that are not specially linked to the kingdom. Mark has the least number of parables among the Synoptic Gospels, but his writing shows little interest in Jesus as a teacher. John does not relate any parables, although he does preserve two allegories—the sheep pen and the vine—which could be regarded as extended parables. Jesus typically taught in parables. In addition, he often used metaphors in his discourses, which resembled parables. The parable was valuable because it could stimulate thought and challenge the hearer. This is because parables are easier to keep in mind. Jesus did not speak in parables to hide his meaning. This would be contrary to all that he aimed to do through his work and teaching.

### Significant Events in Galilee

In Nazareth, his hometown, people were so hostile and unwilling to respond to his ministry that Jesus could perform very few miracles there ([Matthew 13:53–58](#); [Mark 6:1–6](#)). This is important because it shows that faith was necessary for people to receive his healing miracles.

There is one miracle performed by Jesus that all four Evangelists describe: the feeding of the 5,000 ([Matthew 14:13–21](#); [Mark 6:30–44](#); [Luke 9:10–17](#); [John 6:1–15](#)). Jesus was very popular at this stage of his ministry and cared for the physical needs of people. After this miracle, some wanted to make Jesus king. They were more concerned with material things and politics than they were with

spiritual truth. This is why Jesus immediately withdrew from them. When the people found him the next day, he went on to instruct them about the spiritual bread that comes from heaven ([John 6:25–40](#)).

At this point in John's Gospel, Jesus is often seen having discussions with his opponents. This style of teaching is different from the synoptic parables but familiar in Jewish-style debate. Many of the people found the spiritual themes in the teaching of Jesus too difficult to accept and consequently stopped being his disciples ([John 6:51–52, 60, 66](#)). Jesus and his teaching were uniquely challenging. Another miracle closely linked with this is when Jesus walked on the water, demonstrating his power in the natural world. Many have sought to explain the event by supposing that Jesus was really walking on the shore, and that the disciples did not realize it. But such a miracle is no different than the massive multiplication of loaves and fishes, and is perfectly possible if Jesus is who he claimed to be.

### Leaving Northern Galilee

Jesus spent a brief time in the region of Tyre and Sidon, where he healed more people and made it clear that his main mission was to the house of Israel ([Matthew 15:21–28](#)). He then moved on to Caesarea Philippi; this was the turning point of his ministry ([Matthew 16:13–20](#); [Mark 8:27–38](#); [Luke 9:18–27](#)). It was there that Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" This caused Peter to confess: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This impressive confession led Jesus to promise that he would build his church on "this rock." There has been much discussion about the meaning of this saying, and whether Jesus intended to build his church on Peter, on his confession, or on Peter making the confession. Historically, Peter was used by God to bring both Jews and Gentiles into the church ([Acts 2, 10](#)). There is no doubt about Jesus's intention to found a church, since the word occurs again in [Matthew 18:17](#). Despite the glorious revelation of Jesus on this occasion, he took it as an opportunity to begin to inform his disciples of his death and resurrection ([Matthew 16:21–23](#)).

This revelation of Jesus was considerably reinforced by the event known as the Transfiguration, when Jesus was transformed in the presence of three of his disciples ([Matthew 17:1–8](#)). Its purpose was to show the three leading disciples something of the nature of Jesus. Also,

Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, as representatives of the Law and the Prophets.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus made two predictions concerning his approaching death. These announcements were a total mystery to the disciples. In [Matthew 16](#), when Jesus mentioned his death, Peter attempted to rebuke Jesus and was rebuked by Jesus in turn. When Jesus mentioned his death again in chapter [17](#), Matthew noted that the disciples were greatly distressed ([Matthew 17:23](#)), while Mark and Luke mentioned the disciples' lack of understanding ([Mark 9:32](#); [Luke 9:45](#)). Jesus was approaching the cross with no support from those closest to him. It is not surprising that when the hour arrived they all forsook him.

The Transfiguration revealed that Jesus was greater than Moses and Elijah and in fact was the beloved Son of God. After that, he was asked to pay the temple tax ([Matthew 17:24–27](#)). This illustrates the attitude of Jesus toward the authorities and practical responsibilities. He paid the tax, although he did not acknowledge any obligation to do so. The method of payment was extraordinary, for it involved the miracle of the coin in the fish. More importantly, this shows Jesus's independence from Jewish law.

More than half of Luke's Gospel concerns the period that begins with Jesus leaving Galilee, and ends with his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. In this section, Luke introduces a lot of information that is not found in the other gospels. We will summarize some of the more striking items that throw light on the life of Jesus:

In addition to the mission of the Twelve, Luke records the mission of the Seventy (or Seventy-two—see [Luke 10:17–20](#)). Special parables are recorded by Luke in this section—the good Samaritan (verses [29–37](#)), the lost sheep ([15:3–7](#)), the lost coin (verses [8–10](#)), and the prodigal son (verses [11–32](#)). As Jesus moved toward Jerusalem, he was concerned with developing the spiritual life of his disciples. He was mindful of the fact that he would not be with them long and wished to prepare them for the future. He taught them about prayer ([11:1–13](#)), the Father's care for them ([12:13–34](#)), and preparation for the coming of the Son of Man (verses [35–56](#)).

### *On the Way to Jerusalem*

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus visited both Jericho and Bethany. At Jericho, he healed Bartimaeus

([Luke 18:35–43](#)) and met Zacchaeus, who reformed his ways as a tax collector ([19:1–10](#)). Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and their brother, Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead ([John 11](#)). Jesus spent his last days in Jerusalem but stayed each night at Simon the Leper's house in Bethany with those who loved him ([Matthew 26:6](#)). There, a woman anointed him with an expensive perfume. This was controversial and prophetic, preparing Jesus for his burial, and enhancing the gospel with loving dedication (verses [6–13](#)).

### *The Final Days in Jerusalem*

All four gospels describe Jesus entering Jerusalem ([Matthew 21:1–11](#); [Mark 11:1–10](#); [Luke 19:29–38](#); [John 12:12–15](#)). Multitudes greeted Jesus, celebrating him as their king. This stands in stark contrast with the crowd's later cry for his crucifixion.

In the Synoptic Gospels, the cleansing of the temple is the first main event following Jesus's entry into the city ([Matthew 21:12–13](#); [Mark 11:15–17](#); [Luke 19:45–46](#)). Jesus's audacity when clearing out the money changers from the temple area was too much for the authorities ([Mark 11:18](#); [Luke 19:47](#)). They decided to kill him. The time of his crucifixion was getting closer.

During this period further controversies developed between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees ([Matthew 21:23–22:45](#)). They tried to trick Jesus with several questions, but he very skillfully turned their questions against them. In the end, no one dared to ask him any more questions ([22:46](#)).

Jesus's final hour was getting closer. Jesus instructed his disciples about future events, in particular the end of the world. He firmly restated his return, and mentioned various signs that would precede it ([Matthew 24–25](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 21](#)). His goal was to challenge the disciples to be watchful ([Matthew 25:13](#)) and diligent (verses [14–30](#)). This section prepares the way for the events of the arrest, the trial, the scourging, and the cross-carrying and crucifixion that would follow. But we must first note the importance of the Last Supper.

On the night before he died, Jesus sat at a table with his disciples. He gave them an easy way to grasp the meaning of his death in the bread and wine, two basic elements of everyday life ([Matthew 26:26–30](#); [Mark 14:22–25](#); [Luke 22:19–20](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#)). This was meant to remind them that his body would be broken and that his blood would be

poured out for others. Jesus had to provide this reminder that his sacrificial death would seal a completely new covenant. It was meant to be a true reminder to help the church remember the central importance of the cross.

John's Gospel does not record the institution of the Last Supper. However, it does record when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as an example of humility ([John 13:1–20](#)). He emphasized to the disciples the principle of service to others. John continues with a series of teachings Jesus gave on the eve of the Passion (chapters [14–16](#)). The most important feature of this teaching was the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples after Jesus had gone. Despite his approaching death, Jesus showed himself more concerned about his disciples than about himself. We can see this in his prayer in [John 17](#). All the Evangelists refer in advance to the betrayal by Judas ([Matthew 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–21; Luke 22:21–23; John 13:21–30](#)), thus preparing the readers for what is about to unfold.

### *The Betrayal and Arrest*

In a sense, the whole gospel story has been working up to a climax of rejection. Jesus would soon lose his popular support and his opponents seemed in control. In John's Gospel the climax is expressed with the words "his hour" ([John 13:1](#)). The betrayal and arrest are part of a larger plan. After the Last Supper, Jesus went straight from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane ([Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46](#)). He prayed to his Father with deep intensity and agony. This gives us a glimpse of what it cost Jesus to identify himself with humanity's needs. He prayed for the cup of suffering to pass from him but at the same time submitted to the Father's will. The three disciples he took with him all fell asleep. The disciple who betrayed him appeared at the gates leading the group who would arrest him. Jesus confronts Judas with amazing dignity, calling him "friend" ([Matthew 26:50](#)). Jesus did not resist his arrest, and called out the crowd of people for their swords and clubs (verse [55](#)).

### *The Trial*

Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas, one of the high priests, for a first examination ([John 18:13](#)). During his trial, he was mocked by his enemies. His disciple Peter denied him three times ([Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–27](#)), as Jesus predicted he would

([Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; John 13:38](#)). Caiaphas presided over the official trial with the Sanhedrin. He was puzzled at first when Jesus refused to speak. Jesus predicted that the Son of Man would come on the clouds of heaven, which was enough to make the high priest charge him with blasphemy ([Mark 14:62–64](#)). Jesus remained calm and dignified despite being spat upon and struck on the face. He showed how much greater he was than those who were treating him with disrespect.

The further examinations before Pilate ([Matthew 27:1–2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28](#)) and Herod ([Luke 23:7–12](#)) were also examples of unfair justice. Jesus did not answer when asked about the charges before either Pilate ([Matthew 27:14](#)) or Herod ([Luke 23:9](#)). He remained majestically silent, except to make a comment to Pilate about the true nature of his kingship ([John 18:33–38](#)). The pathetic governor declared Jesus innocent, offered the crowds the release of either Jesus or Barabbas, and then publicly disclaimed responsibility by washing his hands. Pilate then cruelly scourged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified.

### *The Crucifixion*

Jesus's death on the cross demonstrates humankind's inhuman treatment of one another. Even Jesus Christ—the true example of what it means to be human—was treated with cruelty. The soldiers mocked Jesus ([Matthew 27:27–30](#)), and mixed a royal robe with a hurtful crown of thorns ([Mark 15:17](#)). They forced a passerby to carry the cross ([Luke 23:26](#)) and then cruelly nailed Jesus to the cross. The soldiers carelessly cast lots for his clothes ([John 19:23–24](#)), and arrogantly challenged Jesus to use his power to escape ([Matthew 27:40–44](#)). All these actions expose the cruelty of Jesus's opponents. Yet, Jesus is concerned for the repentant criminal who was crucified with him ([Luke 23:39–43](#)), for his mother ([John 19:25–27](#)), for those responsible for the crucifixion as he prays for their forgiveness ([Luke 23:34](#)) and cries his final triumphant cry ([Mark 15:37](#)). All of this shows a nobility that strongly contrasted with the meanness of those around him. A few witnesses of Jesus's death on the cross demonstrated a clearer understanding, like the centurion who was convinced of Jesus's innocence ([Mark 15:39](#)), or like the women who followed him and stood at a distance ([Matthew 27:55–56](#)). There was one dark moment for Jesus when he cried out about how he felt forsaken ([Mark 15:34](#)). And there was darkness and an earthquake, as if nature itself recognized the

meaningfulness of the event. Even the temple veil was torn in two, as if it had no longer any right to block the way into the holy of holies ([Matthew 27:51](#)).

### *The Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension*

Jesus's body was placed in a tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph prepared the body for burial with the help of Nicodemus ([Matthew 27:57–60](#); [John 19:39](#)). But the tomb played only a secondary part in the resurrection. The Evangelists concentrate on the appearances of Jesus not only on the day of resurrection but also afterwards. The disciples were convinced that Jesus was alive. Some, like Thomas, had doubts to overcome ([John 20:24–29](#)). Others, like John, were more ready to believe when they saw the empty tomb (verses [2–10](#)). The fact that the first to see the risen Lord was a woman, Mary Magdalene, is meaningful ([Matthew 27:61](#); [28:1, 5–9](#)). Her presence at the cross put to shame those disciples who had run away ([Matthew 26:56](#); [John 19:25](#)).

Jesus was in a human form despite being in a glorified and risen state. Yet, the disciples did not recognize him immediately ([John 20:15–16](#)). The disciples were eventually able to recognize the risen Jesus as the man they had known before. His appearances were occasions of both joy and instruction (compare [Luke 24:44](#) and [Acts 1:3](#)). The resurrection, in fact, had transformed the crucifixion from a tragedy into a triumph. Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus went up into heaven to join his Father in glory ([Luke 24:51](#); [John 20:17](#); [Acts 1:9–11](#)).

## **Jesus Christ, Teachings of**

Because of the wide variety of forms in which the teachings of Jesus have been preserved, it is difficult to bring out the essence of that teaching in a systematic way. Jesus did not present us with a theological system. His words were essentially practical in intent. Yet from all the variety of sayings, it is possible to extract a clear idea of what Jesus thought about several important issues. What was his teaching about God? What did he think about himself? What did he mean when he spoke about the kingdom? What does his teaching explain about the meaning of his death? What did he say about the Holy Spirit? How did he describe human beings and their needs? Did he anticipate the Christian church? Did he teach anything about the

end of the world? What were the main features of his moral teaching? The following sections will seek to answer these important questions.

### *Preview*

- Teachings about God
- Teachings about Himself
- Teachings about the Kingdom of God
- Teachings about His Own Death
- Teachings about the Holy Spirit
- Teachings about Humanity
- Teachings about the Church
- Teachings about the Future
- Teachings about Moral Issues

### *Teachings about God*

Anyone who encounters the teachings of Jesus after reading the Old Testament will immediately recognize that much of his teaching about God is the same. Since Jesus, like all orthodox Jews of his day, accepted the testimony of the Old Testament as inspired, it is not surprising that his approach to God was similar. This is especially true of his assumption that God was Creator. He taught a special divine care over the created order and affirmed that God watched over such small creatures as the sparrow ([Matthew 10:29](#)). There is no support in the teachings of Jesus for the view that God is uninterested in the world he made.

One of the most characteristic titles Jesus used for God was Father. This was not new, because the idea occurs in the Old Testament, where God is described as Father of his people Israel. This kind of fatherhood was national rather than personal. In the period between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews came to regard God as so holy that he was removed from direct contact with human affairs. There had to be mediators between God and people. This elevated belief about God did not encourage the idea of God as Father. It is against this background that we must interpret Jesus's unique teaching of the personal fatherhood of God. There is some evidence in Judaism that prayer to God as "Our Father" was known, but what distinguishes Jesus's teachings from those of his contemporaries is that the fatherhood of God was central to what he taught.

The father-son relationship is particularly emphasized in John's Gospel, where Jesus as Son is seen to be in close communion with God as Father. This comes out strongly in Jesus's prayer in [John 17](#) and in the frequent assertions that the Father had sent the Son and that the Son was doing the will of the Father. It is this strong relationship between God and Jesus in terms of fatherhood and sonship that led Jesus to teach people to approach God in the same way. The Lord's Prayer at once recognizes this in its opening words. It is particularly important to note that the intimacy of "Our Father" comes before "may your name be kept holy" ([Matthew 6:9](#)). Jesus never taught people to approach God with terror.

Although there is a connection between the way in which Jesus addressed God as Father and the way in which he taught his disciples to approach God, there is also a distinction. Jesus spoke of "My Father and your Father" when he appeared to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection ([John 20:17](#)), but he did not say "our Father." His sonship was unique because he claimed that he and the Father were one ([John 10:30](#)).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus assured his followers that their heavenly Father knows about their needs ([Matthew 6:32](#); [Luke 12:30](#)). On this solid foundation they are encouraged not to be anxious. This gives some insight into how Jesus's teachings about God have a bearing on practical issues.

### *Teachings about Himself*

What Jesus said about himself is of great importance because this undoubtedly formed the basis of what the early church came to teach about him.

Jesus used certain titles of himself or accepted them as descriptions of himself when they were used by others. The most widely used is Son of Man. This title was used by Jesus to refer to himself but was not used by anyone else. It was also used in several different kinds of sayings. Sometimes the sayings related directly to the public ministry of Jesus, like the saying that the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath ([Mark 2:28](#)), or that the Son of Man had the authority to forgive sins (verse [10](#)). Sometimes the sayings had a direct bearing on his coming suffering, as when Jesus said that the Son of Man must suffer many things ([Mark 8:31](#); note that [Matthew 16:21](#) has "he" instead of "Son of Man"). At other times the reference is to a future appearance, as when Jesus declared to the high

priest that he would see "the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" ([Mark 14:62](#)). What did Jesus mean by the title, and why did he use it?

The title "Son of Man" had been used before. The phrase occurs in [Psalm 8:4](#), where it refers to man or humans. Again, the expression is used many times in Ezekiel as a mode of address to the prophet, but here also it means man. A rather different use occurs in [Daniel 7:13](#), where one like a son of man comes with the clouds before the Ancient of Days. There is a strong similarity between this passage and the words of Jesus in [Mark 14:62](#). But an important difference is that whereas Son of Man becomes a title in Mark, it is not so in Daniel. There is some evidence for the title in Jewish apocalyptic literature [a prophetic style of writing]. For example, the Book of Parables of Enoch describes a preexistent being who will come to judge and overthrow the enemies of God. It seems evident from this that Jesus's use of Son of Man as a title is unique.

The Son of Man sayings are distributed throughout the four gospels, and there are no obvious differences in their uses. What is at first striking is that though the title is frequently used by Jesus in the gospels, it never became a name by which Jesus was known by the early Christians. In fact, only in [Acts 7:56](#) does the title appear, in this case used by Stephen. Therefore, it is clear that it had a special meaning for Jesus that it did not have for others. There is no doubt that he was referring to himself and not to someone else, as a careful study of all the Son of Man sayings shows. Those who think that Jesus was referring to someone else arrive at this conclusion only after first ignoring some of the sayings. The most probable reason why he used the title Son of Man was because he wanted to avoid a term like Messiah, which carried with it too many political implications. But what did Son of Man mean to Jesus? It is rich with the idea of humanness, possibly allusions to Daniel's "son of man," and perhaps the Suffering Servant idea from [Isaiah 53](#). It is most likely that Jesus saw it in terms of his mission in a way that his hearers could not fully appreciate. It is also probable that the early church preferred Messiah because this title carried the meaning of a royal deliverer. Also, after the death of Jesus, there would be no further fear of political misunderstanding.

The term Messiah, or Christ, does not belong strictly to the teachings of Jesus, since he himself never used it. The most striking instance where he

accepted being called Messiah was in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. All the Synoptic Gospels record the confession "You are the Christ," while Matthew adds the significant comment by Jesus that flesh and blood had not revealed it but "my Father in heaven" ([Matthew 16:17](#)). He certainly accepted the confession and regarded it as revelation from God. One other case in the Synoptics where he does not specifically refute being the Messiah, or Christ, is his answer to the high priest's question "Are you the Christ?" ([Mark 14:61](#)).

In John's Gospel, Andrew tells Peter that he had found the Messiah ([John 1:41](#)). The woman at Samaria talks to Jesus, and he reveals that he is the Messiah ([4:25-26](#)). There was a widespread expectation among the Jews that a deliverer would come to overthrow their political enemies, the Romans. There were various ideas about his origin (a military leader or a heavenly warrior) and his methods (the Zealots believed that deliverance could come only through armed revolution). It is easy to understand why Jesus was reserved about openly discussing his role as the Messiah.

Another title of highest importance is Son of God, although it occurs mainly in John's Gospel. That both Mark and John regarded Jesus in this way is clear from explicit statements in their gospels (compare [Mark 1:1](#); [John 20:30-31](#)). There are certainly passages where Messiah is linked with Son of God, and where Jesus rejects neither title (compare [Matthew 16:16](#)). But in the teachings of Jesus, one passage makes abundantly clear the special relationship that Jesus had with God as Son—namely, [Matthew 11:27](#) (also [Luke 10:22](#), a parallel passage describing the same event), where Jesus implies that he is the Son of the Father.

However, many similar passages in John's Gospel are more explicit. The Son is unquestionably preexistent because he knows he came from the Father and returns to the Father. It is not possible from the many references to sonship in John's Gospel to come to any other conclusion than that Jesus regarded himself as divine. It is particularly important to note that it is also in John's Gospel that Jesus is portrayed most clearly in his human nature with its accompanying weaknesses. Nowhere in the teachings of Jesus did he explain how God could become man, but he assumed this as a fact. He taught with the authority of God.

### *Teachings about the Kingdom of God*

No one can read the Synoptic Gospels without being impressed with the frequency with which the expression "kingdom of God" (or of heaven) occurs. It was clearly an important theme in the whole teaching of Jesus. It is less evident in John's Gospel but is nevertheless still present. Many of the parables of Jesus are specifically called parables of the kingdom. Jesus's concept of the kingdom provided a foundational idea to the Christian gospel.

The main idea is the rule of God over people rather than a realm that belongs to God. In other words, the emphasis is on the active reigning of the King. This is important because it means that the kingdom is deeply affected by relationships between the members and the King. It also means the kingdom will not be expressed in institutional terms.

There is one problem with the kingdom teachings that must be faced: its timing. Some sayings imply that it is already present, while others suggest that it will not come until the future. Some scholars reject the idea that present and future can be held together. Therefore, they reject one and concentrate on the other. Those who maintain a present understanding of the kingdom developed the idea of a social gospel [which addresses social problems like poverty and injustice] since Christianity was defined as the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. According to [some who affirm] this view, there is no place for a future arrival of the kingdom. On the other hand, some have denied altogether the present aspect and concentrate on the future. In this case, it is difficult to see in what sense the kingdom teachings are relevant.

Yet others have insisted that since both present and future aspects are found in the gospel records, no explanation is sufficient that denies one at the expense of the other. One possible solution is to regard the present aspects as applying to this age but as not reaching their fulfillment until the future establishment of the kingdom. A similar solution, expressed differently, is to maintain that the reality is a future kingdom but that it has extended into the present. Jesus intentionally included both present and future aspects.

That the kingdom was a theme of common interest is clear from [Luke 17:20-21](#), where the Pharisees asked Jesus when it was coming. His answer, that it was among them, shows unmistakably a present

idea. This is equally true of the statement that in the exorcism of evil spirits, the kingdom had arrived ([Matthew 12:28](#); [Luke 11:20](#)). Moreover, Jesus mentioned that the kingdom has been forcefully advancing ([Matthew 11:12](#)). By forcefully advancing, he did not mean by revolutionary methods, although he clearly implied that something dynamic was already happening. This idea of dynamic power is one of the most characteristic features of the kingdom. Jesus spoke of binding the strong, armed man ([Luke 11:21-22](#)). This shows that in his ministry he expected to give a powerful demonstration against the forces of darkness [spirits who do evil things].

It is evident that the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was a kingdom in which God was supreme. It was inseparably linked with his redemptive mission, in which God was bringing spiritual deliverance to his people. Moreover, the kingdom teachings of Jesus cannot be regarded in isolation. It is part of the total message. No part of that message can be separated from any other part without distorting the whole.

The clearest teachings on the future aspect of the kingdom are to be found in some of the parables ([Matthew 13](#)) and in the discourse on the Mount of Olives ([Matthew 24-25](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 21](#)). In the latter, Jesus spoke of the future using imagery from Jewish literature, like the references to clouds, to glory, and to angels in relation to the coming of the Son of Man ([Mark 13:26-27](#)). In Matthew's account, there is reference to a trumpet call, another familiar feature ([Matthew 24:31](#)).

Various features from the kingdom parables give the clearest idea of the nature of the kingdom. Membership in the kingdom is not considered to be universal, because in the parable of the sower ([Matthew 13:1-9](#); [Mark 4:1-9](#); [Luke 8:4-8](#)) not all the soils are productive. The same separation is seen in the parable of the weeds ([Matthew 13:24-30](#)) and the parable of the net ([Matthew 13:47-52](#)). The weeds are destroyed and only the wheat is harvested, while the bad fish are thrown away. The members of the kingdom are those who hear and understand the word of the kingdom ([Matthew 13:23](#)). Therefore, it is clear that a response is necessary to enjoy the benefits of the kingdom.

There is an emphasis on growth in the parable of the mustard seed ([Matthew 13:31-32](#); [Mark 4:30-34](#); [Luke 13:18-19](#)), where rapid development occurs from small beginnings. The parables of the treasure and the pearl ([Matthew 13:44-46](#)) are intended to emphasize the value of the kingdom. The universal character of the kingdom comes out

sharply in the parable of the wicked tenants ([Matthew 21:33-44](#); [Mark 12:1-12](#); [Luke 20:9-18](#)), where the kingdom is said to be taken away from the Jews and given to another "nation," presumably an allusion to the Gentiles ([Matthew 21:43](#)). This is in line with the Great Commission Jesus gave to his disciples to preach to all nations ([28:19](#)). A universal kingdom would certainly be entirely different from the messianic kingdom idea of Judaism, in which Israel was to be the central unit. It is not easy to appreciate how revolutionary the idea was of a worldwide kingdom with gentiles and Jews on the same footing.

### *Teachings about His Own Death*

The announcement of the kingdom must be linked with Jesus's approach to his own death, which Jesus saw as an essential part of his mission. Some scholars have claimed that Jesus considered his ministry to have been a failure, but this is not supported by even a quick reading of the gospels. Moreover, Jesus gave a series of indications that, when taken together, supply us with the meaning Jesus attached to his death within the entire range of his mission.

It is important to note that many times Jesus showed his awareness that details of his life were a fulfillment of Scripture (compare [Matthew 26:24, 56](#); [Mark 9:12](#); [Luke 18:31; 24:25-27, 44-45](#)). In all the instances cited, the suffering of Jesus is referred to as the subject of Old Testament prophecy. This must mean that he had reflected on Old Testament predictions and recognized that they could be fulfilled only through his own sufferings. In this case, Jesus was completely aware that he would suffer to fulfill his own mission.

This emphasis on fulfillment of Scripture is also seen in John's Gospel. His statement that the Son of Man must be lifted up even as Moses lifted up the serpent ([John 3:14](#)) illustrates this point. Most of the passages where fulfillment of Scripture is mentioned are the comments of the Evangelist, John. But there can be no doubt that the fulfillment motive played a vital part both in Jesus's own understanding of his mission and in the early Christians' understanding of his death. In this connection, some hold that John puts more stress on the incarnation as a means of salvation in that he sees it as an illumination of the mind. But this is only part of the truth because there is more on the meaning of the death of Jesus in John's Gospel than in the others.

The gospels emphasize the divine necessity of the death of Jesus. In addition to the fulfillment motive, the idea of necessity is strong in the first prediction by Jesus of his approaching death. In John's Gospel, Jesus speaks of his "hour" several times in the earlier stages of his ministry as "not yet," but in the later stages as having arrived. There is a sense of definite movement toward a climax, the hour undoubtedly being the hour of his suffering (compare [John 17:1](#)). There is not room for any disillusionment here. Jesus knew that only through the hour of death could the Father be glorified. The climax was according to an orderly plan.

Jesus evidently regarded his death as in some ways a sacrifice. The clearest indication of this is in the words of institution at the Last Supper. The cup is connected with the blood of the new covenant, which is said to be for the "remission of sins" ([Matthew 26:26–28](#)). No explanation is given of the way in which the coming death, signified by the broken bread and poured-out wine, would bring about forgiveness of sins. But the immediate realization by the early church that Christ died for our sins (compare [1 Corinthians 15:3](#)) shows that they clearly grasped the importance of what Jesus said. The new covenant idea is parallel to the old covenant, which according to [Exodus 24](#) was sealed with sacrificial blood. There can be little doubt that Jesus had this in mind when he spoke the words about the new covenant. It was also similar to the ideas expressed in [Jeremiah 31](#), referring to a covenant written on the heart [the emotional center of one's being] rather than engraved in stone [as with the Ten Commandments].

Another aspect of the death of Christ seen especially in John's Gospel is the sense of completion that went with it. In Jesus's prayer in [John 17](#), as he faces the cross, he declares that he has finished the work that the Father had given him to do ([John 17:4](#)). This is reinforced by the cry from the cross, "It is finished," which only John records ([19:30](#)). This sense of accomplishment gives a sense of triumph to what might otherwise have been considered a disaster.

### *Teachings about the Holy Spirit*

At several of the major events in the life of Jesus, the Evangelists note the activity of the Spirit (for example, the virgin birth, the baptism, the temptation). Therefore, it is to be expected that Jesus would have instructed his disciples about the Holy Spirit. However, there is surprisingly little in

the Synoptic Gospels on this theme. Most of the teachings come from John's Gospel.

According to Luke, when Jesus began his preaching ministry in Nazareth he read the statement in [Isaiah 61:1–2](#) about the Spirit of God and applied it to himself. He saw his ministry as being inaugurated by the Holy Spirit. This becomes clear in the way in which he responded to the charge that he cast out demons by means of Beelzebub, prince of the demons. He identified the reality of the coming of the kingdom of God by the fact that he was casting out evil spirits by the Spirit of God ([Matthew 12:28](#)). Moreover, he was sensitive to the seriousness of blaspheming the Spirit, which he implies his accusers were in danger of doing. Whatever he did in his ministry he saw as an activity of the Holy Spirit, and this was especially so in the conflict with evil spirits.

While warning his disciples that they would meet with opposition, Jesus assured them of the Holy Spirit's support when they were forced to appear before kings or governors ([Matthew 10:19–20](#); [Mark 13:11](#)). Indeed, he told them that the Holy Spirit would speak through them. This emphasizes that he expected a continuation of the Holy Spirit's activity in the future. Luke records one instance in which Jesus comments on what fathers will do for their children and asks whether God will not give the Holy Spirit to those who ask ([Luke 11:13](#)). The assumption is that God regards the Holy Spirit as the best gift to give his children. On yet another occasion, Jesus recognized that David was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he wrote [Psalm 110](#) ([Mark 12:36](#)). This reflects Jesus's belief in the Holy Spirit's active role in the production of Scripture.

The Gospel of John provides a more detailed development of what Jesus taught about the Holy Spirit. Teachings about the Holy Spirit are usually linked to Jesus's teachings about giving eternal life to those who believe in him and receive him. At the same time he spoke of the new birth and eternal life to Nicodemus, Jesus also spoke of the Holy Spirit ([John 3:3–8, 15–16](#)). When he spoke of the water of life to the Samaritan woman, he also spoke of the Holy Spirit ([4:14, 23–24](#)). The same is true for the discourses on the bread of life ([6:48–63](#)) and the river of life ([7:37–39](#)). Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus declares to various people that he can give them eternal life if they would believe in him. He promises them the water of life, the bread of life, and the light of life, but no one could really partake of these until after the Lord was resurrected. As a sample, they could receive a certain measure of life

via the Lord's words, because his words were themselves spirit and life ([6:63](#)). It was not until the Holy Spirit would become available that the believers could actually become the recipients of the divine, eternal life.

After the Lord's discourse in [John 6](#) (a discourse that was very troubling and offensive to most of his disciples), Jesus said, "The Spirit gives life" ([6:63](#)). When the Holy Spirit became available, they could have life. Again, Jesus offered the water of life—even life flowing like rivers of living water—to the Jews assembled at the Feast of Tabernacles. He told them to come and drink of him. But no one could, then and there, come and drink of him. So John added a note: "He was speaking about the Spirit... For the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." ([7:39](#)). Once Jesus would be glorified through resurrection, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus would be available for men to drink. In [John 6](#), Jesus offered himself as the bread of life to be eaten by men. And in [John 7](#), he offered himself as the water of life to refresh men. But no one could eat of him or drink of him until the Spirit of the glorified Jesus was made available, as was indirectly said in [John 6:63](#) and then stated plainly in [John 7:39](#).

In [John 14:16–18](#), Jesus went one step further in identifying himself with the Holy Spirit. He told the disciples that he would give them another Comforter. Then he told them that they should know who this Comforter was because he was, then and there, staying with them and would, in the near future, be in them. Who else but Jesus was staying with them at that time? Then after telling the disciples that the Comforter would come to them, he said, "I will come to you." First he said that the Comforter would come to them and be in them, and then in the same breath he said that he would come to them and be in them (see [14:20](#)). In short, the coming of the Comforter to the disciples was one and the same as the coming of Jesus to the disciples. The Comforter who was dwelling with the disciples that night was the Spirit in Christ. The Comforter who would be in the disciples (after the resurrection) would be Christ in the Spirit.

On the evening of the resurrection, the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples and then breathed into them the Holy Spirit. This inbreathing, reminiscent of God's breathing into Adam the breath of life ([Genesis 2:7](#)), became the fulfillment of all that had been promised and anticipated earlier in John's Gospel. Through this gift, the disciples were spiritually reborn and indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus

Christ. This historical event marked the beginning of the new creation. Jesus could now be realized as the bread of life, the water of life, and the light of life. The believers now possessed his divine, eternal, risen life. From that time forward, Christ as Spirit indwelt his believers. Therefore, in his first letter John could say, "And by this we know that He remains in us: by the Spirit He has given us." ([1 John 3:24](#)).

The indwelling Holy Spirit helped the disciples remember Jesus's words and actions ([John 14:26](#)) so that they could teach and write about them with deep insight. This means that Jesus did not intend that the preservation of his teachings should be left to chance. All too often theories attempting to explain the way in which the traditions about Jesus and his teachings were transmitted in the period before there were any written gospels are suggested without any reference to the Holy Spirit. It is not acceptable to concentrate on laws of oral tradition and ignore the unique factor in this case—the Holy Spirit. It is part of the Holy Spirit's mission to preserve and transmit the teaching of Jesus. What Jesus says in this passage about the Holy Spirit has far-reaching significance for the formation of the gospels.

Another important function is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world. Jesus made it clear that the Holy Spirit would convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ([John 16:8](#)). Without the activity of the Holy Spirit, there would be no possibility of the disciples making any impact on the world. Nevertheless, Jesus warned that the world could not receive the Holy Spirit because it did not know him ([14:17](#)). The mystery of the Holy Spirit is that he dwells in every believer. This indwelling aspect is of great importance and was particularly developed in the writings of Paul.

### *Teachings about Humanity*

Jesus taught about God's providential care over all human beings. A person's hairs are all numbered ([Matthew 10:30](#)), which is a vivid way of saying that God is concerned about the details of human life. But God is far more concerned with the eternal soul. Jesus made it clear that it would be unprofitable for anyone to gain the world and to lose his or her soul ([Matthew 16:26](#); [Mark 8:36](#); [Luke 9:25](#)). The focus falls on what a person is and not what he or she has. Jesus even said that a maimed body was preferable to a lost life ([Mark 9:43–47](#)). One's total fulfillment depends more on one's spiritual condition than on one's

environment or physical well-being. He was not, of course, unconcerned about people's physical state, as his many healings show, but his major concern was with people's relationship with God.

Jesus never viewed humans as isolated individuals. Within God's community people were expected to have responsibility toward one another. The Sermon on the Mount illustrated this social emphasis in the teaching of Jesus. Those who are merciful to others will obtain mercy ([Matthew 5:7](#)). There is special praise for peacemakers (verse [9](#)). The disciples of Jesus are expected to bring light to others (verse [16](#)). They are expected to give more than expected (verse [40](#)). Jesus is clearly saying that people have responsibility beyond themselves.

The relation of people to God is one of dependence. Jesus taught men and women to pray to God for daily bread ([Matthew 6:11](#)) as a reminder that they cannot be wholly self-sufficient. He allowed no place in his teaching for humans to boast in their own achievements.

Jesus had some specific things to say about home life. He accepted the sacredness of the marriage contract ([Matthew 5:31-32](#); compare [19:3-9](#)) and therefore showed a high regard for the honor and rights of the wife. It was more in his actions and attitudes rather than his specific teachings that Jesus showed his regard for the status of women. When he spoke of men, he often used the term in the sense of people, including both men and women. There is no suggestion that in matters of faith women were in the least inferior to men. Moreover, Luke points out how many women supported Jesus and his disciples in their travels.

Jesus had a high view of the human potential but also acknowledged their present condition. The stress on repentance ([Matthew 4:17](#)) shows a sinfulness of which people need to repent. This sense of need is implicit in the cases where Jesus pronounces forgiveness (for example, to the paralytic, [Matthew 9:1-8](#); and to the woman who anointed him, [Luke 7:47-48](#)). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for forgiveness ([Matthew 6:12](#); [Luke 11:4](#)). He takes for granted that they need it and desire to obtain it.

Jesus gives no support to any self-righteousness in men or women. This is the burden of his criticism of the religious leaders in various sayings, particularly in [Matthew 23](#). He was critical of Jewish teachers because they placed so much importance on works of merit as contributing to salvation. His whole approach depended on

humans casting themselves on the mercy of God. This is vividly illustrated in the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector at prayer ([Luke 18:10-14](#)). It was the latter who threw himself on the mercy of God and who was praised by Jesus.

Undoubtedly, Jesus regarded sin as universal. He never suggested that there was anyone who was exempt from it. The major concept of sin in his teachings was separation from God. This comes out clearly in John's Gospel, with its strong opposition between light and darkness, life and death (compare [John 5:24](#)). Indeed, the "world" in John's Gospel represents the system that takes no account of God. But sin is also seen as enslavement to Satan. The life and teachings of Jesus are seen against the background of spiritual conflict. Jesus can even say to his opponents, "You belong to your father, the devil" ([John 8:44](#)). He assumes throughout that there are hostile forces bringing man into subjection.

In the parable of the prodigal son ([Luke 15:11-32](#)), sin against God is linked with sin before the father. In other words, it is regarded in terms of rebellion and revolt ([verse 21](#)). This is a different assessment of the son's offense than the one arrived at by the elder brother, who could see it only in terms of property. The view that humans are essentially in a state of rebellion against God is a basic principle of Paul's theological position, and it is important to note that it finds its root in the teachings of Jesus.

There is no question that Jesus had much to say about condemnation. Those who did not believe and were therefore outside the provision of salvation that Jesus had made are declared to be already condemned ([John 3:18](#)). At various times Jesus mentioned judgment to come, which shows that a person's destiny is related to his or her present spiritual condition. The whole mission of Jesus must be seen against this background of humanity's spiritual need. A person, if left to himself or herself, would be totally unable to achieve salvation, but Jesus came to offer eternal life to those who believe in him ([John 3:16](#)).

### *Teachings about the Church*

Some have supposed that Jesus did not predict that there would be a church. But on two occasions he used the word "church," which means a people called out by God. On one of the occasions (at Caesarea Philippi) Jesus told Peter that he would build his church upon the rock ([Matthew 16:16-19](#)). It seems most probable that "rock" was intended to link the foundation of the church to

Peter's particular confession about Jesus. It is certain that the later church was a community that affirmed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is important to note that it is Christ himself who is the builder of the church. He assured his disciples that it would be impossible for the gates of hell to overcome it. Moreover, one of the functions of the church was to proclaim forgiveness of sins, and this is implied in what Jesus said to Peter. That the words were not intended to refer exclusively to him is clear from [Matthew 18:18](#), where similar words were addressed to all the disciples. The church, according to [Matthew 18:17](#), was to be a community that could settle disputes between believers.

In addition to these specific references to the church, Jesus assumed that his followers would meet together in his name ([Matthew 18:19–20](#)). In his final words in Matthew's account, he commissioned them to teach what he had taught them and to baptize new disciples ([Matthew 28:19–20](#)). He promised his presence would be with them. The command to baptize was reinforced by Jesus's own example in submitting to John's baptism. One other special rite that Jesus expected his disciples to observe was the Lord's Supper. His instructions about this assume a later community that could observe it. Since the form of words used in the institution point to the meaning of the death of Christ, it is clear that Jesus intended the future community to be frequently reminded of the center of the faith. The Christian church was to be a group of people who knew that through Christ they had entered into a new relationship with God.

Although there are no references to the church in John's Gospel, there are certainly hints that support the community idea. Jesus introduced himself as the Shepherd and spoke of his followers as forming a flock ([John 10:16](#)). The sheep imagery occurs again in this gospel when Peter is instructed three times by the risen Lord to feed the sheep ([John 21:15–17](#)). Another figure of speech that Jesus used to bring out the group idea is that of the many branches that draw their life from the vine, and therefore belong to each other because of their common life in the vine ([John 15:1–8](#)).

Jesus recognized that the future community would need the aid of the Holy Spirit. His teachings on this subject laid the foundation for the evident dependence of the early church on the Holy Spirit, as seen in the book of Acts. Finally, it should be noted that there is a close connection between the church and the kingdom of God, although they are

not identical. The kingdom is more broad than the church, which is included within it.

### *Teachings about the Future*

Jesus thought of the kingdom in terms of both present realization and future hope. The future aspect is related to the end of the age. Although he did not spell it out in specific terms, Jesus did not leave his disciples without any knowledge of how the present age would end. He gave firm assurance that he would return at some time in the future.

He told the disciples that the Son of Man would come with his angels in his Father's glory ([Matthew 16:27](#)). In the discourse in which he answers the disciples' question about the end of the world, he speaks again of the Son of Man coming in clouds with power and glory ([Mark 13:26](#)), probably drawn from the familiar language of [Daniel 7](#). Jesus described various signs that would precede his own coming. He spoke of wars, conflicts, earthquakes, famines, and disturbances in the heavens. The gospel was to be preached to all nations. At the same time, many false Christs would arise.

Jesus gave such details about his return to encourage his disciples in the face of persecution. The future hope had a definitively practical purpose. The disciples were urged to watch. The coming would happen as unexpectedly as a thief in the night. Jesus said that even he himself did not know when the coming would take place ([Mark 13:32](#)).

Another important theme affecting the future is emphasized in Jesus's teachings about resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the body. They attempted to trap Jesus with a question about a woman who had been married seven times. They wanted to know whose husband she would be at the resurrection ([Mark 12:18–27](#)). Jesus pointed out that there would be no marriage when the dead rise. The Sadducees' idea about resurrection was clearly wrong. Jesus's teaching was that those resurrected would be like the angels. There is no doubt about the resurrection of the dead, although no information is given about the resurrection body. Jesus told a story about a rich man and a poor man who both died ([Luke 16:19–31](#)). In the afterlife, the rich man cries out in extreme pain, while the poor man enjoys a state of blessedness. What is most clear from this is the certainty of the afterlife and the fact of a distinction between the two men, although we are not told on what grounds the distinction is

made. Elsewhere in his teachings, Jesus suggested that the most important requirement is faith in himself. The conversation between Jesus and the dying thief on the cross suggests that paradise for the latter consisted of an awareness of the presence of Jesus ([Luke 23:42-43](#)).

The theme of rewards and punishment occurs in many passages. In [Matthew 16:27](#) Jesus says that the Son of Man will reward everyone according to what he or she has done. Those who are worthless are promised punishment in darkness ([Matthew 25:30](#)). Moreover, Jesus spoke of a day of judgment on which men and women must give an account, even of all their careless words ([12:36-37](#)). In the parable of the sheep and the goats, he spoke of a separation that the Son of Man will make when he comes. Those who have shown concern for the believers are praised ([25:31-46](#)).

Among Jesus's most solemn statements are those that speak of hell. There is no way of getting around his teachings about eternal punishment for the unrighteous (as in [Matthew 25:41, 46](#)), which is opposite to the eternal life promised to the righteous. He taught that his disciples would have a place prepared for them in heaven ([John 14:2](#)), and spoke of a Book of Life in which the names of his disciples were written ([Luke 10:20](#)).

### *Teachings about Moral Issues*

Much of the teaching of Jesus is concerned with moral issues—so much so that some scholars have concluded that this was the main burden of his teaching. But the moral teachings cannot be considered apart from the many facets of his teachings outlined above. It has been said that there are close parallels between the teachings of Jesus and the moral teachings of Judaism. What is distinctive about Jesus's teachings about morality is that the motive and power behind moral conduct is not conceived in terms of laws that must be obeyed. Right conduct is seen to be the result of a right relationship with God.

Jesus was himself the model for moral behavior. He made clear that his aim was to fulfill the will of God. There is no sense of legalism [which emphasizes strict obedience to religious laws rather than dependence on faith] in his approach to ethical decisions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compared his own teaching with that of Moses and showed the importance of grasping its inner meaning (compare [Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32](#)). At first glance, Jesus made more rigorous demands than the Mosaic law, because he was

concerned with probing the motives as well as the actions. Many have dismissed the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as entirely impractical, but Jesus never intended that his teaching would be easy. He set as a target nothing less than the perfection of God himself ([Matthew 5:48](#)). Nevertheless, he called his yoke easy and his burden light ([11:29-30](#)), which suggests that he was not setting out an impossible ethical pattern. It must be remembered that he was not publicly declaring policies for society. His concern was that each individual should have powerful motives for right decisions on matters of conduct. His reaction against a rigid application of Sabbath observance at the expense of the welfare of a needy person illustrates this point. Concern for others was rated higher than ritual correctness.

### *Conclusion*

No account of the life and teachings of Jesus would be complete without some indication of the place that Jesus Christ gained in the developing church. Such a quest naturally takes us outside the scope of the gospels into the testimony of the book of Acts and Paul's letters. There we can see whether the predictions of Jesus were fulfilled and whether in fact the early Christians took his teaching seriously. Although there can be no question that Jesus Christ became central to the faith of the early Christians, he was regarded from many points of view. He was seen as Messiah in the sense of a spiritual deliverer, as Lord in the sense of being sovereign over his people, as Servant in the sense of his obedience to suffering, and as Son in his relation to his Father. In many ways, the full understanding of what and who he was could not have occurred until after the resurrection. Therefore, we find that many facets of his teachings about himself were more fully developed in the reflections of his people. This is true in a special sense of the writings of the apostle Paul.

Many have found a problem when trying to link the acts and teachings of Jesus found in the gospels with the Christ who is so central in Paul's beliefs. The problem arises because the apostle does not refer to any specific incident in the life of Jesus and does not reflect in his letters any knowledge of the large amount of teaching material in the Gospels. Does this suggest that Paul had no interest in the historical Jesus? Or could it be maintained that he knew nothing about him? Those who have driven a wedge between Paul and Jesus have not given sufficient weight to those asides indicating that Paul knew a great deal more about the historical

Jesus than he states in his letters. He writes, for instance, about the meekness and gentleness of Christ ([2 Corinthians 10:1](#)), suggesting that he knew that Jesus had said of himself that he was meek and lowly of heart ([Matthew 11:29](#)). Moreover, Paul speaks of the poverty of Christ ([2 Corinthians 8:9](#)) and must have known that the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head. He certainly knows the details of how Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper ([1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#)), and he knows of his death by crucifixion. It seems reasonable to conclude that Paul assumes that his readers will be familiar with the gospel material.

It is perhaps useful in this connection to ask whether the life and teachings of Jesus played a significant part in the early Christian proclamation. One passage that is valuable in this respect is [Acts 10:36–38](#). When Peter addressed Cornelius, he spoke of how God had anointed Jesus of Nazareth, and how Jesus had gone about doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil. It is clear that some account of the acts of Jesus was included in the early preaching, and it is reasonable to suppose that this was usual.

There is no doubt that the example of Jesus was a powerful motive for promoting right behavior. Peter appeals to it when encouraging Christians who were suffering for their faith ([1 Peter 2:21](#)). Paul also knows the value of imitation ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#)). Since Jesus was recognized as being a man who did not sin (compare [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)), his behavior patterns would have proved invaluable for those who needed a new standard for moral action.

There are a few references to the teachings of Jesus in the non-gospel portion of the New Testament. In the Letter of James, which is almost wholly practical, there are more allusions to the teachings of Jesus than anywhere else in the New Testament. This is especially true in echoes of the Sermon on the Mount, and it shows the strong contribution that the moral teaching of Jesus had on the ethical values of the early Christians. Most of the detailed explanations of doctrine in the letters of the New Testament find their basis in some aspect of the teachings of Jesus. These teachings have an ongoing significance for the development of the church.

To what extent is knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus relevant to the 21st century? Existential theologians [who explore questions about who we are and why we exist] have driven such a wedge between the Christ of faith and the

Jesus of history that the latter has ceased to have any importance for them. Christians today, no less than their first-century predecessors, need to know that the object of their faith is the same one who lived and taught in Galilee and Judea.

*See also* Ascension of Christ; Christ; Christology; Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Incarnation; Jesus Christ; Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven; Messiah; Parable; Savior; Son of God; Son of Man; Virgin Birth of Jesus.

## Jesus Justus

A Jewish Christian man.

*See* Jesus #3.

## Jether

1. The firstborn son of Gideon. Because of his youth, Jether was afraid to execute the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna ([Judges 8:20](#)).
2. An Ishmaelite and the father of the commander Amasa ([1 Kings 2:5, 32](#); [1 Chronicles 2:17](#)). Another name for him is "Ithra" ([2 Samuel 17:25](#)). *See* Ithra.
3. The firstborn son of Jada, the brother of Jonathan. Jether was a descendant of Judah through the family line of Hezron. He fathered no children ([1 Chronicles 2:32](#)).
4. A Judahite and the firstborn of the four sons of Ezra ([1 Chronicles 4:17](#)).
5. An Asherite, the father of three sons ([1 Chronicles 7:38](#)). He was likely the same person as, Ithran, son of Zophah ([1 Chronicles 7:37](#)).

## Jetheth

A clan leader (chief) of Edom ([Genesis 36:40](#); [1 Chronicles 1:51](#)).

## Jethlah

KJV form of the Danite city Ithlah in [Joshua 19:42](#).  
See Ithlah.

## Jethro

The father-in-law of Moses. Jethro's daughter, Zipporah, became Moses's wife while Moses was hiding as a fugitive in the wilderness ([Exodus 2:21](#)). When Moses left for Egypt, he took Zipporah and his sons with him, but later sent them back ([4:20](#)). Jethro brought them to Moses after the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai ([Exodus 18:1-7](#)). Through this family connection with Moses, Jethro became involved with the Israelite people.

### *What Was Jethro's Relationship with Israel?*

Scholars have understood Jethro's relationship with Israel in different ways. Jethro was a priest of Midian ([Exodus 2:16; 3:1](#)). We do not know for certain what religion the Midianites followed. The Kenites were a tribe within the Midianite nation ([Judges 1:16](#)). Some scholars have suggested that the Kenites had a tribal god named Yahweh whom Jethro served as priest. Scholars who have suggested that Moses introduced Jethro's tribal god, Yahweh, to Israel have not been able to prove this idea. The evidence in the Bible does not support this view.

It is clear that Jethro was a man who feared and served God. The Bible could be understood to teach that Jethro knew about Israel's God because he was a descendant of Abraham ([Genesis 25:2](#)). After hearing how God rescued Israel from Egypt, Jethro acknowledged Yahweh as God, the greatest of all gods. He also brought a burnt offering and sacrifices, worshiping Yahweh and identifying with Israel ([Exodus 18:11](#)). Some scholars have interpreted this action as Jethro accepting a covenant with Israel. But this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of what Jethro actually did and the meaning of sacrifice and a shared meal.

After receiving Jethro's good advice about how to handle disputes among the people, Moses appointed capable men as leaders and judges over the people ([Exodus 18:13-27](#)). Jethro then returned to his own land and seems to have had no further contact with Israel. But his son and other descendants later became part of Israel ([Numbers 10:29-33; Judges 1:16; 4:11](#)).

### *Jethro's Other Names*

Jethro is known by other names in the Bible and later writings. The Talmud (a collection of Jewish teachings and explanations of the Torah, including laws, traditions, and discussions by rabbis) records that his name was originally Jether. But after his conversion, his name was Jethro (there is no clear evidence to support this). He is also called Reuel. He is the father of seven daughters who met Moses at a well ([Exodus 2:16-18; Numbers 10:29](#)). He is also referred to by the name Hobab ([Judges 4:11](#)). And Hobab is said to be the son of Reuel ([Numbers 10:29](#)).

The Bible does not explain why different names are used. Some possible explanations include:

1. Each Midianite tribe he served as priest knew him by a different name.
2. Reuel was a tribal name, not a personal name.
3. Hobab, the son's name, was sometimes used to refer to the father.
4. A gloss appears in the text at [Exodus 2:18](#) and [Judges 4:11](#)

Despite the confusion about names, we can clearly establish that Jethro had a son named Hobab.

*See also* Midian, Midianite; Moses.

## Jetur, Jeturites

Son of Ishmael and his descendants ([Genesis 25:15; 1 Chronicles 1:31](#)).

The Israelite tribes who settled east of the Jordan had to fight them ([1 Chronicles 5:19](#)). They are also called Itureans. The Jeturites continued to live into the New Testament times. The region of Iturea was named after them. It was an area northeast of Galilee ([Luke 3:1](#)).

*See* Ituraea, Iturea, Itureans.

## Jeuel

1. Descendant of Judah residing in postexilic Jerusalem ([1 Chr 9:6](#)).
2. Levite who took part in Hezekiah's reforms ([2 Chr 29:13](#)).

3. Head of a family who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra after the exile ([Ezr 8:13](#)).

## Jeush

1. The eldest of three sons born to Esau by Oholibamah. She was the daughter of the Canaanite Anah. Jesus was a chief among the descendants of Esau in Edom ([Genesis 36:5–18](#); [1 Chronicles 1:35](#)).
2. A son of Bilhan from the family of Jediael. He was also a leader in the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 7:10](#)).
3. A Benjamite, son of Eshek and a descendant of King Saul ([1 Chronicles 8:39](#)).
4. A Levite from the family of Gershon and the third of the four sons of Shimei. He and his youngest brother, Beriah, had few sons. So the records during the rule of King David count them as one family ([1 Chronicles 23:10–11](#)).
5. The eldest of three sons born to King Rehoboam by Mahalath. She was the granddaughter of Eliab ([2 Chronicles 11:19](#)).

## Jeuz

From Benjamin's tribe, Shaharaim's son by his wife Hodesh ([1 Chr 8:10](#)).

## Jew

A Judean, or someone belonging to Judah. The English word originated in French.

### Old Testament

The Hebrew word first appears in [2 Kings 16:6](#), meaning "citizens of Judah." It became popular in the period of Jeremiah before the exile in Babylon in the late sixth century BC ([Jeremiah 32:12](#)). This showed a growing sense of national identity among foreign nations. [Jeremiah 34:9](#) uses "Jew" in a

statement emphasizing that citizens had the right to freedom from slavery. [Jeremiah 52:28](#) uses it when counting deported citizens.

Once the people were in exile, the term took on a religious meaning. The Jews differed from surrounding peoples because they believed in one true God. A separation between Jews and gentiles (or non-Jews) developed. In [Daniel 3:8–12](#), some Jews are accused of improper Babylonian religious practices. Esther discusses Jewish identity and survival in a foreign land. [Esther 8:17](#) speaks of gentiles becoming Jews through conversion.

After the exile, the religious meaning of "Jew" is expressed in [Zechariah 8:23](#), which says that the gentiles would seek out Jews because God was with them. In [Ezra 4:12](#), the term "Jews" is the term used for the returned exiles. Nehemiah also uses it this way ([Nehemiah 1:2](#); [4:2](#)). [Nehemiah 13:24](#) emphasizes the importance of social separation for the Jews. It teaches that Jews should not marry foreigners because of their faith. Nehemiah expressed strong disapproval of such marriages.

### New Testament

In the New Testament, "Jew" shares a similar meaning. The New Testament documents described certain Jewish customs to gentiles ([Mark 7:3](#); [John 5:1](#); [19:40](#)). The New Testament distinguishes Jews from gentiles ([Acts 11:19](#)), Samaritans ([John 4:9, 22](#)), and converts ([Acts 2:10](#)). While Jewish Christians can be called "Jews" ([Galatians 2:13](#)), the religious distinctions between Jew and Christian are emphasized.

In [Romans 2:17–29](#), Paul analyzes the term "Jew." He emphasizes that the true meaning of the word lies in an inward attitude to God rather than in rituals. Paul was probably reflecting on his failings as a Jew before he converted to Christianity (compare [Philemon 3:3–6](#)). His mention of "praise" in [Romans 2:29](#) is the most important part of the passage. It is a forceful play on words: in Hebrew, Judah means "praise" ([Genesis 29:35](#); compare [49:8](#)).

Paul views Christianity as the true heir of the faith of the Old Testament. [Revelation 2:9](#) and [3:9](#) agree that being a Jew is more than a matter of birth and synagogue observance (attending Jewish religious services). These passages relate to claims about Jesus being God's chosen Messiah (compare [Romans 9:3–5; 10:1–4](#)). The New Testament shows the opposition of Jews to the Christian message. The gospel was offensive to the Jews ([1 Corinthians](#)

[1:23](#)). Paul had strong Jewish credentials ([Acts 26:4–7](#)) but still received bitter Jewish attacks ([Acts 21:11; 23:12, 27](#)). [Revelation 2:9](#) and [3:9](#) label the Jews' opposition as satanic: they were carrying out the work of God's adversary, Satan.

The Gospel of John uses "Jew" about 70 times, compared to 5–6 times in other gospels. While some uses are neutral, John often uses "Jews" to mean religious authorities, especially in Jerusalem, who opposed Jesus ([John 5:18; 9:18; 11:8; 18:36](#)).

In [John 9:22](#), the Jewish parents of the blind man fear "the Jews" investigating them. In [John 18:14](#), "Jews" is used to refer to the chief priests and Pharisees. It's important to note that the author, who was Jewish, wasn't expressing hatred against all Jews. He condemned those who opposed Jesus, not the entire race or people. He gladly mentions Jews who believed in Jesus ([John 8:31; 11:45; 12:11](#)). Nathanael is featured as a model of a Christian Jew, a true Israelite "in whom there is no deceit" ([John 1:47](#); compare [1:31](#); see [Genesis 27:35; 32:28](#)).

*See also* Diaspora of the Jews; Israel, History of; Judaism; Judaizers; Pharisees; Postexilic Period.

## Jewelry, Jewels

A decorated accessory. In the Bible, both men and women used jewelry ([Exodus 11:2](#); [Isaiah 3:18–21](#)). People gave jewelry as gifts ([Genesis 24:22, 53](#)). Jewelry was often stolen in war ([2 Chronicles 20:25](#)). Before coins existed, gold jewelry was a sign of wealth ([2 Chronicles 21:3](#)).

### Types of Jewelry in the Old Testament

The Old Testament mentions many types of jewelry

- Arm bracelets ([Genesis 24:22, 30, 47](#); [Ezekiel 16:11](#))
- Ankle ornaments ([Isaiah 3:18–20](#))
- Necklaces ([Genesis 41:42](#))
- Crowns ([Zechariah 9:16](#))
- Earrings ([Genesis 24:22](#))
- Nose rings ([Isaiah 3:21](#))
- Finger rings ([Genesis 41:42](#); [Esther 3:10](#))

Gold or silver bases were used to hold precious stones in these items. The precious stones were rounded, polished, and sometimes engraved (carved, etched, or inscribed into a material). Many stones considered precious back then would not be valued as precious today. Instead, they would be considered semiprecious (less rare or valuable than precious stones).

Semiprecious stones were added to necklaces and other pieces of jewelry. Ancient royal headdresses from the graves at Ur show the skill of jewelers from the period. Hairbands and pins were often used to decorate hair, and many have been found. Rings with carved stones were extremely popular, as well as nose rings (see [Genesis 24:47](#)). Fine gold chains were often worn. Signet rings and heavy gold chains were symbols of office ([Genesis 41:42](#)). Bracelets and amulets were worn around the wrist, the upper arm, and the neck. Decorative pins, similar to the modern safety pin, were often used to hold clothing together.

[Isaiah 3:18–23](#) gives a detailed description of women's jewelry and clothing. The prophet warns: "The Lord will take away their finery: their anklets and headbands and crescents; their pendants, bracelets, and veils; their headdresses, ankle chains, and sashes; their perfume bottles and charms; their signet rings and nose rings; their festive robes, capes, cloaks, and purses; and their mirrors, linen garments, tiaras, and shawls."

*See* Minerals and Metals; Stones, Precious.

## Jewish Literature, Extrabiblical

Ancient Jewish writings that are not part of the Bible but help us understand Jewish history, beliefs, and practices. These texts were written between around 200 BC and AD 500. They include:

1. The Mishnah: A collection of Jewish laws and traditions that were passed down orally before being written down around AD 200. These laws explain how to follow the commandments found in the Old Testament.
2. The Talmud: A very large collection of Jewish teachings and discussions about the law. It contains the Mishnah plus extensive commentary from Jewish teachers. There are two versions: the Jerusalem Talmud (completed around AD 400) and the Babylonian Talmud (completed around AD 500).
3. The Targums: Translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic (the common language of many Jewish people at that time). These translations often include additional explanations to help readers understand the text.

These writings are important because they show us how Jewish people understood and practiced their faith in ancient times. They also help us better understand the world Jesus lived in.

*See Mishnah; Talmud; Targum.*

## Jezaniah

Alternate form of Jaazaniah, one of the Judean captains in Jerusalem during the exile ([Jer 40:8](#) nlt mg; [42:1](#)) *See Jaazaniah #1.*

## Jezebel

Daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon ([1 Kgs 16:31](#)). She became the wife of Ahab, king of the northern kingdom of Israel. The marriage was probably a continuation of the friendly relations between Israel and Phoenicia begun by Omri; it confirmed a political alliance between the two nations. Jezebel exerted a strong influence over the life of Israel, as she insisted on establishing the worship of Baal and demanded the absolute rights of the monarchy. So strong was her pagan influence that Scripture

attributes the apostasy of Ahab directly to Jezebel (vv [30-33](#)).

Jezebel's efforts to establish Baal worship in Israel began with Ahab's acceptance of Baal following the marriage ([1 Kgs 16:31](#)). Ahab followed Jezebel's practices by building a house of worship and altar for Baal in Samaria, and by setting up a pole for worship of the Asherah. A campaign was then conducted to exterminate the prophets of God ([18:4](#)), while Jezebel organized and supported large groups of Baal prophets, housing and feeding large numbers of them in the royal palace (v [19](#)). To meet this challenge, God sent Elijah to prophesy a drought that lasted three years ([17:1; 18:1](#)).

Elijah's confrontation with Jezebel and Ahab culminated on Mt Carmel, where Elijah demanded that the prophets of Baal meet him ([1 Kgs 18:19-40](#)). As they and the people of Israel gathered, Elijah issued the challenge to Israel to follow the true God. To demonstrate who was the true God, Baal's prophets and Elijah each took a bull for sacrifice. The prophets of Baal then prepared the sacrifice and called on their god to send fire to consume it. But no answer came. Elijah prepared his sacrifice and had it drenched in water. After his prayer, God sent fire that consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones of the altar, the dust, and the water in the trench. Following this, the Israelites fell down in tribute to God. Then Elijah directed the people to take the prophets of Baal to the brook Kishon, and he slaughtered all of them. When Jezebel heard of this, she flew into a rage and threatened Elijah with the same fate. In fear, Elijah fled for his life to the wilderness.

Jezebel's unscrupulous nature is revealed in the account of Ahab's desire for Naboth's vineyard ([1 Kgs 21:1-16](#)). Although Ahab desired the vineyard, he recognized Naboth's right to retain the family property. Jezebel recognized no such right in view of a monarch's wishes. She arranged to have Naboth falsely accused of blaspheming God and consequently executed, leaving the vineyard for Ahab to seize. For this heinous crime, Elijah pronounced a violent death for Ahab and Jezebel ([21:20-24](#)), a prophecy which was ultimately fulfilled ([1 Kgs 22:29-40; 2 Kgs 9:1-37](#)).

The corrupt influence of Jezebel spread to the southern kingdom of Judah through her daughter Athaliah, who married Jehoram, king of Judah. Thus the idolatry of Phoenicia infected both kingdoms of the Hebrews through this evil Sidonian princess.

In [Revelation 2:20](#) the name of Jezebel is used (probably symbolically) to refer to a prophetess who seduced the Christians of Thyatira to fornication and to eating things sacrificed to idols.

*See also* Ahab #1; Elijah; Sidon (Place), Sidonian.

## **Jezer**

The third son of Naphtali and the founder of the Jezerite clan ([Genesis 46:24](#); [Numbers 26:49](#); [1 Chronicles 7:13](#)).

## **Jeziah**

KJV form of Izziah, Parosh's descendant, in [Ezra 10:25](#). *See* Izziah.

## **Jeziel**

Warrior from Benjamin's tribe who joined David at Ziklag in his struggle against King Saul. Jeziel was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:3](#)).

## **Jezliah**

KJV form of Izliah, Elpaal's son, in [1 Chronicles 8:18](#).  
*See* Izliah.

## **Jezoar**

KJV rendering of Izhar, Helah's son, in [1 Chronicles 4:7](#). *See* Izhar #2.

## **Jezrahiah**

Leader of the temple singers who participated in the dedication of the rebuilt Jerusalem wall ([Neh 12:42](#)).

## **Jezreel (Person)**

1. Descendant of Etam from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chr 4:3](#)). Another possible reading suggests that Jezreel was one of the founding fathers of the town of Etam. Due to numerous scribal alterations

within the Hebrew text, it is difficult to discern the original intent of the author.

2. Firstborn son of the prophet Hosea and his wife, Gomer. Jezreel's name, meaning "God sows," prefigured the outpouring of God's wrath on the disobedient kingdom of Israel under Jehu ([Hos 1:4–5](#)) and ultimate restoration ([2:21–22](#)).

**Jezreel (Place)**

1. A was a town first built by the tribe of Issachar. It was located just south of Shunem ([Joshua 19:18](#)). People had lived in the area earlier, but they left during the el-Amarna period. The town became important in Israel's history. Many key events in the Bible took place in or near Jezreel. Jezreel became more important after the town of Beth-shan declined during the Iron Age. King Saul made Jezreel the center of one of his districts ([2 Samuel 2:9](#)). A spring near the town became a meeting place for Saul's army before they fought the Philistines at Mount Gilboa ([1 Samuel 29:1](#)). After Saule died, the town was part of the kingdom of Ishbosheth for a short time ([2 Samuel 2:8-11](#)). During King Solomon's rule, Jezreel was part of a district in the tribe of Issachar. It was not part of the main Jezreel Valley. Jehoshaphat, son of Paruah, was the leader of this district ([1 Kings 4:17](#)). Omri was king of Israel from 885 to 874 BC. During this time, Omri chose Jezreel to be the winter capital of Israel. Four kings from his family lived there, including King Joram (who ruled from 852 to 841 BC). Joram later went to Jezreel to recover from battle wounds ([2 Kings 8:29](#)). Jezreel had a city wall, a main gate, and a tower for watching the land around it ([9:17](#)). A council of elders and nobles administered it ([10:1](#)). The royal palace was next to a vineyard owned by Naboth, a man from Jezreel. King Ahab took this land in an unjust way ([1 Kings 21](#)). Because of this, God judged Ahab's family severely. Jezebel, the Phoenician wife of Ahab, died in Jezreel. She was thrown out of a window and eaten by dogs when Jehu took power. Jehu also killed King Joram and his officials and threw Joram's body into Naboth's field ([2 Kings 9:24-26](#)). Jehu then killed the rest of Ahab's family ([10:1-11](#)).

After the destruction of the dynasty of Omri, the town became less important. Writers in the Christian era called it a village. For example, Eusebius (who lived AD 260–340) refers to it as a village between Scythopolis (Beth-shan) and Legio (*Onomasticon* 108:13ff.). The Crusaders called it “le Petit Gerim” to tell it apart from a larger town called “le Grand Gerim.”

Today, the site of Jezreel is called Zer'in. It is the location of an Israeli shared farming community (called a kibbutz) about 88.5 kilometers (55 miles) north of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have found remains there from the Iron Age and the time of the Roman Empire.

2. A town in the mountains of Judah ([Joshua 15:56](#)). It was the hometown of Ahinoam, one of the wives of King David ([1 Samuel 25:43](#)). Today, nothing is known for sure about its location.

## Jezreel Valley

The Jezreel Valley is the largest and most fertile valley in the land of Israel. It was named after the town of Jezreel. At first, Jezreel was the only town in the valley that the Israelites controlled during their early battles in the land (compare [Judges 1:27–30](#)).

Later Greek writers called the valley “Esdraelon” ([Judith 1:8](#)). Some people have wrongly used this name only for the western part of the valley. Others have used “Jezreel” for the narrow part leading east toward the city of Beth-shan. But the Bible shows these are two different areas (compare [Joshua 17:16](#); [Judges 1:27–28](#); [Joshua 17:11](#)). Jezreel Valley included towns like Taanach and Megiddo. Beth-shan was nearby but counted separately (compare also [Hosea 1:5](#)).

The Midianites camped in the Jezreel Valley, between the hill of Moreh and Mount Tabor ([Judges 6:33; 7:1](#)). Barak defeated the army of Sisera and Jabin there, near Endor ([Psalm 83:9–10](#)). Later the Philistines gathered there to oppose King Saul ([1 Samuel 29:1, 11](#); [2 Samuel 4:4](#)). During the time of

Israel's kings, this valley was part of an administrative district ([2 Samuel 2:9](#); [1 Kings 4:12](#)). The southern part of the valley may also be called the plain of Megiddo ([2 Chronicles 35:22](#); [Zechariah 12:11](#)).

Egyptian kings such as Thutmose III and Amenhotep II fought battles in this valley. In the late Bronze Age, towns like Megiddo were under Egypt's control. The southwest part of the valley may have been called Harosheth-haggoym, where armies gathered for war ([Judges 4:2, 13–16](#)).

*See also* Palestine.

## Jezreelite

Inhabitant of one of two cities named Jezreel. Two such persons are specifically named:

1. Naboth, who lived in the Jezreel in Issachar's territory ([1 Kgs 21:1–16](#); [2 Kgs 9:21, 25](#)). See Jezreel (Place) #1.
2. David's wife Ahinoam, who was a native of the Jezreel in Judah's territory ([1 Chr 3:1](#)). See Jezreel (Place) #2.

## Jibsam

KJV form of Ibsam, Tola's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:2](#). See Ibsam.

## Jidlaph

The seventh son of Nahor and Milcah ([Genesis 22:22](#)).

## Jimna, Jimnah, Jimnite

The King James Version forms of “Imnah” and “Imnite.” The names refer to the son of Asher and his family ([Genesis 46:17](#) and [Numbers 26:44](#)).

*See* Imnah #1.

## Jiphtah

KJV rendering of Iphtah, a village in Judah, in [Joshua 15:43](#). See Iphtah.

## **Jiphthah-El**

KJV rendering of Iphtah-el, a valley on Zebulun's border, in [Joshua 19:14, 27](#). See Iphtah-el.

*Joab*

*Joab*

**Joab**

1. The son of Zeruiah, who was David's half-sister ([1 Chronicles 2:16](#)). Along with his brothers Abishai and Asahel, Joab was well-known for his courage in war while serving Judah ([2 Samuel 2:18](#); compare [1 Samuel 26:6](#)).  
Joab became important during the battle of Gibeon. At that time, Saul's army was led by Abner. David's army defeated Abner's forces ([2 Samuel 2:8–32](#)). During the battle, Abner killed Asahel, Joab's brother (verse [23](#)). Later, Joab killed Abner to take revenge ([3:26–30](#)). Abner had just joined David's side (verses [12–19](#)). It is possible that Joab thought Abner would be his political rival.  
But was angry about Abner's death. He honored Abner as a great man (verses [31–39](#)). He also cursed Joab's family for disobeying him (verses [26–29, 39](#)). This event shows that Joab could be harsh and act without mercy. Joab led David's attack on the Jebusite city of Jerusalem. After David made Jerusalem his capital, Joab became the commander of David's army ([2 Samuel 8:16; 11:1](#); compare [1 Chronicles 11:6–8; 18:15](#)). Joab also stopped a rebellion by the Syrians and Ammonites ([2 Samuel 10:7–14; 1 Chronicles 19:8–15](#)). He captured the city of Rabbah ([2 Samuel 11–12](#)). During that time, Joab helped arrange the death of Uriah the Hittite. This allowed David to take Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, for himself.  
Joab showed both loyalty to David and strong control of the army during Absalom's rebellion ([2 Samuel 15](#)). Joab defeated the rebels (chapter [18](#)). But he ignored a direct order from David not to kill Absalom ([18:5](#)). Joab killed Absalom anyway and did so in a violent way (verses [10–17](#)). When David mourned for Absalom, Joab warned him that the army could turn against him if he did not speak to them ([2 Samuel 19:5–7](#)). Because Joab disobeyed, David replaced him with

Amasa as commander (verse [13](#)). But later at Gibeon, Joab also killed Amasa in dishonorable way ([20:8-10](#)). Joab still had strong support from the army. He returned to his position as commander ([2 Samuel 20:23, 24:2; 1 Kings 1:19](#)).

At the end of David's life, Joab joined a plot with Adonijah and Abiathar to take control of the kingdom ([1 Kings 1:7](#)). David no longer trusted Joab.

Before he died, David warned his son Solomon about Joab's many acts of betrayal ([2:5-9](#)).

Solomon needed to deal with these threats to his rule. After David died, Solomon punished Adonijah (verse [23](#)), removed Abiathar (verse [26](#)), and went after Joab (verse [28](#)). Joab ran to the altar to seek safety, but Solomon's officer Benaiah found him there and killed him (verses [28-35](#)). In this way, Solomon removed Joab's guilt from his kingdom.

2. The King James Version translation ("Ataroth, the house of Joab") of Atroth-beth-joab ([1 Chronicles 2:54](#)). See Atroth-beth-joab.
3. A man from the tribe of Judah. He was the son of Seraiah and came from the family of Kenaz. He was an ancestor of those living in the valley of craftsmen ([1 Chronicles 4:14](#)).
4. An ancestor of a clan of Jews who returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel following the exile in Babylon ([Ezra 2:6; Nehemiah 7:11](#)).
5. The ancestor of a family group mentioned in [Ezra 8:9](#). Two hundred nineteen of its members returned to the land of Judah with Ezra after the exile in Babylon. He might be the same person as #4 above.

## Joah

1. Asaph's son and a court official under King Hezekiah ([2 Kgs 18:18, 26; Is 36:3, 11, 22](#)). He was

one of the officers sent by Hezekiah to deal with the Assyrians during the siege of Jerusalem.

2. Zimmah's son from Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 6:21](#)).

3. Levite, Obed-edom's son and a gatekeeper of the sanctuary in David's time ([1 Chr 26:4](#)).

4. Joahaz's son and a recorder under King Josiah; he was one of the deputies overseeing the temple repairs ([2 Chr 34:8](#)).

## Joahaz

1. Variant spelling or contraction of Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, in [2 Kings 14:1](#). See Jehoahaz #1.

2. Joah's father. Joah was King Josiah's recorder ([2 Chr 34:8](#)).

## Joanan

An ancestor of Jesus mentioned in [Luke 3:27](#).

See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

## Joanna

1. The King James Version form of Joanan in [Luke 3:27](#). See Joanan.

2. The wife of Chuza, a steward of Herod the governor of Judea. She was among those healed of evil spirits and sickness by Jesus. She was also one of the women who supported him ([Luke 8:2-3](#)). She probably witnessed Jesus's death on the cross and prepared spices for the body. Later, she found Jesus's tomb empty ([Luke 23:55-24:10](#)).

## Joarib

Ancestor of Mattathias ([1 Macc 2:1; 14:29](#)), and according to [1 Chronicles 24:7](#) (there spelled Jehoiarib), head of the first of the 24 courses of priests in David's time.

## Joash

1. Abiezrite who lived at Ophrah and the father of Gideon. Joash built an altar to Baal and an image of Asherah, which Gideon later destroyed ([Igs 6:11-31; 7:14; 8:13, 29-32](#)).
2. Son of King Ahab of Israel ([1 Kgs 22:26](#); [2 Chr 18:25](#)).
3. Alternate name for Jehoash, Ahaziah's son and king of Judah (835–796 BC), in [2 Kings 11:2-3](#) and [1 Chronicles 3:11](#). See Jehoash #1.
4. Alternate name for Jehoash, Jehoahaz's son and king of Israel (798–782 BC), in [2 Kings 13:10-13](#). See Jehoash #2.
5. Judahite from the house of Shelah ([1 Chr 4:22](#)).
6. Second of Beker's nine sons and a leader in Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 7:8](#)).
7. Benjamite warrior who supported David at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:3](#)).
8. One of David's officials ([1 Chr 27:28](#)).

## Joatham

The King James Version spelling of Jotham, king of Judah who reigned from 750 to 735 BC, in [Matthew 1:9](#).

*See* Jotham #2.

## Job (Person)

1. KJV rendering of Iob, an alternate form of Jashub, Issachar's third son, in [Genesis 46:13](#). See Jashub #1.
2. Central character of the book of Job. The intense suffering endured by Job provides the framework for the main theme of the book, which deals with the role of suffering in the life of a child of God.

The etymology of the name is difficult. Some have seen it as a derivative of a Hebrew word meaning "to be hostile" and have suggested that it reflects Job's adamancy in refusing to bow to God's will. The name occurs in several West Semitic texts as a proper name, however, and it seems best to understand it simply as a common name. The meaning of the name in West Semitic is either "no father" or "where is my father?"

The lack of certainty surrounding the authorship and geographical provenance of the book makes it difficult to place Job in history. The occurrence of Job's name in [Ezekiel 14:14, 20](#) seems to support the possibility that he was a personage of great antiquity.

*See also* Job, Book of.

## Jobab

1. A son of Joktan in the family line of Eber ([Genesis 10:29](#); [1 Chronicles 1:23](#)).
2. An early Edomite king. He was the son of Zerah of Bozrah ([Genesis 36:33-34](#); [1 Chronicles 1:44-45](#)).
3. A king of Madon. Along with other Canaanite kings, he joined Jabin of Hazor in a northern alliance. This was to stop the Israelites from taking over the northern section of Canaan. Jobab died in battle at the waters of Merom ([Joshua 11:1](#); [12:19](#)).
4. A son of Shaharaim by his wife Hodesh, a member of the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:9](#)).
5. A son of Elpaal from the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:18](#)).

## Jochebed

Amram's wife and the mother of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam ([Exodus 6:20](#); [Numbers 26:59](#)).

## Joda

Joanan's son, the father of Josech, and a forefather of Jesus Christ. He lived in Palestine during the period after the exile in Babylon ([Luke 3:26](#)).

*See* Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

## Joed

Descendant of Benjamin living in Jerusalem during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 11:7](#)). His name,

meaning "Yahweh is witness," does not appear in a parallel list in [1 Chronicles 9:7](#).

## Joel (Person)

1. Levite from the family of Kohath. He was Azariah's son and an ancestor of Elkanah, the father of Samuel the prophet ([1 Samuel 1:1](#); [1 Chronicles 6:36](#)).
2. Oldest son of Samuel the prophet. He and his brother Abijah so corrupted the office of judge that the elders increased their demands for a king ([1 Samuel 8:2-5](#)). He was the father of Heman the singer ([1 Chronicles 6:33](#); [15:17](#)). His name has been mistakenly translated "Vashni" in the KJV in [1 Chronicles 6:28](#).
3. Prince from one of the Simeonite families that emigrated to the valley of Gedor ([1 Chronicles 4:35](#)).
4. Member of Reuben's tribe ([1 Chronicles 5:4, 8](#)).
5. Chief of Gad's tribe residing in Bashan ([1 Chronicles 5:12](#)).
6. Third of Izrahiah's four named sons and a chief of Issachar's tribe in David's time ([1 Chronicles 7:3](#)).
7. Nathan's brother and one of David's mighty men ([1 Chronicles 11:38](#)). He is alternately called Igal the son of Nathan in [2 Samuel 23:36](#). See Igal #2.
8. Levite from the family of Gershon who took part in the royal procession that brought the ark of God to Jerusalem during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 15:7-11](#)). He may have managed the treasures of the temple in Jerusalem ([1 Chronicles 26:22](#)).
9. Pedaiah's son, who served as the leader of the west half of Manasseh's tribe during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 27:20](#))
10. Levite from the family of Kohath who helped with King Hezekiah's reform of the temple in Jerusalem ([2 Chronicles 29:12](#)).
11. Nebo's son, who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic period ([Ezra 10:43](#)).
12. Zicri's son and the supervisor of 128 Benjaminites who relocated to Jerusalem after the exile ([Nehemiah 11:9](#)).
13. Prophet who wrote the second book of the Minor Prophets. Little is known about him except

that he was Pethuel's son ([Joel 1:1](#); [Acts 2:16](#)). See Joel, Book of.

## Joelah

Warrior who joined David at Ziklag in his struggle against King Saul. Joelah was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:7](#)).

## Joezer

Warrior who joined David at Ziklag in his struggle against King Saul. He was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:6](#)). He was called a Korahite, which probably refers to his place of origin.

## Jogbehah

Jogbehah was a city located in Gilead (the area east of the Jordan River). The tribe of Gad built and fortified this city ([Numbers 32:35](#)). During the time of the judges, when Gideon was chasing the Midianites, he traveled around to the east of Jogbehah. This allowed him to attack the Midianite camp at Karkor when they were not expecting it ([Judges 8:11](#)).

Scholars now identify this ancient city with Khirbet el-Ajbeihat, which is 11.3 kilometers (seven miles) northwest of Amman.

## Jogli

The father of Bukki. Bukki was a leader from the tribe of Dan. He helped oversee how the promised land west of the Jordan River was divided among the tribes of Israel ([Numbers 34:22](#)).

## Joha

1. Benjamite and one of Beriah's nine sons ([1 Chr 8:16](#)).
2. Tizite, the brother of Jediael and one of David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:45](#)).

## Johanan

Name meaning “Yahweh has been gracious.” It occurs also in the alternate form of Jehohanan. The name John is derived from these names. Several men of this name appear in the OT.

1. Son of Kareah ([2 Kgs 25:23](#)). Johanan was a Jewish leader, a contemporary of Jeremiah, and supportive of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem ([Jer 40:8, 13](#)). He forewarned Gedaliah of Ishmael’s plan to assassinate him (vv [13–16](#)). When the warning was ignored and Johanan was refused permission to execute the would-be assassin, Gedaliah was murdered. Johanan took vengeance against Ishmael and rescued those who had been captured ([41:14–18](#)), but he was unable to pursue Ishmael. In fear of a Babylonian reprisal, he made plans to seek asylum in Egypt. Jeremiah, whom he consulted, gave God’s word against this move ([42:1–22](#)), but Johanan was unwilling to take counsel ([43:2–3](#)). He led the Judeans, including Jeremiah and Baruch, to Egypt (vv [5–7](#)).

2. Eldest son of Josiah, king of Judah ([1 Chr 3:15](#)). Possibly he died young, for he did not succeed his father on the throne, even though he was the firstborn.

3. Son of Elioenai ([1 Chr 3:24](#)), a descendant of Jehoiachin, one of the last kings of Judah.

4. Grandson of Ahimaaz. He was the father of Azariah, who served as high priest in the temple of Solomon ([1 Chr 6:9–10](#)).

5. Warrior from Benjamin’s tribe. He joined David’s special forces of 30 men at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:4](#)). The special forces could shoot arrows and sling stones with either hand (v [2](#)).

6. Gadite who joined David in the wilderness ([1 Chr 12:8–12](#)). He was also specially trained for war, in that he could handle both shield and spear, could endure hardship, and was quick on his feet.

7. Ephraimite whose son was a leader in the northern Kingdom during the regime of Pekah and protested against the enslavement of 200,000 Judeans ([2 Chr 28:12](#); nlt “Jehohanan”), who were subsequently freed.

8. Son of Hakkatan (“the younger” or “the smaller”). The designation may be read as “Johanan the younger.” He was head of a family who claimed their descent from Azgad ([Ezr 8:12](#)). He joined Ezra with 110 men in traveling from Babylonia to Judah.

9. Priest under Joiakim. He was one of the priests during whose ministry the Levites and priests formally registered ([Neh 12:22](#)). He is alternately called Jehohanan in [Ezra 10:6](#) and Jonathan in [Neh 12:11](#). See Jehohanan #4.

10. KJV spelling of Jehohanan, Tobiah’s son, in [Nehemiah 6:18](#). See Jehohanan #6.

## Johanan Ben Zakkai

Leading Jewish sage at the end of the second temple period. His place of birth is not known; he went to Jerusalem to study, and after 18 years there spent some time in Galilee. Later, he returned to Jerusalem and taught “in the shadow of the temple.” He encouraged the Pharisees among the priesthood rather than the Sadducees. During the siege of Jerusalem, he managed to leave, in a coffin according to one version. He was a prisoner of Vespasian, probably in AD 68, who gave him permission to settle in Jamnia. There he began quietly to lay the groundwork for the survival of Judaism without its temple.

*See also* Judaism; Pharisees.

## John (Person)

1. The father of Simon Peter and Andrew ([John 1:40–42; 21:15–17](#)). According to [Matthew 16:17](#), Peter’s father was named Jona (Jonas, Jonah). Jona was either another version of the name John or two stories existed about his name.
2. A member of the high priestly family who, along with Annas, Caiaphas, and Alexander, questioned Peter and John after the two apostles had healed a lame man ([Acts 4:6](#)).
3. According to the early church bishop Papias, a member of the larger group of Jesus’ disciples outside the Twelve (compare [Luke 10:1](#)). Known as “John the elder,” he is often said to have written 2 and 3 John ([2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1](#)). The term “elder” more likely refers to John the apostle.
4. The apostle. See John, The Apostle.

5. The Baptist. See John the Baptist.
6. An early disciple known as John Mark, author of the second Gospel. See Mark, John.

## **John Hyrcanus**

Hasmonean ruler of the Jewish people from 135 to 105 BC. See Hasmonean.

## **John Mark**

*See* Mark, John.

## **John Mark**

A close friend of the early church leaders who wrote the Gospel of Mark. John Mark was both a companion to Paul and Peter, and a cousin of Barnabas.

### *Early Life and Family*

John Mark came from a wealthy Jewish family in Jerusalem. They were early believers in Jesus Christ. John Mark had both a Jewish and a Roman name. The Roman name Mark could have signified Roman citizenship, like Paul. Or he might have adopted the name when he left Jerusalem to serve the gentile (non-Jewish) church in Antioch ([Acts 12:25](#)).

When an angel of the Lord freed Peter from prison, the apostle went “to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark” ([verse 12](#)). This house had an outer gate. It was large enough for a large group of believers to gather there. A servant girl named Rhoda worked there ([verses 12-13](#)). This indicates a wealthy family lived there. By the time of this event (around AD 44), Peter may have influenced Mark to become a follower of Jesus ([1 Peter 5:13](#)). Barnabas and Saul (who was also known as Paul) chose Mark to go with them to Antioch. This suggests that the church in Jerusalem had great respect for Mark ([Acts 12:25](#)).

### *Early Ministry and Challenges*

John Mark joined Barnabas and Saul to help them preach the good news about Jesus ([Acts 13:5](#)). However, he soon left the apostles and returned to Jerusalem ([verse 13](#)). The Bible does not tell us why

Mark left the apostles. The journey may have been too difficult for the young Mark.

There is another possible explanation. At Paphos, when the journey began, Paul became the main leader ([verse 13](#)). From this point, Acts speaks of "Paul and Barnabas" rather than "Barnabas and Paul" (except for verses [12](#) and [25](#)). Mark might not have liked how Paul led. Or, he might not have been upset that his relative Barnabas was second to Paul in the work of the gospel. Barnabas was a follower of Jesus before Paul was ([4:36-37](#)). It was Barnabas who introduced Paul to the apostles ([9:27](#)).

But there may have been a more important reason for Mark to leave. Like Paul, Mark was “a Hebrew of Hebrews” ([Philippians 3:5](#)). Mark may have disagreed with Paul’s teaching that non-Jews could be saved through faith alone, without following Jewish laws.

It is important to notice that in the story of this journey, the Bible uses only Mark’s Jewish name “John” when talking about his time with Paul and Barnabas ([Acts 13:5](#)). “John” is also used when he left them at Perga in Pamphylia ([verse 13](#)). It is also important that John Mark returned to the place where he first served. This was the Jewish church at Jerusalem, not the gentile church in Antioch ([verse 13](#)).

Mark’s decision to leave caused problems later. Paul and Barnabas had a serious argument about whether to take Mark on another journey. The disagreement was so strong that Paul and Barnabas split up ([Acts 15:39](#)). Paul was extremely passionate about teaching justification by faith. Barnabas had already shown his uncertainty about this teaching ([Galatians 2:13](#)). This difference in beliefs may have led to their separation. Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas as his new partner and went to Asia Minor to strengthen the new churches there ([Acts 15:39-41](#)).

### *Later Ministry and Reconciliation*

Mark again appears in the biblical record about 11 years later. In [Colossians 4:10](#) and [Philemon 1:24](#), he is in Rome with Paul, who is now an old man and “a prisoner of Jesus Christ” ([1:19](#)). Paul and Mark had made peace. Paul says that Mark and others are “the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God” ([Colossians 4:11](#)).

In his last letter before his death, Paul wrote his final words about Mark. Paul tells Timothy, “Make every effort to come to me quickly... Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because

he is useful to me in the ministry" ([2 Timothy 4:9, 11](#)). Everyone else had abandoned Paul during his trial before Caesar Nero (verse [16](#)). Earlier, Mark had also abandoned the apostle when he was young. Now, he traveled from Ephesus to Rome and attempted to come see his friend Paul with Timothy.

### *The Gospel of Mark*

Mark also had a close relationship with the apostle Peter. According to [1 Peter 5:13](#), Peter sent a greeting to Mark and the church in "Babylon." Here, "Babylon" symbolizes Rome. Peter gives Mark the title, "my son." This shows that Mark had a close relationship with Peter ([Galatians 2:9](#)).

The most important and reliable church tradition (from writings outside the Bible) tells us Mark was the close assistant of Peter. The early church fathers said that Mark carefully wrote down Peter's stories and teachings about Jesus. Mark used these teachings to write the Gospel of Mark, which he probably wrote in Rome between AD 60 and 68.

### **John of Gischala**

Leader in the first Jewish revolt, from Gischala (Gush-halab) in Galilee. He was a rival of Josephus Flavius, who had been appointed commander of Galilee by the Jews. When Vespasian sent his son Titus against Gischala in AD 67, John fled to Jerusalem and took part in the defense of the city. Eventually, he surrendered to the Romans and was imprisoned in Italy. See First Jewish Revolt.

### **John the Baptist**

The one chosen to announce the coming of the Messiah (God's chosen one). John the Baptist prepared people for the arrival of Jesus. He preached about the need for God to forgive the sins of the people. He offered baptism as a sign of repentance. John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River and declared Jesus as the Expected One sent by God. Herod Antipas arrested and beheaded John around AD 29, during Jesus's ministry.

### *Overview*

- John's Birth and Early Years
- John's Appearance and Identity
- John's Message
- John's Baptism
- What Did John Think About Jesus?
- What Did Jesus Think About John?
- John's Arrest, Imprisonment, and Martyrdom
- The Disciples of John

### *John's Birth and Early Years*

The Gospel of Luke is our only source about the birth and childhood of John. It says John was born in the hill country of Judah ([Luke 1:39](#)). John came from a family of priests. His father, Zechariah, was a priest from the order of Abijah. His mother, Elizabeth, was a descendant of Aaron (verse [5](#)). Both parents were righteous and were careful to obey all the commandments of God (verse [6](#)). Like the birth of Jesus, the Bible describes the birth of John as miraculous. Of course, the birth of Jesus has no parallel.

The angel Gabriel announced the birth of John to Zechariah in the temple. It was an answer to the prayers of Elizabeth. She was old and unable to have children (verses [8–13](#)). The angel told Zechariah that he must name the child "John." Gabriel also explained his role as the one to announce the coming of the Messiah (verses [13–17](#)). This special consecration to God from birth is like the call of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah (see [Jeremiah 1:5](#)).

John and Jesus were relatives. Elizabeth is a relative of Mary ([Luke 1:36](#)). This could mean she was a cousin, an aunt, or from the same tribe.

The gospel stories do not give details about the childhood of John, like Jesus. The evangelist Luke only states that John "grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until the time of his public appearance to Israel" ([Luke 1:80](#)).

Some scholars think the Essenes might have adopted John. They lived in a community near the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. The Essenes had a practice of raising boys in their wilderness community. There are some similarities between the Qumran sect, known from the Dead Sea Scrolls,

and the later ministry of John the Baptist. Both practiced strict self-discipline (asceticism) and stayed away from the life of Jerusalem. They used baptism to initiate members of their community and to show repentance. John and the Qumran group also focused on the “end-times,” waiting for the final actions of God in history. Yet, there are many important differences between John and the Qumran group.

### *John's Appearance and Identity*

The Gospel of Mark starts with John the Baptist appearing. “John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” ([Mark 1:4](#)). The Old Testament connects John with the wilderness of Judea in specific. In the wilderness, God revealed himself to Moses ([Exodus 3](#)). He gave the law, and made a covenant (special agreement) with Israel (chapter [19](#)). The wilderness was also a place of refuge for King David ([1 Samuel 23-26](#); [Psalm 63](#)) and the prophet Elijah ([1 Kings 19](#)). The people of God expected it to be where God would rescue them in the future ([Isaiah 40:3-5](#); [Ezekiel 47:1-12](#); [Hosea 2:14-15](#)).

John the Baptist wore unusual clothes made from the hair of camels with a leather belt ([Mark 1:6](#)). This outfit might have reminded people of the prophet Elijah ([2 Kings 1:8](#)) or prophets in general ([Zechariah 13:4](#)). His diet included locusts and wild honey ([Mark 1:6](#)). These were foods authorized to eat (“clean”) according to the dietary laws of Leviticus. Like those at Qumran, John ate the food the desert provided. This was part of the ascetic or monastic lifestyle practiced by John and his followers ([Matthew 9:14; 11:18](#)).

Who did John think he was? People asked if he was the Messiah, Elijah, or the expected prophet ([John 1:20-23](#)). John only said he was, “A voice of one calling: ‘Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness’” ([Isaiah 40:3](#)). This question comes from the end of the Old Testament period. People assumed prophecies from God had stopped ([Zechariah 13:2-6](#)). But people expected it to return before the messianic kingdom arrived (see [Joel 2:28-29](#); [Malachi 3:1-4](#)). Some thought the final prophet would be like Moses ([Deuteronomy 18:15](#)). Others expected a returning “Elijah” as prophesied in [Malachi 4:5-6](#). John did not claim these roles ([John 1:20-23](#)). But his appearance, lifestyle, and message made people think he was this end-time prophet ([Matthew 14:5](#); [Mark 11:32](#)). Jesus also saw John as this final “Elijah” prophet

([Matthew 11:7-15](#)). Malachi prophesied that he would announce the coming of the Lord ([Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6](#)).

### *John's Message*

The message of John had three parts:

1. A warning about an upcoming judgment by the “Coming One.”
2. A call to repent because the kingdom of heaven was coming soon.
3. A demand to show repentance through living in a way pleasing to God.

Many Jews expected the messianic judgment to bring blessings for them and destruction for those oppressing them. But, John warned that being Jewish was not enough to avoid judgment ([Luke 3:8](#)). Only true repentance could prevent destruction ([Matthew 3:2](#)). John expected the Coming One to judge by baptizing the nation “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” ([Luke 3:16](#)).

In the Old Testament, fire symbolized destruction and purification ([Malachi 4:1; 3:1-4](#)). The “pouring out” of the Holy Spirit meant blessing ([Isaiah 32:15](#); [Ezekiel 39:29](#); [Joel 2:28](#)) and purification ([Isaiah 4:2-4](#)). The anticipated judgment of John had two outcomes. God would destroy those who did not repent. Or he would bless those who repented and had a righteous life ([Matthew 3:12](#)).

To prepare for this upcoming event, John urged his listeners to repent ([Matthew 3:2](#)). This meant to return to obeying God so they could receive forgiveness for sins. This change in the relationship of person with God must show in how one lives each day. For example, tax collectors should be fair ([Luke 3:12-13](#)). Soldiers should act just (verse [14](#)). Everyone should show compassion to poor people (verses [10-11](#)).

### *John's Baptism*

In several places, the Gospels say that John baptized people who repented for their sins. This included the Jordan River ([Mark 1:5](#)), Bethany across the Jordan ([John 1:28](#)), and Aenon near Salim ([John 3:23](#)). This was a main part of the message of John about repentance. He warned about upcoming judgment and the arrival of the Messiah. When people came for baptism it showed they had a desire for forgiveness. They also wanted

to renounce their past sinful actions. They had a desire to belong to the future messianic kingdom.

What was the background for how John practiced baptism? In the Old Testament, there were ceremonies for washing to make sure the people were pure before God ([Leviticus 14-15](#); [Numbers 19](#)). They repeated these washings often and focused more on the exact ceremony than moral cleansing. But, the prophets called for moral purity linked to washing with water ([Isaiah 1:16-18](#); [Jeremiah 4:14](#)). This was something even more important. The prophets predicted a spiritual cleansing by God in the end times before the Day of Judgment ([Ezekiel 36:25](#); [Zechariah 13:1](#); see also [Isaiah 44:3](#)). John might have believed this end-time cleansing was happening through his water baptism.

Proselyte baptism might have influenced the baptism of John. This was one ceremony for converting non-Jews to Judaism. Both ceremonies emphasized rejecting the past way of life; they happened once; and they involved dipping in water. But, the baptism of John was for Jews, not non-Jewish converts. It prepared people for the coming new age. It is not likely that proselyte baptism was the main influence on the practice of John. Unless, he saw all Jews as needing repentance, based on the approaching messianic age (see [Matthew 3:7-10](#)).

His baptism had a link to the forgiveness of sins. So, why did Jesus, the sinless Son of God, request it? John asked Jesus this question ([Matthew 3:14](#)). Jesus said, "It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way" (verse [15](#)).

This was true in five ways:

1. First, the baptism of Jesus showed his obedience to the will of God.
2. Second, by accepting the baptism of John, Jesus supported the ministry and message of John. Jesus confirmed the arrival of the kingdom of the coming Messiah, and the need for repentance.
3. Third, through baptism, Jesus criticized the self-righteous people for not repenting. He aligned himself with the repentant tax collectors and sinners waiting for the kingdom of God ([Luke 7:29-30](#)).

4. Fourth, Jesus did not allow John to baptize him for personal forgiveness, but to represent the people of God. His baptism showed unity with them in their need for salvation. Later, he would show this unity when judged in their place on the cross.

5. The voice from heaven ([Mark 1:11](#)) and the descent of the Spirit ([Luke 3:21-22](#)) marked the start of the ministry of Jesus through the baptism of John.

### *What Did John Think About Jesus?*

Throughout his ministry, John pointed to someone much greater than himself. He said he was not even worthy to be the servant of Jesus ([Mark 1:7](#)). John believed he was the one preparing the way for the work of God through the Messiah. [Isaiah 40:3](#) describes this role ([Luke 3:4-6](#)). When people asked, John was clear in denying that he was not the Messiah. He placed himself below this "Coming One" ([Mark 1:7-8](#); [John 1:26-28](#); [3:28-31](#)). The arrival of Jesus for baptism marked the first time John connected his expectations with Jesus ([John 1:35-36](#)).

John recognized Jesus as the Messiah before baptism ([Matthew 3:14](#)). God confirmed that Jesus was his Messiah by sending the Holy Spirit down like a dove and with a voice from heaven. This voice quoted a phrase from an Old Testament psalm about the Messiah ([Mark 1:11a](#), from [Psalm 2:7](#)). It also quoted a phrase from a Suffering Servant song in Isaiah ([Mark 1:11b](#), from [Isaiah 42:1](#)). In John's Gospel, John the Baptist further acknowledged Jesus as the "Lamb of God" ([John 1:29](#)). He prophesied the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. John also recognized him as "God's Chosen One" (verse [34](#), New English Bible). This is another way to refer to the Messiah ([Psalm 2:7](#), see [Mark 1:11](#)).

John had a strong belief in Jesus, so it is puzzling why he questioned Jesus while in prison. "Are You the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?" ([Matthew 11:3](#)). Some think John asked this for the sake of his followers. Some modern scholars think it could be because being in prison made him feel upset.

But, it is more likely that John had some confusion about what the Messiah came to do. John had announced a Coming One who would bring fire and judgment to the wicked ([Luke 3:16](#)). He might have

struggled to understand the focus of Jesus on forgiving and accepting sinners ([Matthew 9:9–13](#)) and healing the sick ([Matthew 8–9](#)). The followers of John asked Jesus if he was the Messiah. Jesus answered by quoting [Isaiah 35:5–6](#) (see also [Isaiah 61:1](#)). This passage describes the role of the Messiah in healing and bringing salvation to poor people. This could have been different from what John and many others may have expected.

### *What Did Jesus Think About John?*

Jesus had high regard for John the Baptist. Jesus showed this by allowing John to baptize him. Several times Jesus stated his regard for John. He called John the greatest man who ever lived ([Luke 7:28](#)). This of course did not include himself. Jesus also described the ministry of John as "a lamp that burned and gave light" ([John 5:33–35](#)). He said that God ordained the baptism of John ([Luke 20:1–8](#)).

John was unique because he lived at a time of change. He was the last of the Old Testament period, the time of the law and the prophets ([Luke 16:16](#)). This came before the messianic age or kingdom of God. John was the last and greatest prophet, like Elijah, who prepared for the people for the judgment of God ([Matthew 11:13–15](#); [Luke 1:17](#)). John was part of the time of the law and prophets. But, he was not as great as the "least" in the kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 11:11](#)). That is, those who live in the time when God's kingdom has come through Jesus.

### *John's Arrest, Imprisonment, and Martyrdom*

Herod Antipas arrested and beheaded John. So, we need to consider the messianic excitement John caused with his message ([Luke 3:15–18](#)). Herod and other rulers were cautious of anyone who might excite the crowds with talk of a new messianic leader or savior. Previous messianic movements had led to violence against the rule of Rome and Herod.

Herod Antipas also faced criticism for marrying Herodias, the ex-wife of his brother Philip. His first marriage to the daughter of Aretus II was a political alliance with the Nabatean kingdom of Perea. His marriage to Herodias broke this alliance and caused tension between the families. John criticized the new marriage of Herod ([Matthew 14:3–12](#)). Herod saw this as a threat to his authority. The Jewish historian Josephus records that Herod arrested John because he feared the influence of John over the people. He imprisoned John at the fortress Machaerus near the Dead Sea.

Herod did not kill John right away because he feared the righteousness of John ([Mark 6:20](#)) and how the people would react ([Matthew 14:5](#)). The Gospels add that Herodias was angry towards John ([Mark 6:19](#)). She plotted to have John beheaded ([verses 21–29](#)). This happened around AD 29 or 30.

### *The Disciples of John*

A group of followers gathered around John during his life ([John 1:35](#)). But, he did not plan to start a lasting movement. This would have gone against his message about the coming Day of Judgment. The disciples of John were likely a small group who he baptized. They were awaiting the Messiah. Some started being loyal to Jesus after John identified him as the Coming One ([John 1:37](#)). Others stayed with John, communicating with him while he was in prison about the activities of Jesus ([Luke 7:18–23](#)). After the death of John, they arranged his burial ([Mark 6:29](#)).

We know little about what the group of the disciples of John did. But, fasting was a main practice for them, like the Pharisees ([Matt 9:14](#)). They likely followed the example of John in fasting ([Luke 7:33](#)). In late Judaism, people often linked prayer and fasting. The disciples of John were also known for the prayers their teacher taught them ([11:1](#)). Seeing this, the disciples of Jesus asked him to teach them to pray. Jesus then taught them the "Lord's Prayer" ([verses 2–4](#)).

After John died, some of his disciples likely joined the followers of Jesus (see [Luke 7:29–30](#)). But, not all did. About 25 years later, the apostle Paul and other Christians met disciples of John in Ephesus ([Acts 18:24–29:7](#)). When they heard about Jesus, these followers of John declared Jesus as the Messiah. Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus, and they received the Holy Spirit ([19:4–7](#)). Later documents show that some groups continued to honor John. Some even considered him the Messiah, centuries after the New Testament period.

## **John, Gospel of**

The fourth Gospel.

Preview

- Author
- Date, Origin, and Destination
- Background

- Purpose and Theological Teaching
- Content

### *Author*

At the end of this Gospel we are told that it was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved" ([In 21:20, 24](#)), but unfortunately the book nowhere tells us who this disciple was. Evidence shows that the most probable identification is with the apostle John. He fills the place we would have expected John to fill from what we know from the other Gospels. (See discussion above on John, the Apostle.)

The Gospel appears to have been written by one who knew the Jews and the Palestine of Jesus' day well. He was familiar with Jewish messianic expectations (e.g., [In 1:20-21; 4:25; 7:40-42; 12:34](#)). He knew of the hostility between Jews and Samaritans ([4:9](#)) and the contempt the Pharisees had for "the people of the land" ([7:49](#)). He knew of the importance attached to the religious schools (v [15](#)). He knew the way the Sabbath was observed and was aware of the provision that the obligation to circumcise on the eighth day overrides the Sabbath regulations (vv [22-23](#)). Throughout the Gospel he moved with certainty in the vast range of Jewish ideas and customs.

It is the same with topography. The writer mentioned many places, and his place-names all seem to be used correctly. He referred to Cana, a village not mentioned in any earlier literature known to us, which means that the reference almost certainly came from someone who actually knew the place. He located Bethany with some precision as about 15 stadia from Jerusalem (about 2 miles, or 3.2 kilometers, [11:18](#)). He had several references to places in or near Jerusalem, such as Bethesda ([5:2](#)), Siloam ([9:7](#)), and the Kidron Valley ([18:1](#)). Of course, this does not rule out some contemporary of John's, but it makes it difficult to think of the author as a much later individual writing at a distance from Palestine. The evidence as we have it indicates that the writer was a Jew in the Palestine of Jesus' day.

To many careful readers, it seems that the Gospel bears the stamp of an eyewitness. For example, Jesus was teaching "in the treasury" ([8:20](#)). Nothing is made of the point; the incident could easily have been told without it. It looks like a reminiscence of someone who sees the scene in his mind's eye as he writes. The fact that the house was filled with fragrance when the woman broke the

perfume jar ([12:3](#)) does not materially affect the account but is the kind of detail that one who was there would remember. The author noted that the loaves used in the feeding of the multitude were barley loaves ([6:9](#)) and that Jesus' tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top to bottom ([19:23](#)). He told us that the branches with which Jesus was greeted were palm branches ([12:13](#)), and that it was night when Judas went out ([13:30](#)). Such touches are found throughout the Gospel, and it seems unjustified to treat them as no more than an attempt to create verisimilitude. They seem much more like indications that the author was writing about events in which he had himself taken part.

The early church accepted Johannine authorship without question. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian all see the apostle as the author. The first to quote this Gospel by name was Theophilus of Antioch, about AD 180.

Those who object to Johannine authorship emphasize the differences between this Gospel and the Synoptics. The argument is that if Jesus was anything like the Christ portrayed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he could not be like the Christ of the fourth Gospel. This is a completely subjective argument, ignoring the fact that any great man will appear differently to different people. The judgment of the church throughout the centuries has been that Jesus was large enough to inspire both portraits. To put the same point another way, we have no reason for holding that the first three Evangelists tell us all there is to know about Jesus. There is no contradiction. John simply brings out other aspects of Jesus' life and teachings.

While we cannot prove beyond all doubt that John the apostle was the author, we can say that there is more reason for holding to this view than to any other.

### *Date, Origin, and Destination*

It has been usual for conservatives and liberals alike to date this writing in the last decade of the first century or early in the second. Some liberal scholars have put it well into the second century, but this is not common, and it is remarkable that there has been such a considerable measure of agreement.

It is said that this Gospel is dependent on the Synoptics, which means that it must be dated sometime after them. But this argument has been widely abandoned in recent times. There is so

much in John that is without parallel in the other three Gospels, and conversely so much in the other three that John might have used had he known it, that it is very difficult indeed to hold that this writer had any of the other Gospels before him when he wrote, or even that he had read them. Such resemblances as there are seem better explained by common use of oral tradition.

It is also argued that there is a very developed theology in John and that we must allow time for its development. Granted, the theology of this Gospel is profound, but this does not require that we must wait for it until the end of the first century. The theology of the Letter to the Romans is also profound, and there is no reason for dating that writing later than the 50s. On the ground of development, then, there is no reason for putting John later than Romans. Development is a slippery argument at best, for it usually takes place at uneven rates, and we have no means of knowing how fast it took place in the area where the author lived.

Other arguments for a late date are no more conclusive. For example, it is urged that the ecclesiastical system presupposed by the Gospel is too late for the time of the apostle John, and that the sacramental system of chapters [3](#) and [6](#) must have taken time to develop. But John does not mention any sacrament. It is true that many scholars think these chapters refer to baptism and the Lord's Supper, but the fact is that John mentions neither.

It is not surprising in view of the way the traditional arguments have crumbled away that many in recent times are arguing that John must have been written before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. If it were later, why does not John have some reference to it? Some of his language appears to be earlier. In [5:2](#) he says there "is" (not "was") a pool called Bethesda. And he often refers to the Twelve as Jesus' disciples, or "his" disciples, or the like. In later times Christians usually said "the" disciples, for they saw no need to say whose the disciples were. But in the early days, when Christians were in contact with rabbis (each of whom had his disciples), it was important to show that Jesus' disciples were in mind. It is important also that John makes no reference to any of the synoptic Gospels. The simplest explanation is that he had not seen them. They were not yet widely circulated.

None of this enables us to date this Gospel with precision. But the weight of evidence points to an early date (before AD 70).

The author was John the apostle, a Jew. However, the writing gives evidence of contact with Greek thought, for example, in the reference to Christ as "the Word" in chapter [1](#) and the translation of words like "rabbi" ([1:38](#)). It is almost universally held that such considerations compel us to see the work as originating in a center of Greek culture, and Ephesus has traditionally been favored. Before the end of the second century we have Irenaeus writing that John published the Gospel during his residence at Ephesus.

Some scholars point to similarities between John and the Odes of Solomon, which they think came from Syria. As there are also some resemblances in the language of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in the early second century, this is held to show that John was written in Syria, probably at Antioch. Others again think that Egypt was the place, and they support this by pointing out that the oldest fragment of a manuscript of this Gospel was found there. There is no real evidence, and we are left with probabilities. There is much to be said for accepting the evidence of Irenaeus and seeing Ephesus as the place of origin, but we can scarcely say more.

There is no real indication of the intended destination. From [20:31](#) we learn that the book was written that the readers might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son, and that by believing they might have life. The Gospel, then, has an evangelistic aim. But it is also possible that "believe" means "keep on believing"—"go on in faith," rather than "begin to believe." That is to say, the book may have been meant from the beginning to build people up in the faith. Probably we should not distinguish between these aims too sharply. Both may well be in mind.

### *Background*

Several possible backgrounds to the Gospel have been suggested. The Greek interest is obvious, and this writing has sometimes been called the Gospel of the Hellenists. The suggestion is that we should look to Greek writings, perhaps the works of the philosophers or Philo of Alexandria, to find the right background against which to understand what John has written. This approach may be seen in the work of Rudolf Bultmann, who thought specifically of Gnosticism. Indeed, for Bultmann one of the sources of this Gospel was a discourse source that he thought was taken from non-Christian Gnosticism. Not many have been prepared to follow Bultmann, but a number of

recent commentators have discerned some form of Gnosticism as the backdrop to John.

While such views are put forward seriously, there are some substantial objections. One is that, despite the confident assertions of some scholars, Gnosticism has never been shown to be earlier than Christianity. In the form in which it comes before us in history, it is a Christian heresy, and of course, the Christian faith must appear before a Christian heresy is possible. Another objection is that there is a basic difference between the two systems. Gnosticism is concerned with knowledge (the very word is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, "knowledge"). Its "redeemer" is one who comes from heaven with knowledge. But John does not subscribe to the view that man is saved by knowledge. The Redeemer comes to take away the sin of the world ([1:29](#)). Gnosticism tells people that life is an upward struggle; Christianity tells of a Savior who came down to raise them up. It is not easy to see any form of Gnosticism as the essential background to Christianity.

Much more significant is John's Semitic background. Especially important here is the OT, accepted as sacred Scripture by Jew and Christian alike. It lies constantly behind John's statements, and it must be studied carefully if John is to be understood. It is plain that John knew and loved the Septuagint, the translation into Greek of the Hebrew OT. Again and again, the Septuagint can be shown to lie behind what John says.

In modern times important discoveries have been made at Qumran, in the vicinity of the Dead Sea. Among the scrolls unearthed in the caves of this area are several that have affinities with John. Indeed, one of the interesting facts about the scrolls is that they have more parallels with John than with any other part of the NT, a fact difficult to explain if John was written late and at a distance from Palestine. The resemblances to the Qumran writings must be viewed with care, for there is often a linguistic resemblance where the thinking is quite different. For example, both use the unusual expression "the Spirit of truth." But where John means one of the persons of the Trinity, the scrolls speak of "a spirit of truth" and "a spirit of error" striving in the souls of people. The connection is real, but John is clearly not dependent on the scrolls for his thinking. The contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they afford additional evidence that this Gospel is basically Palestinian and must be understood against a background of first-century Palestine.

Other backgrounds have been suggested, such as the Hermetic literature. This is a group of writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus ("Hermes Thrice-greatest"), a designation of the Egyptian god Thoth. There are indeed some points of contact with John, but they are few in comparison with those of writings rooted in Palestine. It is difficult to take such suggestions seriously. John is essentially Palestinian.

### *Purpose and Theological Teaching*

The writer told us that Jesus did many "signs" (or miracles) that he had not recorded, but "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life" ([In 20:31](#), nlt). John wrote to show that Jesus is the Messiah. But he did not do this simply with a view to conveying interesting information. He wanted his readers to see this knowledge as a challenge to faith; when they believe, they will have life. John sought to bring men and women to Christ; he had an evangelistic aim. That does not exhaust what he was trying to do, for his words have meaning for believers. It is important that believers have a right knowledge of Jesus and that they continue to believe.

The main theological teaching of this Gospel, then, is that God has sent his Messiah, Jesus. He is the very Son of God, and he comes to bring life ([3:16](#)). Though Jesus told the woman at the well that he was the Messiah, this is not often said so specifically. The avoidance of the term might well be because of the political overtones it had acquired among the Jews at large. They looked for a Messiah who would fight the Romans. He would defeat them and set up a mighty world empire with its capital in Jerusalem. Jesus was not aiming at anything like that, and it was important that he avoid the kind of language that would give that impression. But though the conventional messianic terminology is avoided, John left no doubt that Jesus was God's chosen one. Again and again he depicted Jesus as fulfilling messianic functions. For example, in the long discourse in chapter [6](#) we see Jesus as the bread from heaven, fulfilling the expectation that when Messiah came, he would renew the manna; and in the giving of sight to the blind man (ch [9](#)) we have another messianic function (cf. [Is 35:5](#)).

With this greatness of Jesus, John also combined teaching about his lowness. A continuing, though unobtrusive, strand of Johannine teaching is that Jesus depends on the Father for everything. Apart

from the Father, Jesus said, he could do nothing ([In 5:30](#)). His very food is to do the Father's will ([4:34](#)). He lives through the Father ([6:57](#)). It is the Father who gives him his disciples ([6:37, 44; 17:6](#)). It is the Father who bears witness to him ([5:32, 37](#)). John insists that Jesus is in no sense independent of the Father. In the mission of Jesus, John sees the working out of the purpose of the Father.

## Content

### Prologue and Chapter 1

John begins with a prologue ([1:1-18](#)) that is unlike anything in any of the other Gospels. In it he refers to Jesus as "the Word," a term that has points of contact with both Greek and Hebrew thinking. As John uses it, it conveys the thought that Jesus is the expression of the mind of the Father. John speaks of the Word as God ([1:1](#)), sees him as active in creation ([1:3-5](#)), goes on to the witness borne to him by John the Baptist ([1:6-8](#)), speaks of the coming of the Word into the world ([1:9-14](#)), and finishes with a section on the greatness of the Word ([1:15-18](#)). In this prologue he briefly introduces some of the great themes that will be developed throughout the Gospel. It is a majestic introduction to the whole.

Next we have the beginnings of Jesus' public ministry ([1:19-51](#)). Jesus' work was preceded by that of John the Baptist, and the Evangelist tells us first about the kind of witness that the Baptist gave to Jesus. Witness is one of his important concepts, and witness is all that John the Baptist does in this Gospel. From this witness we move to the way the first disciples came to Jesus. We learn something of how Andrew and Peter came to know the Lord. We read also of Philip and Nathanael, of whom we learn little or nothing in the other Gospels.

### The Signs and Discourses ([2:1-12:50](#))

The public ministry of Jesus is described in a very distinctive way in this Gospel. John has a long section (chs [2-12](#)) in which he tells of a number of miracles Jesus did, interweaving into his account a series of discourses. Sometimes these are addresses given to groups of people, and sometimes they are talks with individuals. Some scholars call this section of the Gospel the Book of Signs, thus emphasizing the prominent place given to seven miracles. For John they are not simply wonders. They are meaningful; in the literal sense of the term they are *significant*.

The first of them is the turning of the water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee ([2:1-11](#)). The water in question is connected with Jewish rites of purification (v [6](#)), and the story is surely to teach us that Jesus transforms life. He changes the water of the law into the wine of the gospel. As a result of this "sign," his disciples believed in him (v [11](#)). John went on to tell how Jesus went up to Jerusalem and drove the traders out of the temple. They were selling animals for sacrifice and changing money. But their business was being done in the Court of the Gentiles, the only place in the temple where a Gentile could come to meditate and pray.

The first discourse is on the new birth ([3:1-21](#)). Jesus talked with Nicodemus, a leading Pharisee, about the necessity for radical renewal if one is to enter the kingdom. Jesus was speaking of God's regenerating activity, not some human reformation. Following this, John records a dispute between some of John's disciples with a Jew on the subject of purification. This opens the way for a section that shows the superiority of Jesus over John the Baptist—by the Baptist's own confession ([3:22-36](#)).

The second discourse is really a long conversation Jesus had with the woman of Samaria, whom he met by a well ([4:1-42](#)). It turns on "the water of life," a term that is not fully explained in this chapter but which we later find points to the life-giving Spirit ([7:38-39](#)). This leads to the story of the second sign, the healing of the nobleman's son ([4:46-54](#)), notable for the fact that Jesus healed at a distance.

The third sign is the healing of the lame man by the pool of Bethesda ([5:1-18](#)). This man had spent many years waiting for healing at the moving of the water. Jesus told him to get up and walk, and he did. Because it was done on a Sabbath, the Pharisees objected. This leads to Jesus' third discourse, that on the divine Son ([5:19-47](#)). Here the closeness of the relationship of Jesus to the Father is stressed, and his place in the judgment is brought out. There is emphasis also on the variety of witness who encountered Jesus, which shows how reasonable it is to accept him as God's own Son.

John's fourth sign is the one miracle (apart from the resurrection) found in all four Gospels: the feeding of the 5,000 ([6:1-15](#)). It is followed by Jesus' walking on water (vv [16-21](#)), which seems to be meant as the fifth sign (though some scholars think not; if they are right, there are only six signs). Then comes the fourth discourse, the great sermon on the bread of life (vv [22-59](#)). Jesus is this bread,

which he gives to all men and women who believe in him. There are references to eating his flesh and drinking his blood (vv [50-58](#)), which point to his death. Some have seen in them a reference to Communion, but it is hard to see why Jesus should refer in this way to an as-yet-nonexistent sacrament. Moreover, much the same effect is attributed in the same discourse to believing (vv [35, 47](#)). It seems best to understand Jesus as meaning that people must believe in him as the one who would die for them in order for them to have life.

There is a section detailing Peter's affirmation of loyalty in the face of some who drifted away from the Master ([6:67-71](#)). Then we come to the fifth discourse, on the life-giving Spirit ([7:1-52](#)). John has an important explanatory point of his own when he tells us that at the time the Spirit had not been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified (v [39](#)). The fullness of the Spirit depends on the completion of the work of Christ in his death and resurrection.

The sixth discourse tells of the light of the world ([8:12-59](#)). This aspect of Jesus' person and ministry is dramatically brought out in the sixth sign, the healing of the man born blind (ch [9](#)). It is a lively narrative, as the healed man conducts a spirited defense against the Pharisees who belittled Jesus.

One of the most beautiful of all the illustrations of Jesus' relations to his people is that on which he dwells in the seventh discourse, where he speaks of himself as the good shepherd (ch [10](#)). There is the obvious truth that sheep depend entirely on their shepherd, but Jesus says something else. Whereas earthly shepherds live to meet the needs of their sheep, Jesus laid down his life for his sheep.

The final sign is the raising of Lazarus ([11:1-44](#)), a man who had been dead for four days. The story graphically brings out Jesus' power over death and his readiness to confer the gift of life. Jesus speaks of himself as "the resurrection and the life" (v [25](#)); death cannot defeat him. He brings life to the dead, to the spiritually dead as well as to physically dead Lazarus. John goes on to note the reaction to this miracle: some believed, but some opposed Jesus (vv [45-57](#)). He includes a notable saying of Caiaphas, the high priest, that one man should die for the people (vv [50-52](#)). Caiaphas was speaking as a cynical politician (better one dead, however innocent, than the whole nation be troubled). But John saw in the words the deeper meaning that Jesus' death would bring salvation to many.

John rounds off his account of the ministry with the story of the anointing of Jesus by a woman in Bethany, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the coming of some Greeks to Jesus, and his final summary of what he had taught (ch [12](#)).

### **The Last Supper**

The account of what went on in the upper room on the night before the Crucifixion is the fullest of all the four Gospels. Curiously, John says nothing about the institution of Communion, a fact that has never been satisfactorily explained. But he tells us how Jesus washed the feet of the disciples ([13:1-17](#)), an action splendidly exemplifying the spirit of lowly service so soon to be shown on the cross. Then comes the prophecy of the betrayal, an action that set in motion the events that would lead to the cross (vv [18-30](#)).

In the long discourse that follows, Jesus dealt with some questions posed by his followers and went on to teach them some important truths, for example, that he is the way, the truth, and the life ([14:6](#)). He develops the thought that he is the true vine, the disciples being vitally joined to him as branches to the vine. It is important for the branches to remain in the vine if they are to have life ([15:1-16](#)). Then come some words about suffering that would be of help to them in times of persecution (vv [17-25](#)). Jesus goes on to speak about the Holy Spirit ([15:26-16:15](#)). This is a very important passage, for it contains much more about the Spirit than we find elsewhere in Jesus' words. Jesus calls the Spirit the "Paraclete," a title not easy to understand. It is in origin a legal term, and at least we can say that it indicates that the Spirit brings friendship, encouragement, and help. Jesus went on to speak of his approaching departure from the disciples and to prepare them for the trying time ahead ([16:16-33](#)). This part of the Gospel concludes with Jesus' great High Priestly prayer. He prayed for the disciples to be one, as he commended them to the care of the heavenly Father (ch [17](#)).

### **The Cross and Resurrection**

When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, he went forward to meet them and they fell to the ground ([18:1-11](#)). He gave himself over to them; they did not take him over. At the outset of his passion narrative, John was making the point that Jesus is sovereign. He was not being defeated by the march of events but was sovereignly doing the will of the Father. John is the only one to tell us that Jesus was taken before Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, the

reigning high priest ([18:12–14, 19–24](#)). He tells also of Peter's three denials of Jesus (vv [15–27](#)). He did not spend much time on the Jewish trial, but he was much more explicit than the other Evangelists in his account of the Roman trial. Clearly, he had some special knowledge of what went on before Pilate. He presents a magnificent picture of Jesus talking with Pilate about kingship—the Son of God discussing with the representative of Caesar the meaning of sovereignty (vv [33–40](#)).

In his account of the Crucifixion John has a number of touches of his own, notably the way Jesus commended Mary to the care of the beloved disciple ([19:26–27](#)), the fact that the cry Jesus uttered as he died was "It is finished" (v [30](#)), and the piercing of his side by a soldier's spear (vv [31–37](#)).

John proceeds to the narrative of the burial (vv [38–42](#)) and of the empty tomb ([20:1–10](#)). He speaks of appearances of the risen Lord to Mary Magdalene (vv [11–18](#)), and to the disciples—both without (vv [19–23](#)) and with Thomas (vv [24–29](#)).

The final chapter, an epilogue, tells of a miraculous catch of fish ([21:1–14](#)) and goes on to the moving account of Peter's threefold declaration of love to Jesus and his restoration.

*See also* John, The Apostle.

## John, Letters of

Three brief epistles ascribed to John. Their brevity is deceiving, for they deal with profound and critical questions about the basic nature of Christian spiritual experience. The Johannine letters also provide interesting insight into the condition of the church at the end of the first century. Heresy is rearing its ugly head. Autonomy and church organization are reflected. The genuine nature of a committed and obedient relationship to God through Christ is powerfully and warmly portrayed and commanded.

Preview

- The First Letter of John
- The Second Letter of John
- The Third Letter of John

## *The First Letter of John*

### Occasion and Purpose

First John is a simple yet profound response to a heresy threatening the church. The methodology used is a careful and clear delineation of the truth as it is found in Christ. The two different positions—the correct and the incorrect—are clearly contrasted. The lines of demarcation are definitely drawn.

The letter, however, also has a positive purpose. The author wants his "children" to know the truth and respond in relationship to God, who was revealed in Christ: "We are writing these things so that our joy will be complete. This is the message he has given us to announce to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him at all" ([1 Jn 1:4–5](#), nlt). The positive purpose is further designated in [5:20](#) (nlt): "And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we are in God because we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life." The clear understanding of Christ—as being both God and man—is of highest importance to the author. The believers need to know this and remain in this truth, so that they can continue to abide in the Son of God and not be taken away from him by heretical teachings.

### The Nature of the Opposition

Assuming that the letter is written to contest the claims of the heretics provides interesting insights into their identity. According to [2:19](#), the opponents had been members of the Christian community but later had withdrawn to propagate their own beliefs.

The major christological error of the heretics was a denial of the humanity of Jesus, with the implication that he was not the Messiah. The false prophets in the world can be identified by their confession of Jesus: "This is the way to find out if they have the Spirit of God: If a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ became a human being, that person has the Spirit of God" ([4:2](#), nlt). The opening verse of the letter sharply contests the denial of Jesus' humanity. The liar is identified in [2:22](#) (nlt) as the one "who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son."

The practical outcome of these positions was a moral irresponsibility that advocated a life of sin and disregard for others. John, therefore, needs to

call these apostates back to a life of ethics and brotherly love in Christ.

The opposition has been identified in various ways. The emphasis on secret and esoteric knowledge points toward a Gnostic-type heresy. The denial of the humanity of Jesus points toward the docetic heresy. Cerinthus of Asia Minor (mentioned by Irenaeus) has often been associated with the opposition in 1 John.

### Author

Careful comparison of 1 John with the fourth Gospel reveals a marked resemblance in vocabulary, style, and thought. Characteristic words used by both works include "love," "life," "truth," "light," "Son," "Spirit," "advocate," "manifest," "sin," "world," "flesh," "abide," "know," "walk," and "commandments." Combinations of words such as "Spirit of truth," "born of God," "children of God," and "overcome the world" also point to a single author. There are also similarities in grammatical usage and patterns of expression. There are marked similarities in theological outlook as well.

It is difficult to deny the close relationship of the two writings. Those who have attempted to distinguish between the two have had to admit that the variations in style and theological method must have come from one who was closely related and deeply influenced by the writer of the other.

The traditional position on authorship has been that the apostle John was the author of both the Gospel and the letter. The opening words of 1 John point clearly in that direction: "The one who existed from the beginning is the one we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is Jesus Christ, the Word of life" (1:1, nlt). This is clearly intended to let the readers know that the author was an eyewitness of the events.

The traditional position has been questioned on the basis of a quotation from Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor (AD 100–140). His comment, transmitted through Eusebius via Irenaeus, is "If anywhere one came my way who had been a follower of the elders, I would inquire about the words of the elders—what Andrew and Peter had said, or what Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples; and I would inquire about the things which Aristion and the elder John, the Lord's disciples, say." A number of significant commentators have argued for the

existence of an elder or presbyter John in Asia Minor as distinct from the apostle John. Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies*, and the Muratorian Fragment (both from the end of the second century), however, assign 1 John to the apostle John.

His claim to be an eyewitness and his air of authority definitely point toward the apostle John as the author of the first letter. Tradition speaks of the advanced age of the apostle as he taught at Ephesus, and of his emphasis upon love among Christians to the very end of his life. First John reflects just such a situation.

### Date

The date for the composition of 1 John is usually placed near the end of the first century. This date is confirmed by the nature of the heresy condemned and by the references to it in Polycarp and Irenaeus. Greater precision in fixing the date is not possible with the evidence available.

### Text

The text of 1 John has been preserved rather well. The simplicity of the terminology and the clarity of its thought have contributed to this preservation. Three passages deserve mention in the discussion of text.

The words "all things" (2:20) are found in the nominative case in some manuscripts and in the accusative or objective case in others. The kJV translates the verse: "Ye know all things." Use of the nominative case, which then modifies "you"—"You all know"—is perhaps a better rendering. The emphasis is on the breadth of the distribution of knowledge and not on the completeness of it.

In 4:19 there is no object for the verb "love" in the earliest manuscripts. Some later manuscripts have inserted either "him" or "God" in this sentence (see nLT mg), and the kJV is dependent upon these manuscripts.

The most famous variant in 1 John is found in 5:7–8. "These three agree in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit . . ." is clearly an interpolation added to the text at a fairly late date. The earliest reference comes from the Spanish heretic Priscillian, who died in AD 385. At a later date it was accepted into the Vulgate. Erasmus, who edited the first Greek Testament ever published, did not include the words on the basis of their absence in Greek manuscripts. The only two Greek manuscripts that contain the words were

produced since that date. Thus modern translations have eliminated this verse.

## Content

Commentators are unable to agree on the specific plan and structure of the first letter. The simple terminology, the narrow range of vocabulary, the repetition of ideas, and the almost monotonous grammatical construction defy logical analysis in terms of outline and structure. Commentators have characterized the argument of the epistle as "spiral." The picture is that of a venerable and respected elder in the community sharing his wisdom without attempting to provide a closely reasoned argument.

Although chapter designations were not introduced into the text of the NT until AD 1228 and are often misleading divisions of thought, they do provide a convenient method for surveying the content of the letter. It should be noted that the letter also departs from the common letter style of the first century so vividly represented in the Pauline letters.

The first chapter is composed of an introduction and a discussion of walking in the light. The nature of God and man in relationship comes into sharp focus.

The introduction stands in the noble tradition of the prologue to the fourth Gospel and the prologue to the Letter to the Hebrews. With majestic profundity the basic dependability of the gospel message is declared. The author claims his status as an eyewitness of the one through whom the Father manifested himself. He claims that he is simply proclaiming the events in which he himself participated. The emphasis on hearing, seeing, and touching (the frequent use of the perfect tense emphasizes the continuing results) takes the manifestation out of the ethereal and speculative realm and places it directly in the world of experience.

The purpose of the proclamation is fellowship (the Greek word is *koinonia*). This fellowship operates both on the horizontal plane between believers and on the vertical plane between believers and both Father and Son ([1:3](#)). The second element of purpose is "to make our joy complete" ([v 4](#)).

In the body of the letter the author moves immediately ([1:5-10](#)) to the definitive nature of God as light. God's nature as light has a number of significant implications. First, darkness has no place in God at all ([v 5](#)). Second, those who walk

(live, conduct themselves) in darkness cannot be in fellowship with God ([v 6](#)). Third, a relationship with God (walking in the light) results in fellowship with other believers and cleansing from all sin by Jesus, his Son ([v 7](#)). Fourth, all have sinned, and denial of that fact does not change the truth ([v 8](#)). Fifth, acknowledgment of sin brings forgiveness and cleansing from the faithful and righteous God ([v 9](#)). Finally, denial of ever having sinned is a reflection upon God and proves that his word is not present ([v 10](#)).

Joy and fellowship are available only to those who walk in the light of God's presence. God—who is light through his Son, Jesus Christ (we are reminded of the prologue of the fourth Gospel, that the Word manifested light to all men)—solves the problem of sin and unrighteousness through forgiveness and cleansing.

The second chapter continues the thought of the final paragraph of chapter [1](#)—the solution to the problem of sin—and then turns to a discussion of the new commandment and the threat of the antichrist.

In [2:1-6](#) the solution to the problem of sin in the presence of a pure God is expanded. Jesus Christ not only forgives sin and cleanses unrighteousness but also he is our advocate (the same word used in [In 14-16](#) and transliterated "Paraclete") before God. Jesus had satisfied the requirements for complete reconciliation between God and humanity.

In response the believer is to keep his commandments. The third verse is the first of a number of verses that respond to one question: How can the believer know that all of this is true? The first test is that of obedience. The implications of the test of obedience is stated positively in verses [3](#) and [5](#) and negatively in verse [4](#). Verse [6](#) clearly points out that the model for the lifestyle of the believer is to be found in Jesus.

The second test of believing ("abiding in him") is outlined in verses [7-17](#). The second authentication is love for the brothers and sisters in the Christian community. The author clearly states that it is impossible to walk in the light of God and hate your Christian brother or sister at the same time. This is an expansion on the idea of fellowship in the light found in the opening verses.

After encouraging three different age groups ([2:12-14](#)—the reference may well be to stages in the Christian life rather than to chronological age groups), he warns them of the folly of loving the

world (vv [15-17](#)). The world consists of transient lusts and pride and is not a part of the Father, who is light. The only one who survives is the one who is obedient to the total will of God.

Then the author turns to the problem of the end times with its manifestation of the antichrist ([2:18-27](#)). The antichrists (note the use of the plural) once were members of the fellowship (v [19](#)). Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah falls into that category. The author further declares that it is impossible to deny Christ and embrace God (v [23](#)). Those who are born of God have an anointing from him that enables them to recognize the lies of the antichrist (v [27](#)).

The whole epistle to this point has revolved around the implications of walking with God, who is light. God's revelation of himself in Jesus provides clear direction and understanding to recognize the true and identify the false.

The last two verses of chapter [2](#) introduce the new topic for chapter 3, being "born of God" ([2:29](#)). The children of God do not fear the final revelation of God at the Second Coming. Instead, they anticipate it, for the full quality of their new birth will be made visible ([3:2](#)). The author pauses to revel in the function of God's love in our lives as his children (v [1](#)).

The author quickly comes back from the joy of contemplating our status as children of God to the stark realities of the world in which we must live. The world about us is characterized by sin, which is now defined as lawlessness ([3:4](#)). Sin finds its origin in the devil, who "has been sinning from the beginning" (v [8](#)). The children of the devil reveal their essential nature by living lawless lives—Cain is used as a model (vv [10-12](#)).

Jesus, whose second appearance is noted in the opening verses, came the first time to take away sins ([3:5](#)) and destroy the works of the devil (v [8](#)). Those who live in Jesus should live according to the pattern of their Father, who is righteous (v [7](#)). The righteous lifestyle is characterized by purity (v [3](#)) and cessation of sin (vv [7-9](#)). The contrast between the two lifestyles is obvious (v [10](#)).

The last half of chapter [3](#) turns to one of the expressions of righteousness—love for others in the Christian community. The negative was already introduced in verse [12](#) (Cain). Hatred of the brother is equivalent to murder ([3:15](#)). Indifference to the need of a brother or sister is also condemned (vv [17-18](#)). The model for the love of the brother is Jesus, who laid down his life for us (v

[16](#)). The positive note is that love for one's brothers and sisters is evidence of being born of God—of passing from death into life (v [14](#)). Again, the contrast between the children of God and the children of the devil is obvious.

The last half of chapter [3](#) highlights one of John's favorite emphases. "We know" is repeated in verses [14, 16, 19, and 24](#). In a world of uncertainties, John recognizes the great need for assurance. He thus outlines a variety of tests to establish and maintain assurance for the children of God.

The transition to chapter [4](#) occurs at the end of chapter 3: "We know he lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us" (v [24](#), nlt). Those who have the Holy Spirit need to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. The doctrinal test is then outlined. Those who have the Spirit of God recognize that Jesus is God come in the flesh ([4:2-3](#)). False prophets who deny this have the spirit of the antichrist (v [3](#)). Obedience to God enables the children of God to recognize and respond to the language of God (vv [4-6](#)).

In verses [7-12](#) John speaks of the origin of love as coming from God who is love ([4:8](#)). That love was demonstrated unmistakably in Jesus (vv [9-10](#)) in order to solve the problem of sin. The natural response of the children of God, then, is to love one another (v [11](#)), to the end that God's love may be perfected (reach its designated goal) in us (v [12](#)). In this paragraph being born of God, loving God, and knowing God are inextricably intertwined.

Verse [13](#) picks up the assurance note of [3:1](#): "God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us" (nlt). Further assurance is given to those who recognize that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world, which leads us to know the love of God. The love of God flows through us to others and is an evidence of our relationship to God ([4:14-21](#)). The present assurance is so clear that even the fear of Judgment Day is obviated (vv [17-18](#)).

In the final chapter, John turns to the interrelationship between love and righteousness. Those who are born of God do not find the commandments of God to be burdensome ([5:3](#)). The faith of the children of God enables them to find victory over the world that would hinder the fulfillment of commands (v [4](#)). That faith rests in Jesus as the Son of God (v [5](#)). Again, correct belief enters the picture: Jesus was fully human (v [6](#)), and the Spirit bears witness to the reality of Jesus (vv

[7-8](#)). The result is a great inner certitude that God "has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" ([v 11](#), nlt). Again, the line of demarcation between the one who has life and the one who does not is made crystal clear ([v 12](#)).

Verses [13-16](#) move from the possession of eternal life to certainty in prayer. A solid confidence in God brings answers to prayer ([vv 14-15](#)). Confidence also extends to prayer on behalf of others who are committing sin (now John defines sin as unrighteousness rather than the sin that leads to death, [v 12](#)); God will honor that prayer by giving life to the sinner ([v 16](#)).

The final verses are a reiteration of the major themes of the letter. The victory of the one who is born of God through the true God who has come to us in Jesus clearly differentiates the child of God from the life of the world under the power of the evil one. The shining note of assurance continues to the very end of the letter.

### *The Second Letter of John*

#### **Author, Setting, and Date**

Second John was written in a setting similar to that of 1 John. The author identifies himself as "the elder" and designates his audience as "the elect lady and her children" ([2 Jn 1:1](#)). The "elect lady" is probably a church and the "children" are the members of it. The closing greeting from "your elect sister" ([v 13](#)) confirms this analysis. This church was harassed by the same heresies that were attacked in 1 John. The heresies are denounced, and the church is warned not to entertain the messengers of the heresy.

The grammar, style, and vocabulary of 2 John compare very closely to 1 John. Eight of the 13 verses of the second letter are almost identical with verses in 1 John.

Information concerning date of writing is inadequate to make any decision. The similarity to 1 John suggests a similar era.

#### **The Message**

The message of the letter is twofold. In the first place, the members of the Christian community were urged to love one another ([v 5](#)). The nature of love is then defined as following his commandments ([v 6](#)). The second, and more compelling, element is the warning against the deceivers who refuse to acknowledge Christ and persuade others to do the same. Love indeed has its

limits when it comes to even housing those who refuse to acknowledge Christ ([vv 8-11](#)). The deceivers are probably the same heretics identified in the first letter.

The letter closes with a promise of further communication in person. The purpose of the visit will be to complete one another's joy (cf. [1 Jn 1:4](#)).

### *The Third Letter of John*

#### **Author, Setting, and Date**

Third John is also written in a similar setting. The occasion, however, is not the threat of heresy. The problem now is a certain Diotrephes, who is repudiating the authority of "the elder" and trying to frustrate his leadership. The letter is addressed to Gaius, who is still loyal to the elder. The elder asks Gaius to provide for the genuine missionaries who are passing through. In the thanksgiving section Gaius is commended for his faithfulness to the truth, especially as a "child" of the elder.

Again, we have insufficient information to establish date or additional setting. The familiar terminology and writing style tie it closely to the other two letters; as such, the author was probably John the apostle.

#### **Message**

The burden of the letter is also twofold. The first paragraph ([3 Jn 1:5-8](#)) commends Gaius for his hospitality to the itinerant missionaries who are traveling "for the sake of the Name" ([v 7](#)), i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ. The missionaries have spoken well of Gaius's love for the church.

The main body of the letter warns against the insubordination of a certain Diotrephes. His love of power and authority has led him not only to defy the authority of the elder but also to convince others to follow his defiance or be excommunicated. He has refused to entertain the genuine itinerant preachers. Gaius is warned not to be influenced by Diotrephes' example.

The conclusion reflects the anticipation of an immediate personal visit. Normal greetings conclude the little letter.

*See also* John, the Apostle.

## John, the Apostle

The apostle known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”; author of the fourth Gospel, three epistles, and probably Revelation.

The apostle John has a high reputation among Christian people, and his influence has been felt throughout the centuries. Despite this, he is a surprisingly shadowy figure. When he appears in the pages of the NT, it is almost always in company with Peter or James, and if there is speaking to be done, it is usually his companion Peter who does it; thus, there is not a great deal on which to base a biography.

John's father's name was Zebedee, and John had a brother called James ([Mt 4:21](#)). Among the women at the cross, Matthew names Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and “the mother of Zebedee's children” ([27:56](#)). Mark names the two Marys and adds Salome ([Mk 15:40](#)). This indicates that Salome may be the name of John's mother. If Matthew and Mark are naming the same women as does John, then Salome was Jesus' “mother's sister” ([In 19:25](#)). This would make John a cousin of Jesus. We cannot be certain of this, for there were many women there ([Mt 27:55](#)) and there is no way of being sure that Matthew, Mark, and John all name the same three. Many accept the identification, but we can scarcely say more.

John was among those whom Jesus called by the Sea of Galilee ([Mt 4:21-22](#); [Mk 1:19-20](#)). This makes him one of the first disciples. It is also possible that he was the unnamed companion of Andrew when that apostle first followed Jesus ([In 1:35-37](#)). John was important in the little group around Jesus since he was one of three who were especially close to the Master. These disciples were selected to be with Jesus on many great occasions. John, along with his brother James and Peter, was present at the Transfiguration ([Mt 17:1-2](#); [Mk 9:2](#); [Lk 9:28-29](#)). Jesus also took just these three into the house of Jairus when he brought that man's daughter back to life ([Mk 5:37](#); [Lk 8:51](#)). Before Jesus' arrest, it was this trio that he took to pray with him in the Garden of Gethsemane ([Mt 26:37](#); [Mk 14:33](#)). Though the three were admonished for sleeping instead of watching in prayer, we must not overlook the fact that in that time of great difficulty, when Jesus faced the prospect of death on a cross, it was to these three that he looked for support.

There are other occasions when John is mentioned in the Gospels. Luke tells us of John's surprise when the miraculous catch of fish took place ([Lk 5:9-10](#)).

This is especially noteworthy since John was a fisherman. Toward the close of Jesus' ministry, we find John coming to Jesus with Peter, James, and Andrew to ask when the end would come and what would be the sign when all things come to their climax ([Mk 13:3-4](#)). And on the last evening, Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal ([Lk 22:8](#)).

Passages like these show that John was highly esteemed among the apostles and that he stood especially close to Jesus. But there are indications that at first John was far from appreciating what Jesus stood for. When Mark gives his list of the Twelve, he tells us that Jesus gave to James and John the name “Boanerges,” which means “sons of thunder” ([Mk 3:17](#)). Some in the early church understood this name as a compliment, thinking it meant that James's and John's witness to Jesus would be as strong as thunder. But most see it as pointing to their tempestuousness of character. We see this, for example, when John encounters a man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name. John instructs him not to, “for he isn't one of our group” ([Mk 9:38](#); [Lk 9:49](#)).

Mark also tells us of an occasion when the sons of Zebedee asked Jesus for the two chief places in his kingdom, one to be on his right and the other on his left ([Mk 10:35-40](#)). Matthew adds the point that the words were spoken by the men's mother, but he leaves us no doubt that James and John were in on it ([Mt 20:20-22](#)). Jesus proceeded to ask them whether they could drink the cup he would drink and be baptized with the baptism he would receive. (Clearly, these are metaphors for the suffering Jesus would in due course undergo.) James and John affirmed that they could, and Jesus assured them that they would indeed do this. However, he gave them no assurance about their places in the Father's kingdom. (But it is plain that James and John would suffer for Christ.) At that time they also failed to understand the loving spirit that moved their Master and was required of them as well.

Another incident that shows the same tempestuous spirit is one involving Samaritan villagers who refused to receive the little band as they traveled. When James and John heard of it, they asked Jesus whether he wanted them to call down fire from heaven to consume the villagers ([Lk 9:54](#)). They were clearly at variance with Jesus, and indeed he rebuked them. But we should not miss the zeal they displayed for their Lord, nor their conviction that if they did call down fire it would come. They were sure that God would not fail to answer the prayer

of those who asked for vengeance on the opponents of Jesus. There is zeal here and faith, though also a spirit of lovelessness.

The synoptic Gospels thus show us John as a zealous and loyal follower of Jesus. He is not depicted as gentle and considerate. At this time, he knew little of the love that should characterize a follower of Jesus, but he did have faith and a passionate conviction that God would prosper Jesus and those who served him.

John is not mentioned by name in the fourth Gospel, but there are passages that speak about “the disciple whom Jesus loved” ([Jn 13:23](#); [19:26](#); [20:2](#); [21:7, 20](#)). We are not told who this was, but the evidence seems to indicate that it was the apostle John. For example, there is an account of a fishing trip in chapter [21](#), with a listing of those who went fishing. It includes Peter, who must be ruled out as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” because he is often mentioned along with the beloved disciple. Thomas and Nathanael were there, but there seems to be no reason for seeing either as a likely candidate. Two unnamed men and the sons of Zebedee make up the remainder of the party. James is excluded as being the author because of his early death—around AD 44 ([Acts 12:2](#)). This leaves us with John or one of the unnamed men. John is favored by the fact that the beloved disciple is linked with Peter on a number of occasions ([Jn 13:23-24](#); [20:2](#); [21:7](#)). We know from the other Gospels that Peter and John (together with James) were especially close (see also [Acts 3](#); [8:14](#); [Gal 2:9](#)). Of course, one of the unnamed disciples may have been the beloved disciple, but we have no reason to assume this. Further, such a supposition faces the problem of the omission of the name of John the apostle throughout the entire fourth Gospel. If John wrote this book, we can understand his not mentioning himself. But if it was written by someone else, why would that person omit all mention of a man as prominent in the apostolic band as the other Gospels show John to have been? In addition, if John is the author, it would explain why John the Baptist is called simply “John.”

It is argued that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” is not the kind of title a man would naturally use of himself, but it must be said also that it is not the kind of title a man would naturally use of someone else, either. And it may be that John uses it in a modest fashion—partly because he did not want to draw attention to himself by using his name, and partly because he wanted to emphasize the truth

that it was the fact that Jesus loved him that made him what he was.

If this identification may be accepted, we learn more about the apostle. We should not, of course, read the words “the disciple whom Jesus loved” as though they meant that Jesus did not love the other disciples. He loved them all. But as applied to John, they mean that he was indeed beloved, probably also that he recognized that he owed all he had and all he was to that love. That he was specially close to Jesus is indicated by the fact that he leaned on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper ([Jn 13:23](#)). It also tells us something of his relationship to the Master that he was at the cross when Christ was crucified and that it was to him that Jesus gave the charge to look after his mother ([19:26-27](#)). One would have expected that Jesus would have selected one of his family for this responsibility. But his brothers did not believe in him, whereas both John and Mary did. This event certainly shows that a close relationship existed between Jesus and the disciple he loved.

On the first Easter morning, John raced with Peter to the tomb when Mary Magdalene told them it was empty. He won the race but stood outside the tomb until Peter came. Peter, the leader of men, went right in, and John followed. We read that he “saw and believed” ([Jn 20:8](#)). Then in chapter [21](#) we read of the beloved disciple fishing with the others. Significantly, it was he who recognized that it was Jesus who stood on the shore and told them where to cast the net ([21:7](#)).

There is not much to add to this picture when we turn to Acts. At the beginning, John’s name occurs in a list of the Twelve ([Acts 1:13](#)); and later, when we are told of James’s death, it is noted that he was John’s brother ([12:2](#)). In every other reference to John, he is in the company of Peter. These two were the instruments God used in bringing healing to a lame man (ch [3](#)). At that time, they were going to the temple at the hour of prayer. This says something about their habits of devotion. Prayer at the ninth hour apparently refers to the Jewish service of prayer that was held at the same time as the evening offering (i.e., at about three o’clock in the afternoon). Evidently, Peter and John were continuing the devotional habits of pious Jews with an interest in the temple and all its doings. On another occasion, these two were arrested and jailed on account of their preaching about Jesus’ resurrection ([4:1-3](#)). They were brought before the council, where Peter spoke for them. The council saw that these two men were “uneducated,

common men" (v [13](#)). This means that they had never had the normal rabbinic education. By the standards of the council, they were uneducated. The council forbade them to speak about Jesus, but the apostles' reply displays John's typical boldness: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (vv [19–20](#), rsv).

John was associated with Peter again when the gospel was first preached in Samaria. Philip was the evangelist to the Samaritans, but the apostles in Jerusalem decided to send Peter and John to Samaria when they heard how the people had accepted the gospel message. "As soon as they arrived, they began praying for these new Christians to receive the Holy Spirit" ([Acts 8:15](#), tlb), a revealing illustration of apostolic priorities. In due course, they laid their hands on the new believers and they received the Holy Spirit ([8:17](#)). John is not specifically mentioned, but he no doubt was included in "the apostles" who were arrested and jailed because of the jealousy of prominent Jews ([5:17–18](#)). But that imprisonment did not last long, for an angel released them at night, so that they resumed their preaching in the early morning (v [21](#)). John is mentioned by name in [Galatians 2:9](#), where he is joined with Peter and James and the three are called "the pillars of the church."

This appears to be the extent of the NT's record of the apostle John. Clearly he was an important figure in the little band of early Christians. On almost every occasion when he comes before us in the record, he is in the company of someone else and normally the speaking is done by his companion, not by John. But we may justly conclude that he stood very close to Jesus. Perhaps he had entered into the mind of Jesus more than any of the others. The best evidence of this is the Gospel of John. Clearly the man who wrote this had great spiritual insight. John may have been more the thinker than a man of action and leader of men.

We have seen that there is good reason to think that the fourth Gospel was written by the apostle John. The epistles of John probably came from him also (though, as they stand, they are anonymous). All the Johannine writings probably emanated from the province of Asia. The heretics alluded to in 1 John resemble the Cerinthians (followers of the heretic Cerinthus), who were in Asia Minor at the end of the first century, and tradition connects the author of 1 John with Ephesus. It is certain that the same person wrote all three letters, and reasonably

certain that this author also wrote the Gospel of John; the Gospel and the letters certainly represent the same mind at work in different situations.

An author named John wrote the book of Revelation ([Rv 1:1](#)), though it is not clear whether this is the apostle or another John. Tradition has identified the John of Revelation (see [Rv 1:1, 9; 22:8](#)) with John the apostle, the author of the Gospel of John and the three letters of John. This view was held by Justin Martyr as early as 140. The main objection to this view is that the original Greek is unlike that of the other Johannine writings, showing scant respect for the rules of the language. Some have suggested that a different John wrote Revelation, others that John's disciples wrote the Gospel and letters and that John himself wrote Revelation. But it is still plausible that the apostle John (or one of his close disciples) wrote the Gospel and the letters.

Assuming John the apostle wrote Revelation, he was exiled to Patmos ([Rv 1:9](#)). But the date of this is uncertain. Some probably unreliable evidence from the late fifth century suggests that John was martyred at about the same time as his brother James (c. 44; see also [Acts 12:2](#)). Jesus' prophecy in [Mk 10:39](#) need not imply that both met with a simultaneous and violent end. Much stronger is the tradition reflected by Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus (c. 190), that John died a natural death in Ephesus, and by Irenaeus (c. 175–195) that John lingered on in Ephesus until the time of the emperor Trajan (ruled c. 97–117).

## Joiada

1. Paseah's son who, with Meshullam, repaired the Old Gate in the Jerusalem wall during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 3:6](#)).
2. Levite and high priest in Jerusalem during the postexilic era, the great-grandson of Jeshua, son of Eliashib, and father of Jonathan ("Johanan" or "Jehohanan," [Neh 12:10–11, 22](#)). He is alternately called Jehoiada in [Nehemiah 13:28](#), where we read that one of his sons was expelled from the priesthood for marrying a daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria.

## Joiakim

Levite high priest in a family of high priests. Jeshua's son and the father of Eliashib the high

priest, a contemporary of Nehemiah ([Neh 12:10-12:26](#)).

## Joiarib

1. One of the Jewish leaders whom Ezra sent to Iddo at Casiphia to gather Levites and temple servants for the caravan of Jews returning to Palestine from Babylon ([Ezr 8:16](#)). He is alternately called Jehoiarib in [1 Chronicles 9:10](#).
2. Zechariah's son, the father of Adaiah, and an ancestor of a Judahite family that resettled in Jerusalem during the postexilic era under Nehemiah ([Neh 11:5](#)).
3. Father of Jedaiah, a priest who served in the temple during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 11:10](#)). Perhaps Joiarib's forefather was Jehoiarib, who was the head of the first course of priests ministering in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chr 24:7](#); cf. [9:10](#)).
4. One of the leaders of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua to Judah after the exile ([Neh 12:6](#)). His family in the next generation was headed by Mattenai (v [19](#)).

## Jokdeam

One of the cities located in the hill country allotted to Judah's tribe for an inheritance, mentioned between Jezreel and Zanoah ([Jos 15:56](#)).

## Jokim

Descendant of Judah through Shelah's line ([1 Chr 4:22](#)).

## Jokmeam

1. City mentioned in [1 Kings 4:12](#) (kjv "Jokneam"); seemingly close in proximity and perhaps the same as Jokneam. *See* Jokneam.
2. City given to the Kohathite Levites out of Ephraim's inheritance ([1 Chr 6:68](#)). A parallel passage in [Joshua 21:22](#) lists the city as Kibzaim. *See* Kibzaim.

## Jokneam

Royal Canaanite city belonging to Carmel ([Jos 12:22](#)), mentioned also by Thutmose III as "the Well of Q." The border of Zebulun touched on the stream near Jokneam ([19:11](#)); the town became a Levitical city in Zebulun ([21:34](#)). Some think that Jokmeam of [1 Kings 4:12](#) should be amended to Jokneam, but this is not certain. Eusebius placed it six miles (9.7 kilometers) from Legio (beside Megiddo) on the way to Ptolemais. This is Tell Qaimun, at the mouth of Wadi Milh on the edge of the Jezreel Valley.

*See also* Levitical Cities.

## Jokshan

A son of Abraham and Keturah. Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan ([Genesis 25:2-3](#); [1 Chronicles 1:32](#)).

## Joktan

A son of Eber and a younger brother of Peleg. A number of Arabian groups descended from him ([Genesis 10:25-29](#); [1 Chronicles 1:19-23](#)).

## Joktheel

1. Town in the Shephelah of Judah near Lachish ([Jos 15:38](#)).
2. Ancient Edomite stronghold originally named Sela. Amaziah changed its name to Joktheel after defeating the Edomites ([2 Kgs 14:7](#)).

## Jona

KJV form of John, father of Simon Peter and Andrew, in [John 1:42](#). *See* John (Person) #1.

## Jonadab

1. A nephew of King David. He was the son of Shimeah, brother of King David. Jonadab was a friend of Amnon, the son of David. He created a plan that helped Amnon force himself on his half-sister Tamar ([2 Samuel 13:3–5](#)). Later, Absalom, who was Tamar's brother, took revenge by killing Amnon.
2. A son of Recab. He was a descendant of the Kenites ([1 Chronicles 2:55](#)). He started a religious group called the Recabites, who chose to live as nomads (people who move from place to place rather than settling in one area). Jonadab supported Jehu when Jehu violently removed the family of King Ahab from power ([2 Kings 10:15, 23](#)).

## Jonah (Person)

Prophet of Israel; Amittai's son ([Jon 1:1](#)) of the Zebulunite city of Gath-hepher ([2 Kgs 14:25](#)). The historian who wrote 2 Kings recorded that Jonah had a major prophetic role in the reign of King Jeroboam II (793–753 BC). Jonah had conveyed a message encouraging expansion to the king of Israel, whose reign was marked by prosperity, expansion, and unfortunately, moral decline.

In the midst of all the political corruption of Israel, Jonah remained a zealous patriot. His reluctance to go to Nineveh probably stemmed partially from his knowledge that the Assyrians would be used as God's instrument for punishing Israel. The prophet, who had been sent to Jeroboam to assure him that his kingdom would prosper, was the same prophet God chose to send to Nineveh to forestall that city's (and thus that nation's) destruction until Assyria could be used to punish Israel in 722 BC. It is no wonder that the prophet reacted emotionally to his commission.

No other prophet was so strongly Jewish (cf. his classic confession, [Jon 1:9](#)), yet no other prophet's ministry was so strongly directed to a non-Jewish nation. Jonah's writing is also unusual among the prophets. The book is primarily historical narrative. His actual preaching is recorded in only

five words in the Hebrew—eight words in most English translations ([Jon 3:4b](#)).

*See also* Israel, History of; Jeroboam #2; Jonah, Book of; Prophet, Prophetess.

## Jonah, Book of

The fifth book of the 12 Minor Prophets in the traditional order of the Old Testament. It is a story rather than a collection of prophetic messages. It tells about Jonah's experiences after he disobeyed God's command to preach to the people of Nineveh. Several unusual events in the book have sparked much debate about its meaning.

### Preview

- Author
- Authenticity
- Date
- Purpose
- Content

### Author

Traditionally, people believe that Jonah, the son of Amittai, wrote the book of Jonah. He was an important prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel ([2 Kings 14:25](#)).

The book describes Jonah as a very patriotic person. However, his misguided patriotism led him to rebel against the idea of Israel's former enemies receiving forgiveness from God. One of the most important lessons of the book appears when God criticizes Jonah's exclusive attitude ([Jonah 4:6–11](#)).

Jesus used two experiences of Jonah as signs for his generation. Jonah's three days and nights in the great fish symbolized Jesus's death and resurrection ([Matthew 12:38–41](#)). Also, the Ninevites' positive response to Jonah's preaching highlighted the failure of many in Jesus's generation to believe in him ([Luke 11:32](#)).

### Authenticity

The unusual elements in the book of Jonah have led to different opinions about its nature. Some people think the story is fictional because Jonah gets swallowed by a fish. Others find the repentance of the people of Nineveh ([Jonah 3:5](#)) hard to believe.

Top biblical scholars have supported the book's historical accuracy. They counter arguments against its historicity and highlight the evidence supporting it. This includes Jesus's references to the prophecy and early Jewish tradition.

Critics of Jonah's authenticity highlight these issues:

1. The term "king of Nineveh" ([Jonah 3:6](#)) seems inaccurate. Nineveh was Assyria's capital, so people would call him the king of Assyria
2. The past tense used for Nineveh ([Jonah 3:3](#)) suggests a later date than traditionally believed
3. The description of Nineveh's size is greatly exaggerated ([Jonah 3:3](#))
4. There is no historical evidence for the Ninevites' mass repentance.
5. It is improbable for a person to survive inside a fish for a long time

The term "king of Nineveh" is similar to expressions in the Old Testament. For example, Ahab, the king of Israel, is called "king of Samaria" ([1 Kings 21:1](#)), and Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, is referred to as "king of Damascus" ([2 Chronicles 24:23](#)). Therefore, calling someone "king of Nineveh" is not unusual.

Using the past tense to describe Nineveh might just be a way to narrate its size when Jonah prophesied there.

The phrase "three-day journey" likely means it would take three days to walk through Nineveh's suburbs and administrative district.

The repentance of the Ninevites should not be seen as a mass conversion to Yahweh, the God of Israel. The book of Jonah describes their response as repentance because of the destruction Jonah threatened ([Jonah 3:4](#)). Secular history does not record this event, but evidence suggests such a response was possible. In less than a decade, from 765 to 759 BC, Nineveh experienced a total solar eclipse and two serious plagues. These events may have prepared the citizens for the prophet's unusual message.

One of the kings of Assyria, Adad-nirari III, worshipped only the god Nebo. If Jonah's prophetic ministry was active during his reign, from 810 to 783 BC, Jewish monotheism represented by Jonah

might have found a more favorable environment than usual in a pagan society.

Animals also took part in the national repentance after Jonah's preaching ([Jonah 3:7-8](#)). The historian Herodotus talks about a similar event in the Persian Empire.

The most challenging event is Jonah's experience in the fish. Many note that most whales' throats are too small for a man. However, the book mentions a great fish, not specifically a whale ([Jonah 1:17](#)). Still, a sperm whale can swallow something as large as a man.

There are many stories of people being swallowed by whales. While some may be exaggerated, it is not wise to dismiss all of them. (An interesting story is in the *Princeton Theological Review* 25, 1927, p. 636.) Jonah's experience in the great fish might not be impossible. God's actions in history often include unusual or miraculous events.

The challenges in the book of Jonah have led many to see it as a prophetic story rather than historical fact. The most common view is that the book shows God's universal concerns. It speaks against the exclusive nationalism of the Jews. Some suggest this narrow-minded attitude fits best into the period after the exile, when Israel's hatred for its former captors was still very strong.

This view has several difficulties. While the Old Testament contains many parables, none is as long as the book of Jonah. Additionally, in a parable, major elements usually symbolize people, objects, or ideas that support the main lesson. Supporters of this view struggle to explain how Jonah's experience in the fish adds to the parable's central lesson.

Another way to look at the book is as a long allegory. An allegory is a type of story where elements symbolize similar real-life aspects. The author usually explains the meaning. In the Old Testament, allegories are short and add strength to a statement. The book of Jonah does not seem to fit this type. It is a story without clear meanings for the people, objects, and events mentioned.

There is no strong reason to doubt the historical truth of the book of Jonah based on common arguments. Jesus mentioned Jonah's story, suggesting he believed it was true.

#### *Date*

If Jonah was the son of Amittai mentioned in [2 Kings 14:25](#), the prophecy would date to the reign

of Jeroboam II of Israel, from 793 to 753 BC. Jonah would then be one of the important prophets of the eighth century who served during Israel's Silver Age.

Some people think someone other than Jonah wrote the book. They date it from after Nineveh's fall to after the Jewish exile in Babylon.

### *Background*

Archaeologists have found many artifacts and writings at ancient Nineveh. These show it was a cultural center for much of its history. During the Middle Assyrian period, Nineveh grew significantly and became an administrative center. Some of the most powerful Assyrian kings ruled from Nineveh.

Calah, located south of Nineveh, was smaller in size but had nearly 70,000 people. The large population of Nineveh in the prophecy of Jonah aligns with this.

### *Purpose*

The book of Jonah teaches that God's grace extends beyond the Hebrew people. This lesson appears in the book's dramatic climax. Jonah, feeling sorry for himself, mourns the loss of the plant that provided him shade. God highlights Jonah's concern for the plant compared to his own concern for the thousands in Nineveh.

The book explains that God's mercy was not only for the Hebrew people during Jonah's time. It was available to everyone who repented, even Israel's enemies.

### *Content*

The book of Jonah starts with God telling Jonah to preach to Nineveh. Jonah did not want to go because he knew the people would repent. He did not want to show God's mercy to the disliked Assyrians. So, he tried to escape by ship from Joppa, hoping to avoid God. He sailed to Tarshish, a Phoenician colony in southern Spain, which was the farthest west he could go in the ancient Mediterranean world ([Jonah 1:1-3](#)).

God would not let his servant disobey without punishment ([Jonah 1:4-16](#)). God's love required Jonah's discipline. The discipline began with a storm sent by God ([Jonah 1:4](#)). During the storm's fierce rage, the sailors prayed to their own gods and threw extra cargo overboard ([Jonah 1:5](#)). Amidst the chaos, Jonah was asleep in the ship's hold.

The sailors did not know Jonah was the real problem. The ship's captain woke Jonah and told him to pray to his god for help with the storm ([Jonah 1:6](#)).

When the sailors received no answer to their prayers, they cast lots to find out who caused the god's anger and the storm ([Jonah 1:7](#)). The lot showed Jonah was to blame. The sailors then asked which god caused the storm and why. Jonah simply said he was a Hebrew who worshiped the Lord who made both land and sea ([Jonah 1:9](#)).

The sailors asked Jonah what they should do to him because the storm was getting worse ([Jonah 1:11](#)). Earlier, the captain had told Jonah to pray or face death. Now Jonah explained that praying would not help, but his death might ([Jonah 1:12](#)). He asked them to throw him into the sea.

Before agreeing to Jonah's request, the sailors tried hard to save the ship ([Jonah 1:13](#)). When they could not, they threw him into the sea ([Jonah 1:15](#)). Imagine how amazed the sailors were when the storm stopped as soon as Jonah hit the water. This experience made the crew fear the Lord. They offered a sacrifice and made promises to him ([Jonah 16](#)).

God was not finished with Jonah. He sent a large fish to swallow him ([Jonah 1:17](#)). Jonah stayed in the fish's belly for three days and nights (see [Matthew 12:38-41](#)). Inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God ([Jonah 2:1](#)) and thanked him for hearing his prayer and saving him from drowning ([Jonah 2:7-8](#)). This rescue led Jonah to renew his devotion to God ([Jonah 2:9](#)). His prayer showed he was familiar with the Psalms (see [Psalms 3:8; 5:7; 18:4-19; 30:2-3; 31:6, 22; 39:9; 42:6-7; 59:17; 69:1-2; 120:1; 142:3; 144:2](#)).

God answered Jonah's prayers by giving him a chance to obey and keep his promises. The sea creature spit Jonah onto the shore ([Jonah 2:10](#)).

The writer now focuses on God's actions toward the city of Nineveh ([Jonah 3-4](#)). Jonah repented for his disobedience and showed his repentance by going to Nineveh to deliver God's message ([Jonah 3:1-3](#)). When he arrived in Nineveh, he began to proclaim God's message. The city's inhabitants were told they had 40 days ([Jonah 3:4](#)), but they responded immediately.

The people and their king showed regret by wearing sackcloth and fasting ([Jonah 3:5-6](#)). After repenting privately, the king made a public

announcement to strengthen their response to God's message ([Jonah 3:7-9](#)).

God accepted Nineveh's repentance ([3:10](#)), which made Jonah upset, and he complained ([Jonah 4:1-3](#)). His recent psalm of praise to God ([Jonah 2:1-9](#)) turned into bitter grumbling. Jonah prayed to God again ([Jonah 4:2](#)), explaining why he refused the first mission. He knew God was loving and forgiving, and he disliked that God extended this to his country's enemies. Foolishly, Jonah asked to die rather than witness God's work among the Ninevites ([Jonah 4:3](#)).

God showed compassion to Nineveh and planned to show it to Jonah through examples and lessons ([Jonah 4:4-11](#)). God's gentle question, "Have you any right to be angry?" likely touched Jonah deeply ([Jonah 4:4](#)). However, the prophet chose to build a temporary shelter on Nineveh's east side ([Jonah 4:5](#)), waiting to see if anything would happen.

God added a plant with large leaves to the natural objects he used with Jonah ([Jonah 4:6](#)). This plant made Jonah happy. However, a worm sent by God destroyed the plant ([Jonah 4:7](#)). Then, God sent a hot sirocco wind to dry the air, increase the heat, and worsen Jonah's misery ([Jonah 4:8](#)). Once more, Jonah begged to die.

For the second time, God asked Jonah, "Have you any right to be angry about the plant?" ([Jonah 4:9](#)). This question aimed to teach the insensitive prophet a lesson. Jonah, however, responded with more bitterness ([Jonah 4:9](#)). He was very upset because the plant's death affected him personally, even though he did not create it ([Jonah 4:10](#)). The Lord Yahweh created humanity and cared about the Ninevites' well-being. Did the great Creator not have the right to be upset over Nineveh's destruction, with its 120,000 children and all its animals ([Jonah 4:11](#))? Just as Jonah wanted the plant to live, God wanted even more for Nineveh to be saved.

*See also* Jonah (Person); Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess.

## Jonam, Jonan

An ancestor of Jesus mentioned in [Luke 3:30](#).

*See* Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

## Jonas

1. The King James Version form of Jonah in [Matthew 12:39-41](#) and [Luke 11:29-32](#).  
*See* Jonah (Person).
2. The King James Version form of John, Simon Peter's father, in [John 21:15-17](#).  
*See* John (Person) #1.

## Jonath-Elem-Rechokim

Hebrew phrase in the title of [Psalm 56](#) (kjv), translated "To be sung to the tune, 'Dove on Distant Oaks'" (nlt); perhaps a familiar ancient melody to which the psalm was performed.

*See also* Music.

## Jonathan

1. A Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, descended from Gershom, son of Moses (see [1 Chronicles 23:14-15](#)). He served as a priest first for Micah in Ephraim and later for the tribe of Dan during the time of the judges ([Judges 17:7-10; 18:30](#)).
2. A Benjamite who was Saul's firstborn son and Meribbaal's father ([1 Samuel 14:49](#); [1 Chronicles 8:33-34](#)). Jonathan was a brave warrior ([1 Samuel 13:2-4; 14:1-15](#); [2 Samuel 1:22](#)) and a loyal friend to David ([1 Samuel 18:1-5; 19:1-7](#)). The Philistines eventually killed him and his brothers at Mount Gilboa ([1 Samuel 31:2](#); [1 Chronicles 10:2](#)).
3. He was the son of the high priest Abiathar and a loyal servant of David ([2 Samuel 15:27, 36](#); [17:17, 20](#); [1 Kings 1:42-43](#)).
4. Shimei's son and David's nephew ([2 Samuel 21:21](#); [1 Chronicles 20:7](#)).
5. He was the son of Shagee the Hararite and one of David's strong warriors ([2 Samuel 23:33](#); [1 Chronicles 11:34](#)).

6. Judahite, Jada's son, was Jether's brother and the father of Peleth and Zaza ([1 Chronicles 2:32–33](#)).
7. He was Uzziah's son and one of King David's treasurers ([1 Chronicles 27:25](#)).
8. David had a relative who worked as a counselor and scribe in the royal household ([1 Chronicles 27:32](#)).
9. Ebed's father. Ebed went back to Judah with Ezra after the Babylonian captivity ([Ezra 8:6](#)).
10. Asahel's son. He and Jahzeiah opposed Ezra's idea that the sons of Israel divorce the foreign women they married after returning to Palestine from exile in Babylon ([Ezra 10:15](#)).
11. A Levite who was the son of Joiada. He was the father of Jaddua and a descendant of Jeshua, the high priest ([Nehemiah 12:11](#)). He might be the same person as Jehohanan (or Johanan), Eliashib's grandson, mentioned in [Ezra 10:6](#) (see also [Nehemiah 12:23](#)).  
*See* Jehohanan #4.
12. He was a priest and the leader of Malluch's family during Joiakim's time as high priest ([Nehemiah 12:14](#)).
13. A priest, father of Zechariah, and a descendant of Asaph ([Nehemiah 12:35](#)).
14. The secretary whose house held Jeremiah as a prisoner during King Zedekiah's rule in Judah ([Jeremiah 37:15, 20; 38:26](#)).
15. Kareah's son sought protection from Gedaliah ([Jeremiah 40:8](#)).

16. Jonathan was the youngest son of Mattathias and brother of Judas Maccabeus. After Judas died in battle against Bacchides ([1 Maccabees 9:18](#)), Jonathan took his place ([9:28–31](#)). For three years, Jonathan led a small group of fighters against Syria. The Syrians were distracted by their own political struggles, so in 157 BC, they made peace with him. These political issues in Syria helped Jonathan. Five years later, he became the high priest in Jerusalem and the administrator of Judea ([1 Maccabees 10:1–11](#)). Under his leadership, Jewish territory and power grew. Jonathan skillfully played Syrian political rivals against each other. One rival was Tryphon, who wanted the Syrian throne and felt threatened by Jonathan. In 143 BC, Tryphon decided to overthrow Jonathan. He captured Jonathan through deceit and eventually killed him, leaving his brother Simon to lead the Jews ([1 Maccabees 10:12–13](#)).

## Joppa

Joppa was a city about 56.3 kilometers (35 miles) northwest of Jerusalem. It served as the main seaport for Jerusalem.

The city stood on a rocky hill about 35.4 meters (116 feet) high. A small cape (a piece of land sticking into the sea) reached out into the water. This made it the only natural harbor on the Mediterranean coast between Egypt and the Old Testament town of Acco.

About 91.4 to 121.9 meters (300 to 400 feet) offshore, a series of reefs formed a breakwater. This helped protect the harbor. Ships could enter the harbor from the north. The harbor may have been larger and safer in Bible times than it is today. The land around Joppa had good water and rich soil.

### *Early History of Joppa*

Joppa first appears in ancient records from Egypt. Thutmose III, who ruled from 1490 to 1432 BC,

listed Joppa as one of the cities he captured in Palestine.

During the Amarna period (1353–1336 BC), a local prince in alliance with Jerusalem ruled Joppa. A record from this time describes Joppa's beautiful gardens. It also praises the city's skilled workers in metal, leather, and wood.

### *Joppa in the Bible*

When Joshua divided the land of Canaan among the 12 tribes of Israel, Dan received Joppa ([Joshua 19:46](#); “Japho” in the King James Version). The Philistines soon captured Joppa and made it one of their seaports. When David conquered the Philistines, he brought Joppa back under Israel's control. During the rule of Solomon, Joppa became an important seaport for Jerusalem. Workers floated cedar logs from Lebanon to Joppa. From there, they carried the wood to Jerusalem to build the temple ([2 Chronicles 2:16](#)).

Joppa is the seaport where Jonah went when he tried to run away from God ([Jonah 1:3](#)). He planned to sail to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh, where God had sent him.

In 743 BC, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III invaded the land of the Philistines. Joppa was likely one of the cities he captured. In 701 BC, another Assyrian king, Sennacherib, also listed Joppa as one of the cities he took.

After that, there is little record of Joppa until the time of Ezra. Then, cedar logs from Lebanon were once again floated to Joppa and carried to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple ([Ezra 3:7](#)).

During the fourth century BC, Eshmunazar, the king of Sidon, controlled Joppa. When Sidon rebelled against the Persian Empire and was destroyed, Joppa became a free city.

### *Joppa under Greek, Jewish, and Roman Rule*

Alexander the Great later renamed the city from Japho (its Old Testament name) to Joppa. He also started making coins there, which made the city more important in the Greek Empire. After Alexander died, his followers fought over Joppa many times. The city was ruled by Egypt from 301 BC until 197 BC. Then Antiochus III took it and made it part of the Seleucid kingdom.

During the Maccabean period, Joppa went through many changes. In 168 BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes brought his army to Joppa as he moved toward

Jerusalem. He wanted to force the Jews to follow Greek customs and religion.

In 164 BC, after Judas Maccabeus won battles against the Seleucids, some non-Jewish people in Joppa killed about 200 Jews by drowning them. In response, Judas burned the harbor buildings and the boats there. But he could not take the city ([2 Maccabees 12:3-9](#)).

In 147 BC, Jonathan and Simon defeated a Syrian general named Apollonius Taos. They took control of Joppa for Alexander I Epiphanes, who was trying to become king of Syria ([1 Maccabees 10:74-86](#)). Later, Simon used political strategies to strengthen Jewish control of the city. He made Joppa into a Jewish city by building strong defenses and removing the Greek residents.

During the Roman occupation of Pompey, he declared Joppa a free city. Julius Caesar returned it to the Jews in 47 BC. Herod the Great captured it in 37 BC. The people of Joppa did not like Herod, so he built a new port at Caesarea, about 64.4 kilometers (40 miles) to the north.

By the time Jesus was born, Joppa was under the control of Caesarea in the Roman province of Syria (Josephus's *Antiquities* 17.13.2-4).

### *Joppa in the New Testament and Later History*

A Christian congregation appeared quite early in Joppa. Two well-known disciples lived there:

- Dorcas, whom Peter raised from death ([Acts 9:36-41](#)), and
- Simon the tanner (verse [43](#)).

From Joppa, God called Peter to Caesarea to share the good news about Jesus with the Roman centurion Cornelius ([10:1-48](#)).

Later, Joppa became one of the main cities to fight against the Romans. In AD 68, the Roman general Vespasian destroyed the city and set up a military camp there. It was rebuilt later and is now called Jaffa. Today, Jaffa is part of the modern city of Tel Aviv.

## **Jorah**

Alternate name for Hariph in [Ezra 2:18](#) and [Nehemiah 7:24](#). See Hariph.

## Jorai

Member of Gad's tribe ([1 Chr 5:13](#)).

## Joram

1. The son of Toi and king of Hamath. His father sent him to congratulate David when David defeated Hadadezer of Zobah ([2 Samuel 8:9–12](#)). He is also called Hadoram in [1 Chronicles 18:10](#).
2. Another name for Jehoram, who was king of Judah from 853 to 841 BC. *See* Jehoram #1.
3. Another name for Jehoram, who was king of Israel from 852 to 841 BC. *See* Jehoram #2.
4. The son of Jeshiah from the tribe of Levi ([1 Chronicles 26:25](#)).

## Jordan River

A major river lying in the bottom of a great canyon called the Jordan Rift. This long canyon stretches from lower southwest Asia Minor (Syria) to the Gulf of Aqaba. The rift was once filled by the Lisan Lake, but significant geologic activity caused it to recede. The result was the formation of three separate bodies of water:

1. the Huleh Lake,
2. the Sea of Galilee, and
3. the Dead Sea.

The Jordan River flows into each of these bodies of water to this day. The name of the stream in Hebrew means "the descender."

### *Sources of the Jordan River*

Originating at the northern end of the Huleh Basin, the river comprises four separate streams:

1. Nahr Bereighith
2. Nahr Hasbani
3. Nahr el-Liddani
4. Nahr Baniyas

In the northwest corner of the Huleh Valley, the Bereighith emerges within the area of Merj Ayoun. It flows from a spring located on a modest knoll west of Mount Hermon.

Slightly to the east is the Hasbani, a stream that descends from a spring 1,700 feet (518.2 meters) above sea level. This stream follows a course of about 24 miles (38.6 kilometers). These two smaller streams merge less than a mile above their confluence with the el-Liddani and the Baniyas.

The el-Liddani, lying between the Nahr Hasbani and the Nahr Baniyas, is located near Tel el-Qadi (the biblical city of Dan). Both the melting snows off Mount Hermon and 'Ain Leddan, a spring nestled among thick underbrush, feed this most powerful stream of the four. Flowing quickly and briefly, the el-Liddani rushes to meet the Nahr Baniyas, the last of the four streams.

The Baniyas originates from a cave approximately 1,100 feet (335 meters) above sea level, in the northeast corner of the Huleh Valley. It is close to the New Testament site of Caesarea Philippi. The Baniyas follows a steep descent to its confluence with the other streams. These four streams make up the Jordan River. They flow together along a southerly course of 10 miles (16 kilometers) before entering Huleh Lake.

### *Course and Character of the River*

The Jordan follows a north-south course through the Great Rift. It descends gradually from the Huleh Lake (7 feet, or 2 meters, above sea level) to the Dead Sea (1,274 feet, or 388 meters, below sea level). From the Huleh Lake the river follows a 20-mile (32.2-kilometer) course. It passes through the basaltic lip that forms the southern dam of the Huleh Basin (Rosh Pinnah Sill). Then it descends quickly to the Sea of Galilee (685 feet, or 209 meters, below sea level).

To the south lies the Dead Sea at a distance of approximately 65 miles (105 kilometers). The river that connects the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea travels a circuitous route of 200 miles (322 kilometers). The snakelike riverbed cuts through the *Ghor*, the canyon floor.

The Jordan has many tributaries. Not all tributaries are perennial. If there is no consistent water source, such as a spring at the head of the riverbed, these V-shaped watercourses remain dry until a seasonal deluge. When the rain comes, these dry, narrow courses are filled with fast-paced streams

that flow off the sides of the canyon into the Jordan River.

North of the Sea of Galilee, four major systems feed the river system in the Huleh Basin. Nahr Dishon and Nahr Hazor are on the west side. Nahr Shuah and Nahr Gilbon are on the east. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea are the following major tributary systems:

1. on the east—Yarmuq, 'Arab, Tayibeh, Ziqlab, Jurm, Yabis, Kufrinjia, Rajib, Zarqa, Nimrin, Abu Gharuba.
2. on the west—Fejjas, Bireh, Jalub, Malih, Far'ah, Aujah, el-Qelt.

The character of the *Ghor* varies from north to south as the canyon floor drops farther below sea level. Just south of the Sea of Galilee farmable land may be cultivated without irrigation. Occupation and settlement are more common.

Further south and farther below sea level, beyond the narrowest part of the canyon at Ghor el-Wahadina, the terrain and climate change. When the canyon floor consistently approaches 1,000 feet (305 meters) below sea level, the climate becomes more desert-like.

In this dry and desolate region, the river and its immediate surroundings become more noticeable. The river is a source of life to the plants and animals living along its banks. Its course and character are more easily discerned as it has become a real stream in the desert. The dense foliage on the banks of the Jordan is still today popular home for animals. Just as in biblical times, the low-lying shrubs and the tamarisk provide thick ground cover.

This lower section of the canyon, called the Zor, is 150 feet (45.7 meters) below the *Ghor*. The canyon floor is separated from the Zor by *qattara*, a sedimentary deposit of grayish-white marls and clays that form steep and barren slopes. This area is generally inaccessible and extremely dangerous. The Zor and *qattara* form a natural barrier between Cis-Jordan (west) and Transjordan (east). Trade, settlement, and travel were necessarily affected by these geographical features.

### *Old Testament Events Near the Jordan River*

- The Israelites passed across the Jordan upon entry into the promised land ([Joshua 3:14–17](#)).
- The fords of the Jordan were the sites of conflict in the war of Jephthah and the Gileadites against the Ephraimites ([Judges 12:1–6](#)).
- The prophet Elijah sought refuge from Ahab king of Israel by the brook of Kerith east of the Jordan ([1 Kings 17:1–5](#)).
- Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind after having crossed the Jordan with Elisha on dry ground ([2 Kings 2:6–12](#)).
- Naaman, the Syrian general, bathed in the Jordan at the command of Elisha, and his leprosy was healed ([2 Kings 5:8–14](#)).
- Elisha made the ax head float here ([2 Kings 6:1–7](#)).

### *New Testament Events Near the Jordan River*

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan ([Matthew 3:13–17](#)).
- Peter confessed that Jesus was the "Christ, the Son of the living God" at Caesarea Philippi. This conversation takes place near one of the sources of the Jordan, Nahr Baniyas ([Matthew 16:13–20](#)).
- Jesus healed two blind men at Jericho, which is near the Jordan ([Matthew 20:29–34](#)).
- Jesus also visited with Zacchaeus in Jericho ([Luke 19:1–10](#)).

## Jorim

An ancestor of Jesus listed in [Luke 3:29](#).

*See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.*

## Jorkeam, Jorkoam

Identified with Raham, a descendant of Judah through Caleb's line ([1 Chr 2:44](#); kjv "Jorkoam"), the name should perhaps be understood as a place-name and be identified with Jokdeam ([Jos 15:56](#)).

## Josabad

KJV spelling of Jozabad, a Benjamite warrior, in [1 Chronicles 12:4](#). See Jozabad #1.

## Josaphat

The King James Version spelling of Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, in [Matthew 1:8](#).

*See* Jehoshaphat (Person) #1.

## Jose

The King James Version spelling of Joshua, Eliezer's son, in [Luke 3:29](#).

*See* Joshua (Person) #5.

## Josech

An ancestor of Jesus mentioned only in [Luke 3:26](#).

*See* Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

## Josedech

KJV spelling of Jozadak, Joshua's father, in [Haggai 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4](#); and [Zechariah 6:11](#). See Jozadak.

## Joseph

1. Jacob's 11th son and the firstborn son of Rachel. Rachel named the boy Joseph, meaning "may he add," expressing her desire that God would give her another son ([Gn 30:24](#)).

Nothing more is said about Joseph until, at the age of 17, he is seen tending his father's flocks with his brothers ([Gn 37:2](#)). Joseph was the favorite of his father, since he was the son of his old age (v [3](#)) and the firstborn son of his favorite wife. Because of this, his brothers hated Joseph. This envy was

magnified when Jacob gave Joseph a ground-length, long-sleeved, multicolored robe (vv [3-4](#)). (This type of garment is illustrated by the paintings in the Asiatic tombs of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan and of the nobles at Gurneh, near Luxor.) The animosity of his brothers increased still more when Joseph revealed to them his dreams of dominion over them (vv [5-11](#)). Subsequently, when Joseph was sent to check on his brothers and the flocks near Shechem, his brothers sold him to a caravan of traders going down to Egypt (vv [25-28](#)). His brothers then took his robe, dipped it in goat's blood, and brought it to Jacob, who concluded that Joseph had been killed by wild animals (vv [31-33](#)); Jacob was overwhelmed with grief (vv [34-35](#)).

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of the guard ([Gn 37:36; 39:1](#)), who eventually put Joseph in charge of his entire household. However, trouble arose from Potiphar's wife, who was attracted to the young Hebrew and tried to seduce him ([39:6-10](#)). He steadfastly resisted her advances, protesting that to comply with her wishes would be a disservice to his master and a sin against God (v [9](#)). One day she seized his garment, but he left the garment behind and fled. Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of attempted rape; her report was believed, and Joseph was incarcerated in the king's prison (v [20](#)), where Pharaoh's butler and baker were also confined. While in prison, Joseph, with the Lord's help, interpreted these men's troublesome dreams. As Joseph had foretold, the baker was executed and the butler was restored to royal favor (ch [40](#)).

Two years later Pharaoh had two dreams that his magicians and wise men could not interpret. The butler, remembering Joseph, had him summoned from prison. God revealed to Joseph that the dreams foretold seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of famine ([Gn 41:25-36](#)). Pharaoh, impressed with Joseph's interpretation, made him ruler of Egypt, second only to himself (vv [39-44](#)). Joseph was given a new name, Zaphenath-peneah, and a wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera (v [45](#)).

Joseph was 30 years old when he became ruler of Egypt. During the seven years of prosperity, he gathered the good supplies for the seven years of famine to come ([Gn 41:53-56](#)). When the famine eventually became severe in Palestine, Jacob sent all his sons, except Benjamin, his youngest son, to Egypt to purchase grain. Appearing before Joseph in Egypt, they did not recognize him. But he knew them and remembered his dreams of years before

([42:8–9](#)). After listening to the report of their family, he accused them of being spies (vv [9–14](#)) and insisted that they leave one of their brothers as hostage and return with Benjamin to verify the truthfulness of their report (vv [19–20](#)). Thus Simeon was bound and left in Egypt (v [24](#)).

After the famine worsened in Palestine, Jacob asked his sons to go back to Egypt to buy more grain ([Gn 43:1–2](#)); reluctantly agreeing to the conditions that the Egyptian administrator had placed on them, Jacob allowed Benjamin to go with them (vv [11–13](#)). When they arrived in Egypt, they were taken to Joseph's house, where Simeon was restored to them (v [23](#)) and a meal was prepared for them (v [33](#)). Joseph at last disclosed his identity and declared that God had sent him before them to preserve their lives ([45:4–8](#)). Arrangements were then made to send for Jacob; wagons were provided, along with provisions for the journey (v [21](#)). When Jacob came to Goshen in the Nile Delta, Joseph went out to meet him, and another great reunion took place ([46:28–29](#)). He also presented his father and brothers to Pharaoh, who let them live in the land of Goshen ([47:6](#)).

Upon learning that his father was ill, Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to him for his blessing. He presented the sons so that the older would be at Jacob's right hand and the younger at his left in order that Manasseh would receive the blessing of the firstborn. Jacob, however, crossed his hands and with his right hand on Ephraim gave him the greater blessing ([Gn 48:14–20](#)). He also gave to Joseph the land that he had taken from the Amorites (v [22](#)). At Jacob's death, Joseph made the funeral arrangements; and after the customary funerary practices were carried out, a great funeral procession went to Canaan, where Jacob was buried by his sons in the cave of Machpelah near Hebron ([50:1–12](#)).

When Joseph was 110 years old, he called his brothers and told them that he was about to die. He made them take an oath that when they returned to Canaan they would take his bones with them. So he died, was embalmed, and was placed in a coffin in Egypt ([Gn 50:26](#)). Many years later, during the exodus, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him from Egypt ([Ex 13:19](#)). Joseph's remains were eventually interred at Shechem in the parcel of land that Jacob had bought from Hamor, the father of Shechem ([Gn 33:18–20](#); [Jos 24:32](#)). See Israel, History of; Patriarchs, Period of the.

2. Igäl's father from Issachar's tribe. Igäl was one of the 12 spies sent by Moses to search out the land of Canaan ([Nm 13:7](#)).

3. Asaph's second son and the leader of the first course of priests serving in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chr 25:2, 9](#)).

4. One of Binnui's descendants who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic era ([Ezr 10:42](#)).

5. Priest and family leader from Shebaniah's line during the days of Joiakim, the high priest ([Neh 12:14](#)).

6. Descendant of David ([Mt 1:16](#); [Lk 3:23](#)) and the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Joseph was betrothed to Mary, a young woman of the city of Nazareth. Mary had learned from the angel Gabriel that she was to bear the Son of God, whom she was to name Jesus ([Lk 1:31](#)) and that this conception was to be a work of the Holy Spirit (v [35](#)). Joseph was not aware of this, so when he learned that Mary was pregnant, he decided to divorce her quietly, for he was a just man and did not want to humiliate her publicly ([Mt 1:19](#)). An angel subsequently appeared to him in a dream to tell him what was happening ([Mt 1:21](#); cf. [Is 7:14](#)). The text of Matthew makes it clear that there was no sexual union between Joseph and Mary until after Jesus was born ([Mt 1:18, 25](#); see also [Lk 1:34–37](#)).

When Caesar Augustus issued a decree that everyone had to register in his native city for purposes of taxation, Joseph and Mary returned to Bethlehem, where Jesus was subsequently born ([Lk 2:1–6](#)). Later, Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord (vv [22, 33](#)). After the visit of the wise men, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt to protect the child from King Herod ([Mt 2:13](#)). Upon the death of Herod, an angel similarly advised him to return to Israel, so the family went to live in Nazareth. The last recorded event that involves Joseph is the incident of Jesus at the temple at age 12 ([Lk 2:41–51](#)). Joseph is not mentioned by name, but Mary told Jesus that she and his father had been looking for him anxiously.

Jesus was identified by people around Nazareth as "Joseph's son" ([Lk 4:22](#); [Jn 1:45](#); [6:42](#)). It is only through references identifying Jesus that we learn of Joseph's trade. Twice Jesus is referred to as "the carpenter's son" ([Mt 13:55](#); [Mk 6:3](#)). Joseph was not a carpenter in our sense of the word, for houses were built mostly of stone and earth. He was a

woodworker or artificer in wood, and probably most of his work was with furniture and agricultural implements.

During the ministry of Jesus, it was his mother and his brothers who came to look for him ([Mt 12:46–50; Mk 3:31–35](#)), so it is assumed that by this time Joseph was dead. Joseph was most likely the father of James, Joseph, Simon, Judas, and unnamed sisters ([Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3](#)).

*See also* Brothers of Jesus; Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

7. Joseph and Mary's son and the brother of Jesus ([Mt 13:55](#)); alternately called Joses in [Mark 6:3](#). *See* Brothers of Jesus.

8. Native of Arimathea and the follower of Jesus who provided for his burial. He was a rich man from the town of Arimathea and a respected member of the Sanhedrin, or council ([Mk 15:43](#)). He was a good and righteous man and did not go along with the decision to crucify Jesus ([Lk 23:50–51](#)). Joseph had been a secret follower of Jesus because he was afraid of the Jews ([In 19:38](#)), but after the Crucifixion he took courage and went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. He and Nicodemus took the body, treated it with spices, and wrapped it in linen cloths, according to the Jewish burial customs. In a nearby garden was Joseph's own new rock-cut tomb in which no one had ever been buried. Here they placed Jesus and sealed the tomb with a large stone.

9. Mattathias's son and an ancestor of Jesus ([Lk 3:25](#)). *See* Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

10. KJV rendering of Josech, an ancestor of Jesus, in [Luke 3:26](#). *See* Josech.

11. Jonam's son and an ancestor of Jesus ([Lk 3:30](#)). *See* Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

12. Disciple of Jesus who was "called Barsabbas" and "surname Justus" ([Acts 1:23](#)). Joseph was one of the candidates put forward by the 11 apostles to replace Judas Iscariot. It was Matthias, however, who was chosen.

13. Cypriot Levite who sold a field and gave the proceeds to the apostles. He was surnamed "Barnabas," meaning "son of encouragement," by the apostles ([Acts 4:36](#)). *See* Barnabas.

## Joseph and Asenath

This story is about Asenath, the wife of the patriarch Joseph. The story takes place during Joseph's stay in Egypt ([Genesis 41:45](#)). It is known by several other titles, which include The Life and Confession of Asenath, The Book of Joseph and Asenath, and variations of these names. Ancient manuscripts of it exist in Latin, Syriac, Slavonic, Romanian, Ethiopic, and Armenian (about 40 copies in Armenian).

Most scholars believe the story was written by Jewish authors in Egypt between 100 BC and AD 100. It likely comes from Hellenistic Judaism, a blend of Jewish and Greek culture common in Egypt at that time. In this story, Asenath serves as an example of someone who turns from idolatry to faith in the true God. Some believe she represents people who converted to Judaism. If this is true, the story shows that not all Jewish groups before Christ were focused on strict laws. It also emphasizes how people must recognize their sin and depend on God's mercy.

The original text of the story was probably in Greek. It has two main parts:

- Part one describes Asenath's privileged life before she met Joseph. Joseph at first refuses to marry her because she worships idols. Asenath repents in ashes. She prays to God, who sends an angel to tell her he forgives her, and her name is now in the Book of Life. Joseph returns and is amazed by Asenath's new beauty, and rejoices that she has converted. With Pharaoh's approval, they marry the next day.
- Part two describes when Joseph's father, Jacob, and his family arrived in Egypt. Pharaoh's older son desires Asenath. He therefore tries to convince Joseph's brothers, Dan and Gad, to help him kidnap her. Joseph's other brothers stop the plan and want to kill Dan and Gad. However, Asenath successfully pleads for their lives. Pharaoh gives his royal crown to Joseph. Pharaoh gives his royal crown to Joseph, who rules Egypt for 40 years. When Joseph finishes his rule, he returns leadership to Pharaoh's younger son, who becomes the new king.

*See also* Apocrypha; Asenath; Joseph.

## **Joseph Barsabbas**

*See Joseph #12.*

## **Joseph of Arimathea**

*See Joseph #8.*

## **Josephus, Flavius**

A Jewish military officer and historian. He lived from AD 37 to about AD 100.

Josephus was born into a wealthy priestly family in Jerusalem. His mother was related to the Hasmoneans, who were the ruling family of the Jewish people in earlier times. As a young person, Josephus had an excellent memory and learned

things easily. When he was a teenager, he joined a strict religious group. Later, he became a Pharisee (a member of an important Jewish religious group that strictly followed religious laws).

### *What Was Josephus's Role in the First Jewish Revolt?*

In AD 64, Josephus traveled to Rome as part of a group sent to free some Jewish priests who had been arrested. His visit to Rome, the capital city of the empire, had a lasting effect on him. When he returned to Jerusalem, a major rebellion against Rome began in AD 66. This was called the First Jewish Revolt.

The Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish governing council, put Josephus in charge of Galilee (a region in northern Israel). He organized the area well, but this caused problems with John of Gischala, who had led Galilee before him. The two men and their followers fought against each other until the Roman general Vespasian arrived in the spring of AD 67.

Josephus and his followers from Galilee took shelter in the city of Jotapata. The Roman army surrounded the city for six weeks. Eventually, they captured and destroyed it. Josephus and 40 of his soldiers managed to escape and hide in a cave. A friend spoke to the Romans on Josephus's behalf, and they promised not to kill him. Josephus then convinced his fellow soldiers to kill one another instead of being captured by the Romans. In the end, only Josephus and one other soldier were left alive. Then Josephus gave himself up to the Romans.

Josephus was brought to meet Vespasian, the Roman general. Josephus told Vespasian that he would become the next Roman emperor. Because of this prediction, Vespasian did not kill Josephus, but still kept him as a prisoner. In AD 69, Vespasian did become emperor, just as Josephus had said. Vespasian then set Josephus free. To show his loyalty to Vespasian, Josephus took Vespasian's family name, Flavius. In AD 70, Vespasian's son Titus led an army to attack Jerusalem. Josephus went with him. Several times, Josephus tried to convince the Jewish people to give up and surrender to the Romans, but they refused to listen.

After Titus's destruction of Jerusalem, Josephus went to Rome. Vespasian gave him Roman citizenship and a salary for his previous work. This allowed Josephus to spend his time writing books that are very important to historians today.

### *What Are Josephus's Most Important Writings?*

His first major book was called *The Jewish War*, which he wrote in AD 77–78. This book tells the story of the conflict between the Romans and Jews. It starts with the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (a Greek king who ruled over the Jews) and continues past the fall of Jerusalem.

Josephus's most important work was probably *Antiquities of the Jews*, which he wrote around AD 94. This was a set of 20 books that told the history of the Jewish people. It started with the creation story and ended with the war against Rome in AD 66. Josephus wrote it to help non-Jewish people better understand and respect the Jews.

He also wrote a book about his own life, called *Life*. In this book, he mainly defended his actions when he was in charge of Galilee.

His last book was called *Against Apion*. He wrote it to defend the Jewish people against those who hated them and spread lies about them (called "anti-Semites"). In this book, he used both careful reasoning and harsh criticism to make his points.

As a historian, Josephus sometimes changed information to please the people who supported him. However, he saw many of the events he wrote about with his own eyes. His books help us understand the time when the Christian church first began. They tell us about the religious beliefs, political situation, places, and important people of that time. Christians find his writings especially valuable because he wrote about John the Baptist, Jesus, and Jesus's brother James (who was also called James the Just because of his holy life).

### Joses

1. An alternate spelling for Joseph, Mary's son, in [Mark 6:3](#). See Joseph #7.
2. The King James Version spelling for Joseph. He was also called Barnabas in [Acts 4:36](#). See Barnabas.

### Joshah

Prince in Simeon's tribe ([1 Chr 4:34](#)).

### Joshaphat

1. Mithnite (nlt "from Mithna") and one of David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:43](#)).
2. One of the seven priests assigned to blow a trumpet before the ark of God in the procession led by David when the ark was brought to Jerusalem ([1 Chr 15:24](#)).

### Joshaviah

Elnaam's son, the brother of Jeribai and one of David's 30 valiant warriors ([1 Chr 11:46](#)).

### Joshbekashah

Heman's son and head of the 17th of 24 divisions of priestly musicians for ministry in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chr 25:4, 24](#)).

### Josheb-basshebeth

Alternate spelling of Jashobeam, commander of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:8](#)).

See Jashobeam #1.

### Joshibiah

Simeonite prince, Seraiah's son, and the father of Jehu ([1 Chr 4:35](#)).

**Joshua (Person)**

1. The son of Nun. He was Moses's assistant and successor. He was also a military leader. God chose him to lead the Israelite's conquest of Canaan ([Numbers 13:16](#), "Jehoshua" in the King James Version; also spelled "Jehoshuah" in [1 Chronicles 7:27](#) and "Jeshua" in [Nehemiah 8:17](#)). Early in the exodus (when the Israelites left Egypt), Joshua was sent by Moses to fight against the Amalekites ([Exodus 17:8–15](#)). Joshua defeated Amalek, and Moses wrote of the event and built an altar that he called "The LORD Is My Banner" ([Exodus 17:15](#)). Joshua was one of the 12 men Moses sent from Kadesh-barnea to look at Canaan. He represented the tribe of Ephraim ([Numbers 13:8](#)). At that time, Joshua was called Hoshea, but Moses changed his name to Joshua ([Numbers 13:8, 16](#)). Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies to bring back a positive report concerning an Israelite invasion of the land ([Joshua 14:6–9](#)). These two men were also the only adult Israelite males who left Egypt and later entered the promised land across the Jordan River ([Numbers 14:30](#)). The Lord told Moses he would soon die. Moses then asked about who would lead after him. The Lord chose Joshua to be the new leader ([Numbers 27:12–23](#)). After Moses died on Mount Nebo, Joshua's leadership was confirmed ([Numbers 34:17](#)). The Lord then told Joshua to cross the Jordan and take the land ([Joshua 1:1–2](#)). From the Transjordan, Joshua sent two men across the river to explore Jericho ([Joshua 2](#)). Rahab hid them in Jericho, and later, they returned safely to Joshua to inform him that the people of the land were fearful because of the Israelites ([Joshua 2:23–24](#)). After crossing the river, the Lord told Joshua to set up a circle of 12 stones

at Gilgal to mark the event ([Joshua 4:1–7](#)). The Lord then commanded all of the males who had been born during the exodus to be circumcised ([Joshua 5:2–9](#)).

While camped at Gilgal, near Jericho, Joshua encountered a man with a drawn sword. The man was the Lord. When Joshua challenged him, the Lord said to remove his shoes, for the ground was holy ([Joshua 5:13–15](#)).

The Lord gave Joshua directions for the destruction of Jericho. Joshua and the Israelites followed God's directions and the city fell ([Joshua 6](#)). The attack on Ai ended in temporary defeat until the matter of Achan's sin was discovered and judged ([Joshua 7:10–26](#)). Then Ai was taken and destroyed.

Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal ([Joshua 8:30–32](#)). The blessings and curses were read, as commanded by God through Moses ([Joshua 8:33–35](#); compare [Deuteronomy 27–28](#)).

Because the Israelites failed to ask for direction from the Lord, Joshua was tricked into making a covenant of peace with the Hivites of Gibeon ([Joshua 9:14](#)). Joshua then reduced them to doing trivial tasks in Israel ([Joshua 9:21–27](#)).

The kings of the various Canaanite cities allied themselves against the Israelite threat ([Joshua 9:1–2](#)). A league of five Amorite cities (Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon) attacked Gibeon ([Joshua 10:1–5](#)). The Gibeonites asked Joshua for help. He quickly routed the Amorite forces. It was on this occasion that Joshua commanded the sun and the moon to stand still so that Israel could have more time to defeat these adversaries ([Joshua 10:12–14](#)). This victory was followed by a series of successful attacks on enemy towns ([Joshua 10:28–43](#)).

Next, Joshua faced a group of enemies from the north. This group was led by

Jabin, the king of Hazor ([Joshua 11:1–5](#)). The Lord told Joshua he would succeed, and the city of Hazor was taken and destroyed by fire ([Joshua 11:6–15](#)). [Joshua 11:23](#) summarizes the land's conquest. [Chapter 12](#) lists the kings who were conquered.

Joshua was now old, and the Lord told him that there was still much land to take. These territories are listed, but the Lord told Joshua to divide the land among the nine and a half tribes ([Joshua 13:7](#); compare [Joshua 13:8–18:28](#)). Joshua himself was given the city he asked for, Timnath-serah, in the hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt that city and settled there ([Joshua 19:49–50](#)).

The Lord told Joshua to choose cities of refuge. A person guilty of manslaughter (killing someone accidentally) could flee there to escape the avenger of blood ([Joshua 20](#)). Then the Levites came to Eleazar, the priest, and Joshua. They requested their cities, as the Lord had commanded through Moses ([Joshua 21:1–42](#)).

When he was old, Joshua summoned all of Israel. He charged them to be faithful to the Lord ([Joshua 23](#)).

Finally, he called all of Israel to Shechem, where he gave them his farewell message. He summed up the Lord's dealings with them since Abraham. Then, he challenged them to serve the Lord. He put before them the well-known choice: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!" ([Joshua 24:15](#)).

Joshua died at the age of 110 years and was buried in the land of his inheritance at Timnath-serah ([Joshua 24:29–30](#); another account in [Judges 2:8–9](#) reads "Timnath-heres"). Israel served the Lord during all the days of Joshua and the elders who outlived him ([Joshua 24:31](#); [Judges 2:7](#)).

*See also* Conquest and Allotment of

the Land; Israel, History of; Joshua, Book of.

2. An inhabitant of Beth-shemesh. The Philistines sent the cart carrying the ark into his grainfield. It stopped by a large stone, which was used to mark the event ([1 Samuel 6:14, 18](#)).
3. The governor of Jerusalem during King Josiah's reign ([2 Kings 23:8](#)).
4. Jozadak's son and high priest during the days of Zerubbabel in Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon ([Haggai 1:1–14; 2:2–4](#); [Zechariah 3:1–9; 6:11](#); "Jeshua" in the New Living Translation). Joshua is also called Jeshua in Ezra and Nehemiah.  
*See* Jeshua (Person) #3.
5. Eliezer's son and an ancestor of Jesus Christ ([Luke 3:29](#)).  
*See* Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

## **Joshua, Book of**

First of the historical books in the English Bible and the first of the Former Prophets (including Judges, the books of Samuel, and the books of Kings) in the Hebrew Bible. It begins with the Lord's commission of Joshua ([Jos 1:1–9](#)) and concludes with the burial of Joshua, Eleazar, and the bones of Joseph ([24:29–33](#)). The purpose of the book is to show how Joshua continued in the footsteps of Moses, how the Lord gave the land to Israel, and how Israel might prosper in the land.

Preview

- Author and Date
- Problems of Interpretation
- Purpose
- Content

### *Author and Date*

According to the Talmud, Joshua wrote the book. This ancient tradition is possibly based on the brief statement that Joshua "recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God" ([24:26](#), nlt). However, this applies only to the renewal of the covenant (ch [24](#)). The issue of authorship is tied up with the dating of the book. Since the book has no unambiguous

markers on date and authorship, neither critics nor conservative scholars have been able to come to any agreement on these issues. According to a conservative analysis of Joshua, the book was written between 1375 BC and 1045 BC (premonarchic). The argument is based on the references to the migration of Dan ([19:47](#); cf. [Jgs 18:27–31](#)), to Jerusalem as a Jebusite city ([Jos 15:8, 63; 18:16, 28](#)), to Sidon rather than Tyre as the prominent Phoenician city ([11:8; 13:4–6; 19:28](#)), and also on the eyewitness style ([5:1, 6](#)—in the MT). But critical scholars have raised issues that they considered could best be resolved by positing a seventh-century BC or even an exilic date.

### *Problems of Interpretation*

#### **Holy War**

The morality of the Conquest may be explained by the concept of holy war. The holy war motif would explain why Israel was to destroy the indigenous population ([Dt 7:16; 20:16–18](#); [Jos 6:21; 8:24–26; 10:10, 28–30, 35–42; 11:11](#)). The justification may lie in the concept that Israel was God's instrument of judgment on the Canaanite nations. This argument is related to the mention of the wickedness of the Canaanites ([Gn 15:16; Dt 7:2–5, 25–26; 12:30–31](#); [Jos 23:7; Jgs 2:11](#)). However, the canonical narrative of the progression of the Conquest puts the responsibility on the Canaanites. They marched and fought against Israel ([Nm 21:21–35](#); [Jos 7:4–5; 8:5, 16–17; 9:1–2; 10:1–6; 11:1–5; 24:11](#)). Therefore, it could be argued that in the process of war a sincere invitation to make peace was given to the kings (cf. [Nm 21:21–22](#); [Dt 20:10–11](#)) but was refused. Instead, the kings took the initiative in battle. The responsibility for the destruction of the native population thus lay with the leadership. Yet all this was evidence of God's working in human affairs, which the Bible simply states, "For it was the Lord himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the Lord had commanded Moses" ([Jos 11:20](#), niv). Even as Pharaoh, whose heart the Lord hardened, was responsible for the plagues in Egypt, so the Canaanite rulers were responsible for the extermination of their populations. The biblical account of the Conquest affirms the mystery of human responsibility and divine sovereignty without explaining it.

## Nature of the Conquest

Various explanations of the nature of the Conquest have been given. The traditional view of a blitzkrieg type of conquest, which resulted in a complete occupation of the whole land (cf. [Jos 10:40; 11:1-3, 16-19](#)), does not fit within the whole picture of the book. The book presents a realistic description of the areas that still had to be conquered ([13:1-7](#)) and of the military strength of the indigenous population (cf. [13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-18; 19:47](#)). Moreover, Joshua promised that the Lord would continue to help Israel to occupy the land, as its population and needs developed ([23:5](#)). The occupation of Canaan was in two stages: conquest and gradual occupation (cf. [Ex 23:29-30; Dt 7:22](#)).

### Purpose

The role of the final (canonical) form of the book is to present Joshua's obedience to the law of Moses. Victory and defeat are illustrations of obedience and disobedience. Of course, there is tension in this because the descriptions of the Conquest are complete and yet incomplete. The tension is a dynamic device to show that the Conquest and enjoyment of the land depend wholly on obedience. The period of Joshua is viewed as a paradigm of obedient Israel. Thus, a holistic reading of the book presents an appeal to covenant loyalty directed to future generations.

### Content

#### Conquest of the Land, [1:1-12:24](#)

##### The Lord's Commission of Joshua, [1:1-9](#)

With the death of Moses ([Jos 1:1](#)), the Lord himself confirms Moses' ordination of Joshua ([Dt 34:9](#)). He charges him with leadership in the conquest of Canaan ([Jos 1:2-3](#)), defines the geographical boundaries of the land (v [4](#)), encourages him with his continued presence (vv [5, 9](#)), and expects him to devoutly follow in "the law of Moses" (i.e., the law given in Dt; cf. [Dt 31:9, 24-26; Jos 23:6](#)), so that he may succeed in his mission ([1:7-8](#)). The original mission, as well as the ministry of Moses, find their continuity in Joshua.

##### Crossing the Jordan, [1:10-5:12](#)

The first stage calls for the preparation of Israel. As their leader, Joshua must demonstrate to the people that he follows in the footsteps of Moses. He does this by reminding the Transjordan tribes to demonstrate loyalty to the command of Moses by joining with the other tribes in the conquest of

Canaan ([1:13-15](#); cf. [Nm 32:20-27](#)). They submitted to Joshua's authority as to Moses' ([Jos 1:16-18](#)). He demonstrates his military leadership in sending the two spies to Jericho (ch [2](#)). His authority is accepted by priests ([3:6; 4:10](#)) and people ([3:5-9](#)) as they cross the Jordan. The crossing of the Jordan marks the public recognition of Joshua as a leader like Moses ([4:14](#)).

The account of the crossing marks an important transition from the era of the exodus/wilderness to the era of the Conquest. On the one hand, the story of Rahab illustrates how the Canaanites had heard about the Lord's mighty acts ([2:10-11](#)) and reacted with great fear (cf. [Ex 15:15; 23:27-28; Dt 2:25; 7:23; 11:25; 32:30](#)). Rahab's expression of faith in Israel's God ([2:11](#)) anticipates the inclusion of the Gentiles in the covenant community as promised to the patriarchs ([Gn 12:3](#)). By faith Rahab was included in the covenant and was richly rewarded by the inclusion of her name in the lineage of Jesus ([Mt 1:5](#)).

The Israelites crossed the Jordan with the knowledge that the fear of God had come on the Canaanites ([Jos 2:24](#)). However, they were also instructed to show their reverence for the Lord by keeping a safe distance between themselves and the ark of the covenant ([3:4](#)) and by consecrating themselves (v [5](#)). The "living God" was among them and required holiness and reverence from his people (v [10](#)). He, in turn, would demonstrate his loyalty in the marvelous passage through the Jordan River (v [13](#)) and in the conquest of the land ([3:10](#)). After the tribes had crossed the river ([4:1](#)), each leader of the 12 tribes took up a stone out of the dried-up riverbed and set up a memorial at Gilgal (vv [1-9, 20](#)). Thus, Israel was to remember that the stones, taken from the place where the priests who carried the ark had stood, were reminders of the majestic presence of God. Future generations who were to hear this report (vv [21-24](#)) were hereby encouraged because the fear of God would fall on all the peoples of the land (v [24](#)).

The consecration before the conquest of Jericho is also symbolized by the act of circumcision ([5:1-9](#)) and by the celebration of the Passover (vv [10-12](#)). The events are not necessarily chronologically related but were selected as examples of Israel's responsiveness to Joshua's ministry. Moses' appeal to the new generation had its effect (cf. [Dt 4:4-14; 6:1-5](#)). The new generation served the Lord as long as Joshua and the elders were alive ([Jos 24:31](#)). Physical circumcision, neglected during the wilderness journey ([5:5](#)) due to unbelief, was a sign

of spiritual responsiveness. The responsive nation received the external sign of the covenant with the anticipation that the Lord of the covenant would bless his people in giving them victory and the fruit of the land. Their reproach was rolled away (v 9). The covenant continuity is also brought out in the brief mention of the Passover celebration. The newness is their eating the fruit of the land. With the taste of the food of Canaan, the manna stopped. The desert experience was over. A new era was ushered in with their presence in the Promised Land (vv 11-12).

#### Conquest of Jericho, [5:13-6:27](#)

The victory is the Lord's. This is the message with which the battle of Jericho begins. The holy God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush ([Ex 3:2-4:17](#)) appeared to Joshua as the commander of the Lord's army ([Jos 5:14-15](#)) with a message from the Lord ([6:2](#)). The city of Jericho will fall without a siege and ensuing battle. Israel's response to Jericho's preparedness for war (cf. [24:11](#)) was strange, but the presence of the ark and the blowing of the trumpets symbolized that the Lord would fight for Israel, even as he had promised. However, Israel could not take any of the spoil. Because Yahweh fought for Israel, everything was to be devoted to him ([6:17](#)). The Lord honored the vow to Rahab, made by the spies, so that she and her family were kept alive (vv [17, 25](#)), but they were temporarily placed outside the camp (v [23](#)). The valuable metals were placed into the treasury (vv [19, 24](#)), whereas everything else was burned by fire (v [24](#)). Nothing was to be taken for personal gain; otherwise God's judgment would rest on Israel (v [18](#)). In order to emphasize God's absolute ownership of Jericho, Joshua put a curse on anyone who would attempt to rebuild the city ([6:26](#); cf. [1 Kgs 16:34](#)). The rumors of Jericho's destruction spread, and the peoples of Canaan knew that the Lord was with Joshua ([Jos 6:27](#); cf. [1:5, 9](#)).

#### Tragedy and Triumph at Ai, [7:1-8:29](#)

Victory was short-lived because Achan defied God's "ban," took some of the objects, hid them in the ground under his tent ([7:21](#)), and brought God's wrath on all of Israel (v [1](#)). Israel was stunned by their defeat at Ai (vv [2-5](#)). Joshua and the elders responded to the disaster by fasting and lamenting (vv [6-9](#)). What a contrast between the reports of victory spread through the land and the anguished cry of God's servant, fearful that the Canaanites would amass strength and wipe out Israel (v [9](#)). Only after the people had consecrated themselves (v [13](#)) and Achan was exposed and his memory

removed (vv [25b-26](#)) could they renew the attack on Ai with the encouraging promise of God's presence and victory ([8:1-2](#)). Ai, too, was taken (vv [3-19](#)) and the population execrated (vv [20-26](#)), but Israel enjoyed the spoils by direct permission from the Lord (v [27](#)). The ruins of Ai, the pile of stones covering the body of Ai's king (vv [28-29](#)), and the heap of rocks over Achan's body were sobering reminders to Israel that God's faithfulness requires absolute loyalty from his people.

#### Renewal of the Covenant, [8:30-35](#)

Joshua led Israel in a ceremonial covenant renewal at Shechem, as Moses had instructed ([Jos 8:31](#); cf. [Dt 11:29; 27](#)). Joshua took care in the proper preparation of the altar (cf. [Ex 20:25](#)) on which dedicatory and communal offerings were presented. He copied the law as a symbol of his royal leadership and his devotion to the Lord ([Jos 8:32](#); cf. [Dt 17:18](#)). All Israel (officers and people, aliens and native-born Israelites) together presented themselves for the reading of the blessings and the curses ([Jos 8:33-35](#)). The whole book of Deuteronomy (i.e., "the Book of the Law," cf. [Dt 31:26](#)) was read in their presence. Half the tribes stood on Mt Gerizim and said "Amen" to the blessings, and the other six stood on Mt Ebal, saying "Amen" to the curses (cf. [Dt 27:9-26](#)).

#### Covenant with the Gibeonites, [9:1-27](#)

The rumors of God's mighty acts had brought fear on the Canaanite kings (cf. [Jos 2:8-11, 24; 5:1; 6:27](#)). The first defeat at Ai had given them a ray of hope that Israel could be put down. Rather than submit themselves to Israel and suffer from humiliation as servants of Israel, they joined forces against Joshua and Israel ([9:1-2](#)).

The Hivites from Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriat-jearim ([9:7, 17](#)) did not join with their fellow Canaanites. Instead, they developed an intricate plan to deceive Israel and to sue for full treaty status. The purpose of the treaty was that of friendship (namely, "peace"), promising each other to be of mutual assistance in case of attack. The concern was with the preservation of life (vv [15, 24](#)). Their deception included a ruse about the great distance they had traveled (vv [11-14](#)) and a false report of Israel's victories in Transjordan with no mention of their crossing the Jordan ([9:9-10](#); cf. [5:1](#)). The law permitted the submissive city to subject its population to a type of suzerainty treaty, in which Israel defined the terms and expected the subjugated populace to serve as its forced laborers ([Dt 20:11](#); cf. [Jgs 1:28-35; 1 Kgs 9:15-21](#)).

However, the treaty permitted the Hivites to maintain their way of life with the advantage of Israel's military protection.

### The Southern Campaign, [10:1–43](#)

The king of Jerusalem, Adoni-zedek, led the cities of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon in an alliance against Gibeon as a military ploy to take a stand against Israel ([Jos 10:1–5](#)). The Gibeonites appealed to Israel for help based on their covenantal relationship (v [6](#)). Joshua led Israel on a 25-mile (40-kilometer) hike through the wilderness from Gilgal up to Gibeon during one night (vv [7–9](#)). The Israelite attack surprised the Canaanites, who were already frightened of the Israelites. The camp of the Canaanites was thrown into confusion, and the soldiers fled the hill country via the road of Beth-horon to Azekah and Makkedah (v [10](#)). But while running, they were tormented with large hailstones (v [11](#)). The victory was the Lord's. Miraculously, Israel could push the Canaanites farther from the hill country because of the long day (vv [12–14](#)). The marvel of this day was long remembered in the Book of Jashar (cf. [2 Sm 1:18](#)), because on it the Lord listened to a man, namely Joshua ([Jos 10:14](#)).

The five kings hidden in a cave at Makkedah were discovered, killed, hanged on trees, and buried in the cave ([10:16–27](#)). Their foolish attempt to make war on Israel came to a quick end. Since the coalition of large cities had been put down, Joshua led Israel in a rapid campaign of the other southern cities (vv [29–43](#)). The region was taken in one campaign with the Lord's help (v [42](#)).

### The Northern Campaign, [11:1–15](#)

The Israelites were again forced into battle, this time by the leadership of Jabin, king of Hazor. Jabin rallied the kings of the northern cities who assembled their troops and horses by the waters of Merom for battle against Israel ([11:1–5](#)). The similarity to the southern campaign is a literary way to demonstrate that the kings of the south and north initiated the war and were consequently defeated. So it was with the northern kings, who were routed as far as the region of Sidon in Phoenicia (v [8](#)). Their horses were hamstrung and their chariots burned (v [9](#)), as the Lord had instructed (v [6](#)). Israel was to depend on the Lord (cf. [Ps 20:7](#)). Hazor, the great and ancient city, the center of Canaanite power in the north, was completely destroyed ([Jos 11:10–13](#)). The burning of Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were exceptions, because Israel had been promised Canaanite houses, wells,

and cities ([Dt 6:10–11](#); cf. [Jos 24:13](#)). The campaign narrative stresses again the absolute loyalty of Joshua to the Lord and to Moses, the servant of the Lord ([Jos 11:9–15](#)).

### Summary of the Campaigns, [11:16–12:24](#)

Joshua led Israel in victory and rest because of his careful adherence to the Lord's directions to Moses. Moses had described the land to be conquered in detail ([Dt 1:7](#)), and Joshua took the regions of which Moses had spoken. Though the cities could have sued for a peaceable arrangement under which they would have been forced laborers ([Dt 20:11](#)), none of the cities recognized Israel. In fear they plotted and schemed how to destroy Israel. They were the aggressors. God had hardened their hearts ([Jos 11:20](#)). The theological reason is a mystery, as it was in the case of Pharaoh. But the net result was that Canaan was conquered and the population exterminated, except for the Hivites at Gibeon and their surrounding cities (vv [19–20](#)). Even the Anakites, who had brought fear on Israel some 40 years before ([Nm 13:33](#); cf. [Dt 2:10, 21](#)), were execrated ([Jos 11:21](#)). Yet it is already apparent that not every square mile of land was taken (v [22](#)), even though in a sense the entire land was Israel's, because major centers of Canaanite resistance had been broken. The tension between fulfillment and complete fulfillment is apparent in these verses.

The listing of defeated kings (ch [12](#)) includes the victories over Sihon and Og under Moses' leadership. Their juxtaposition with the list of kings conquered under Joshua demonstrates the continuity of leadership and purpose—two leaders, many campaigns, but one battle. The Land of Promise is now a fulfillment. Through the campaigns the borders of the land of inheritance were now more apparent. In Transjordan the limits are from the Arnon to Mt Hermon (vv [2–5](#)). In Canaan the boundary extends from the region south of Sidon to the Negev (vv [7–8](#)).

### The Division of the Land, [13:1–22:34](#)

#### The Command to Divide the Land, [13:1–7](#)

Because of Joshua's advanced age, the "whole" land was not taken. Moses had forewarned Israel that the inheritance would result from conquest as well as from gradual extension of Israel's narrow boundaries. Slowly Israel was to inherit the whole land, lest it be overwhelmed by the size and be unable to use it properly ([Ex 23:29–30](#); [Dt 7:22](#)). The areas still to be occupied were: the region to

the north of Galilee, Mt Hermon (east of the Sea of Galilee), the area occupied by the Philistines, and regional Canaanite enclaves ([Jos 13:2-7](#); cf. [Jgs 1](#)). Israel was not to be concerned with the future rights of occupation, because the Lord promised to help them ([Jos 13:6](#)).

#### Division of Transjordan, [13:8-33](#)

Joshua did not alter the Mosaic arrangement concerning the allotments to the tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad ([Jos 13:8, 32-33](#); cf. [Nm 32](#); [Dt 3:12-17](#)). Their territory also excluded certain regions still occupied by Canaanites ([Jos 13:13](#)). The clans of Reuben had received the territory from the Arnon River north to Heshbon (vv [15-23](#)). The clans of Gad had received the territory of Gilead, south of the Jabbok River to Heshbon (vv [24-28](#)). Several clans of Manasseh received the region south of the Wadi Yarmuk to the Jabbok (vv [29-31](#)). The Levitical towns are not listed here, but a reference is made to them as not receiving a patrimony, because they were to live off the offerings and sacrifices made to the Lord ([Jos 13:14](#); cf. [Nm 18:20-24; 35:1-8](#)).

#### The Tribal Divisions in Canaan, [14:1-19:51](#)

Eleazar, the high priest, and Joshua together cast lots to determine the boundaries, size, and allocation for the remaining nine and a half tribes. Again the exclusion of the tribe of Levi is mentioned ([Jos 14:4](#)), because their cities will be dealt with in chapters [20-21](#). Another literary device is special mention of the inheritance of Caleb in the beginning ([14:6-15](#)) and of Joshua at the conclusion ([19:49-50](#)). These two were the only ones who had left Egypt as adults, had been faithful spies, and had entered into the Promised Land ([Nm 14:24, 30](#); [Dt 1:36-38](#)).

#### Judah, [15:1-63](#) (cf. [Jgs 1:10-15, 20](#))

The boundaries of Judah extended from the Dead Sea westward to the Mediterranean ([Jos 15:2-12](#)). The cities of Judah are listed in its four regions: 29 in the Negev (vv [21-32](#)), 42 cities in the Shephelah (or western foothills) and coastal plains (vv [33-47](#)), 38 cities in the hill country ([15:48-60](#)), and 6 cities in the desert (vv [61-62](#)). Judah was unable to take Jerusalem (v [63](#)) until David made it his capital (cf. [Jgs 1:21](#); [2 Sm 5:6-16](#)).

#### Ephraim and Manasseh, [16:1-17:18](#)

These two tribes, descended from Joseph, were richly blessed (cf. [Gn 48; 49:22-26](#); [Dt 33:13-17](#)) and had obtained prominence among the tribes. They received one allotment as “the allotment for

Joseph” ([Jos 16:1](#)). Part of Manasseh had already received a patrimony east of the Jordan ([13:29-31](#)). The limits for Ephraim and the west half of Manasseh were from Bethel to Mt Gilboa in the north and from the Jordan to the Mediterranean ([16:1-3](#)). Ephraim received the smaller portion in the south (vv [5-9](#)) but was unable to drive the Canaanites out of Gezer. The clans of Manasseh are given, including Zelophehad ([17:3-6](#); cf. [Nm 27:1-11](#); [36:1-12](#)), in order to clearly distinguish them from the clans of Manasseh in Transjordan. The region of west Manasseh extended from Shechem to Mt Gilboa ([Jos 17:7-11](#)); but Manasseh, also, was incapable of driving out the Canaanites completely (vv [12-13](#)).

Though they had received the largest portion of the land (more than a third), the tribes of Joseph complained. They knew that the Lord had blessed them ([17:14](#)), and they expected to get more cultivable land. But Joshua urged them to use the available land by cutting down the forests (vv [15-18](#)). When they expressed realistic concern about Canaanite military power, Joshua called on them to do their share in occupying the land.

#### Seven Tribes, [18:1-19:51](#)

The Israelites assembled at Shiloh to set up the tabernacle (cf. [1 Sm 1](#)). At that point seven tribes had not yet received their patrimony. Joshua called for each tribe to commission three men to survey the land. When they returned, Joshua cast lots at the tabernacle in Shiloh and divided the land ([Jos 18:3-10](#)). The territory of Benjamin was between Judah and Ephraim (vv [11-28](#)). Simeon’s allotment was in southern Judah ([19:1-9](#)), resulting in its absorption into Judah (cf. [Gn 49:7](#)). Zebulun ([Jos 19:10-16](#)), Issachar (vv [17-23](#)), Asher (vv [24-31](#)), and Naphtali (vv [32-39](#)) received a portion north of Manasseh in the region of Galilee. Dan received the seventh lot and suffered subsequently, when it could not maintain the allotted territory because of the pressure of Judah on the east and the Philistines to the west (vv [40-48](#)). They migrated northward and found the sources of the Jordan to be a fruitful region ([Jos 19:47](#); cf. [Jgs 18](#)).

#### Conclusion, [19:49-51](#)

The conclusion is symmetric with the beginning ([Jos 14:1-14](#)) in that Joshua also received a gift. Again, mention is made that all divisions were in the presence of the Lord, witnessed to and executed by the high priest Eleazar and Joshua ([19:51](#); cf. [14:1](#)).

#### Cities of Refuge and the Levitical Cities, [20:1-21:45](#)

According to the instructions of Moses, six Levitical cities were set apart, three on each side of the Jordan, as cities of refuge ([Nm 35:9-34](#); [Dt 4:41-43; 19:1-10](#)). The purpose was to provide “refuge” (asylum) for those who were guilty of manslaughter but had not intentionally killed someone. This practice was not to provide a way out for someone who was guilty, but to allow for the legal process to be completed ([Jos 20](#)).

The Levites received by clan a total of 48 cities, six of which also served as cities of refuge ([21:1-42](#)). The Levites could not cultivate the soil because they were dependent on the tithes of the people ([Nm 18:21-24](#)), but they were permitted to have land for grazing. The dimensions of the land are given in [Numbers 35:4-5](#). A special allocation is made to the descendants of Aaron ([Jos 21:9-19](#)), because they served as priests and their 13 cities were in the Judah-Simeon region, in proximity to the Jerusalem temple of the Solomonic era.

With the allocation of the Levitical cities, the division of the land is concluded. The promise of the land is fulfilled ([21:43-45](#)). God is faithful! This section emphasizes the fulfillment, the power, and the grace of God, by which Israel entered into its rest. However, the book of Joshua also hints of the struggle that is still ahead of the Israelites and of the test that ultimately they will fail (cf. [Ps 95:11](#); [Heb 3:7-11](#)).

#### Return of the Transjordan Tribes, [22:1-34](#)

Joshua dismissed the two and a half tribes with a commendation for their loyalty to the other tribes and to the Lord ([Jos 22:1-4](#)), with a warning not to succumb to idolatry but to love the Lord in accordance with the Deuteronomic law, and with a blessing (vv [5-8](#)). However, as they returned they set up a large altar by the Jordan on the western side. The other tribes heard about it and met at Shiloh (v [12](#)). They wisely commissioned Phinehas, the son of the high priest, with ten representatives of the tribes, to investigate the matter. The commission charged the Transjordan tribes with treachery ([Jos 22:15-20](#); cf. [Nm 25](#); [Jos 7](#)).

The response of the Transjordan tribes demonstrated their concern for the unity of the tribes and for the worship of God. These tribes feared being excluded from the fellowship of God’s people and had purposefully constructed an altar, identical to that prescribed in the law, in order to demonstrate their common heritage ([Jos 22:21-30](#)). The altar was not for sacrifice or worship but

functioned as a symbol of the covenantal unity of the people of God.

Phinehas and the tribal representatives were pleased with the response and left with the assurance of God’s presence ([22:30-31](#)). Their report to the tribes led to reconciliation of all the tribes on this matter. The narrative concludes with a mention of the name given to the altar: “A witness between us and them that the Lord is our God, too” (v [34](#), nlt).

#### Epilogue: The Land Is a Sacred Trust, [23:1-24:33](#)

The last two chapters contain Joshua’s farewell speeches to all the leaders and to all Israel.

#### Address to the Leaders, [23:1-16](#)

Joshua reviews what the Lord has done for Israel in giving the land to the tribes. He has demonstrated his loyalty. And he will continue to be with his people so that no enemy can stand against them. He will fulfill every outstanding promise, even as he had already fulfilled promises. However, they must persevere in their loyalty to the Lord. Loyalty to the Lord is not apart from loyalty to the law of Moses. Apostasy will be severely punished, first by leaving the nations to ensnare Israel, and then by consuming them in his wrath.

#### Address to Israel, [24:1-28](#)

The address ends with a covenant renewal at Shechem ([Jos 24:1, 25-28](#); cf. [8:30-35](#)). In the ancient Near East it was common when making a treaty (covenant) to give a brief historical summary of the relationship of the parties involved. Joshua reviewed Israel’s history from the patriarchs to their generation: patriarchs ([24:2-4](#)), exodus (vv [5-7](#)), and conquest (vv [8-13](#)).

The goodness, presence, and loyalty of Yahweh was evident to them. Yahweh also expected “faithfulness” from his people in the form of whole allegiance, without any form of idolatry ([Jos 24:14-15](#)). As the head of his family, Joshua vowed to be loyal (v [15](#)). The people responded by giving reasons for being loyal to the Lord (vv [16-18](#)). But Joshua pushed them to a deeper commitment by challenging their profession (vv [19-20](#)), then recording their vow and setting up a stone of witness against them (vv [25-27](#)).

#### End of an Era, [24:29-33](#)

The book began with a reference to the death of Moses ([1:1-2](#)) and concludes with the death and

burial of Joshua ([24:29–30](#)) and of Eleazar the high priest (v [33](#)). This marks the end of an era. The burial of Joseph's bones ([Jos 24:32](#); cf. [Gn 50:25](#); [Ex 13:19](#)) in a plot purchased by Jacob ([Gn 33:19](#)) brings together the hope characteristic of the epoch of Moses and Joshua.

*See also* Cities of Refuge; Conquest and Allotment of the Land; Israel, History of; Joshua (Person) #1; Levitical Cities.

## Josiah

1. Sixteenth king of the southern kingdom of Judah (640–609 BC). A godly man, he stood in marked contrast to his grandfather Manasseh and his father, Amon. In fact, Scripture declares there was no king either before or after him who was as obedient to the law of Moses ([2 Kgs 23:25](#)). The Greek form of his name, Josias, appears in [Matthew 1:10–11](#) (kjv). The Greek form of his name, Josias, appears in [Matthew 1:10–11](#) (kjv).

### The Era of Josiah

When Josiah became king in 640 BC, the international scene was about to change drastically. After the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal died in 633 BC, mediocre rulers followed him on the throne, and there was considerable unrest in the empire. Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, seized the kingship in Babylon and established the Neo-Babylonian Empire late in 626 BC. Soon Babylonians and Medes combined forces to topple the Assyrian Empire, and in 612 BC completely destroyed the city of Nineveh. As Babylonian power rose in the east, Assyrian control over the province that had once been the kingdom of Israel relaxed and Assyrian pressure on Judah virtually ceased. After the fall of Nineveh, the Assyrians established their capital at Haran. There they were defeated by Babylonians and Scythians in 610 BC. At that point Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt decided to support Assyria. In the late spring of 609 BC he advanced through Judah, defeated and killed Josiah, and spent the summer campaigning in Syria. At this time, the international political landscape was undergoing significant changes. After the death of the powerful Assyrian king Ashurbanipal in 633 BC, weaker rulers took his place and the empire was in a state of unrest. The Neo-Babylonian Empire was established in 626 BC by Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians and Medes joined forces to overthrow

the Assyrian Empire, ultimately destroying the city of Nineveh in 612 BC. As the Babylonian Empire grew in power, Assyrian control over the former kingdom of Israel weakened and their pressure on Judah diminished. After the fall of Nineveh, the Assyrians relocated their capital to Haran, where they were later defeated by the Babylonians and Scythians in 610 BC. It was at this point that Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt decided to support Assyria, leading to his defeat of Josiah in 609 BC and subsequent campaign in Syria.

Before Josiah's reign, Judah had given in to gross idolatry during the reign of Manasseh (697–642 BC). Baalism, Molech worship, and other pagan religions had spread throughout the land, as well as occultism and astrology. A false altar even stood in the temple in Jerusalem, and human sacrifice to pagan deities was practiced near Jerusalem. The nation was completely corrupt. Although some reform occurred in Manasseh's later years, conditions returned to their previous depravity during the reign of his son Amon (642–640 BC). In 640 BC officials of Amon's household assassinated him, and the “people of the land” put Josiah on the throne ([2 Kgs 21:26](#); [22:1](#); [2 Chr 33:25–34:1](#)).

### Josiah's Activities of Reform

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king. Evidently he had spiritually motivated advisers or regents; by the time he was 16, he began of his own accord “to seek the God of his ancestor David” ([2 Chr 34:3](#)). When he was 20, he became greatly exercised over the idolatry of the land and launched a major effort to eradicate the pagan high places, groves, and images from Judah and Jerusalem. So intense was Josiah's hatred of idolatry that he even opened the tombs of pagan priests and burned their bones on pagan altars before the altars were destroyed. Josiah was only eight years old when he became king. It is believed that he had advisors or regents who were motivated by their faith. By the time he was 16, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David on his own. When he was 20, he became very concerned about the idolatry in the land and made a major effort to remove the pagan high places, groves, and images from Judah and Jerusalem. Josiah had such a strong dislike for idolatry that he even opened the tombs of pagan priests and burned their bones on pagan altars before destroying the altars.

Josiah carried out his reform movement beyond the borders of Judah, expressing his anger particularly towards the cult center at Bethel, where Jeroboam had established his false worship.

In fulfillment of prophecy ([1 Kgs 13:1-3](#)), he destroyed the altar and high place and burned the bones of the officiating priests to defile the site ([2 Kgs 23:15-18](#)). What he did at Bethel, he did throughout the kingdom of Samaria (vv [19-20](#)).

When Josiah was 26, he launched a project to cleanse and repair the temple in Jerusalem ([2 Kgs 22:3](#)). Shaphan, the king's administrative assistant, commissioned the work; Hilkiah the priest supervised the renovation and construction. In the process of restoring the temple, Hilkiah found the Book of the Law, the nature and contents of which are otherwise unknown. Possibly in the dark days of Manasseh a deliberate attempt had been made to destroy the Word of God. At any rate, there was little knowledge of Scripture in Judah.

When Shaphan read the Book of the Law to Josiah, the king was deeply troubled by the warnings of punishment for turning away from God. He sent a delegation to Huldah the prophetess to inquire about the consequences for the land. The prophetess responded that God's condemnation would indeed come upon Judah for their wrongdoing, but she also assured Josiah that because his heart was devoted to God, the punishment would not occur during his lifetime.

The ruler summoned a large group of representatives for a public reading of the law—specifically sections that focused on responsibilities to God. The ruler and the people made an agreement before God to follow his commandments.

Faced with the importance of maintaining a pure monotheistic faith, the king was spurred on to even more rigorous efforts to cleanse the temple and Jerusalem. He destroyed the vessels used in Baal worship, the monument of horses given by the kings of Judah for sun worship, the chariots dedicated to the sun, the homosexual community near the temple, and shrines built by Solomon and in use since his day. Moreover, he made stringent efforts to eliminate the pagan shrines and high places in all the towns of Judah ([2 Kgs 23:4-14](#)).

### The Passing of Josiah

The exact reason why Josiah opposed Pharaoh Neco's advance through Judean territory is unknown. He may have wanted to prevent aid from reaching the hated Assyrians or to maintain his own independence. Josiah was mortally wounded in the conflict and was greatly lamented by Jeremiah and all the people ([2 Chr 35:25](#)). Well they might weep, for their godly king was gone, and

within a few years the judgment withheld during his lifetime would descend on the nation.

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Israel, History of.

2. Son of Zephaniah, who returned to Jerusalem with other Jews after the captivity ([Zec 6:10, 14](#); Hebrew "Hen").

## Josias

The King James Version spelling of Josiah, Jehoiachin's father, in [Matthew 1:10-11](#).

*See* Josiah #1.

## Josibiah

KJV spelling of Josibiah, Jehu's father, in [1 Chronicles 4:35](#). *See* Josibiah.

## Josiphiah

Father of Shelomith, leader of a family of which 160 members accompanied Ezra back to Palestine ([Ezr 8:10](#)).

## Jot or Tittle

An expression Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount.

In [Matthew 5:18](#) *jot* is a transliteration of the Greek letter iota. Originally, "jot" referred to the Hebrew letter *yod*, the smallest letter. *Tittle* comes from Middle English. It refers to the dot over abbreviated words. The King James Version translators used it for a Greek word meaning "little horn." Jews used the word to refer to the small markings that differentiate certain Hebrew letters. Jesus used both terms to stress the law's importance. He said not one jot or tittle would vanish from the law until all was fulfilled.

## Jotbah

Hometown of Haruz, the father of Meshullemeth, who was the mother of King Amon of Judah ([2 Kgs 21:19](#)). Its location is uncertain; however, some identify it with the town later named Jotapata by

the Romans, situated six miles (9.7 kilometers) north of Sepphoris (modern Khirbet Jefat).

## Jotbathah

Temporary camping place of the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings, located between Hor-haggidgad and Abronah ([Nm 33:33-34](#)). Later, following the death of Aaron, Israel journeyed from Gudgodah to this place, noted for its streams of water ([Dt 10:7](#)).

*See also* Wilderness Wanderings.

## Jotham

1. The youngest of Gideon's 70 sons and the only survivor of Abimelech's murder of Jotham's brothers at Ophrah ([Judges 9:5](#)). Upon learning of Abimelech's plan with the Shechemites, Jotham traveled to Shechem. This led to the death of his brothers. He addressed the people from on top of the nearby Mount Gerizim. Using a parable, he showed Abimelech's rise as king. He ended his criticism by cursing his half-brother ([Judges 8:31](#)) and the disloyal people of Shechem ([Judges 9:7](#)). Jotham then fled to Beer because he was worried about Abimelech seeking revenge ([Judges 9:21](#)). Later, God fulfilled Jotham's curse. The people of Shechem were killed in a revolt. Abimelech was struck down by a woman ([Judges 9:57](#)).

2. The eleventh king of Judah who reigned from 750 to 735 BC. He was the son of King Azariah (also spelled Uzziah) of Judah and Jerusa, the daughter of Zadok ([2 Kings 15:7](#); [2 Chronicles 26:21](#); [27:1](#)). He was the father of Ahaz. Jotham, at 25 years of age, ascended Judah's throne in the second year of King Pekah of Israel and ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. At first, he reigned with Azariah, who had leprosy for allowing non-Jewish worship, until his father's death ([2 Kings 15:5](#)).

Jotham was considered a righteous king in the eyes of the Lord. However, he also failed to cleanse the temple of its pagan influences. So the people of Judah continued in their evil ways ([2 Chronicles 27:2-6](#)). He built:

- The Upper Gate of the temple
- Part of the wall of Ophel
- The defenses of numerous towns in Judah's hill country ([2 Chronicles 27:3-4](#))

Jotham also defeated the troublesome Ammonites in battle (v 5) and listed the families of Gad living east of the Jordan according to their families ([1 Chronicles 5:17](#)). He was buried in Jerusalem after his death ([2 Chronicles 27:9](#)). The prophets Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea were all active during his time as king. Jotham is listed as an ancestor of Jesus Christ in Matthew's genealogy ([Matthew 1:9](#)).

*See also* Chronology of the Bible (Old Testament); Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Israel, History of.

1. The Second of Jahdai's five sons ([1 Chronicles 2:47](#)).

## Joy

The positive human condition that is either a feeling or an action. The Bible uses "joy" in both senses.

### *Joy as a Feeling*

Joy is a feeling brought about by well-being, success, or good fortune. A person automatically

experiences it because of certain favorable circumstances. It cannot be commanded.

- The shepherd felt experienced joy when he found his lost sheep ([Matthew 18:13](#)).
- The crowd felt it when Jesus healed a Jewish woman who was bound by Satan for 18 years ([Luke 13:17](#)).
- The disciples returned to Jerusalem rejoicing after Jesus's ascension (return to heaven) ([Luke 24:52](#))
- The church in Antioch felt joy when its members heard the Jerusalem Council's decision that they did not have to be circumcised to keep God's law ([Acts 15:31](#)).
- Paul mentioned his joy in hearing about how obedient Roman Christians were ([Romans 16:19](#)).
- Paul wrote to the Corinthians that love does not rejoice in wrong but rejoices in the right ([1 Corinthians 13:6](#); see also [1 Samuel 2:1; 11:9; 18:6](#); [2 Samuel 6:12](#); [1 Kings 1:40](#); [Esther 9:17-22](#)).

[Psalms 137:1-6](#) shows that emotion cannot be commanded. The captors of the Jewish people wanted them to sing in the land of their exile, something they were unable to do because Jerusalem was the source of their joy.

### *Joy as an Action*

There is a joy that Scripture commands. That joy is action that can be engaged in regardless of how the person feels. [Proverbs 5:18](#) tells the reader to rejoice in the wife of his youth, without reference to what she may be like. Christ instructed his disciples to rejoice in persecution ([Matthew 5:11-12](#)). The apostle Paul commanded constant rejoicing ([Philippians 4:4](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:16](#)). James said Christians should view tests as joy because such tests develop endurance ([James 1:2](#)). Joy in difficult times is only possible because it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, who is present in every Christian ([Galatians 5:22](#)).

*See also* Fruit of the Spirit.

### **Jozabad**

1. Benjaminite from Gederah and one of the military men who came to David's support at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:4](#)).
- 2, 3. Leaders and mighty warriors from Manasseh's tribe who joined David at Ziklag to fight against Saul ([1 Chr 12:20](#)).
4. One of the Levites who assisted with the administration of the temple contributions in Jerusalem during King Hezekiah's reign ([2 Chr 31:13](#)).
5. One of the Levitical chiefs who generously gave animals to the Levites for the celebration of the Passover feast during King Josiah's reign ([2 Chr 35:9](#)).
6. Levite, the son of Jeshua, and one who helped Meremoth, Eleazar, and Noadiah take inventory of the temple's gifts and precious metals during the days of Ezra ([Ezr 8:33](#)).
7. Priest and one of the six sons of Pashhur who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife during the postexilic era ([Ezr 10:22](#)).
8. One of the Levites who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife ([Ezr 10:23](#)).
9. One of the Levites who assisted Ezra with teaching the people the law during the postexilic period ([Neh 8:7](#)).
10. One of the Levites who relocated to Jerusalem and was put in charge of the work of the temple during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 11:16](#)).
11. Alternate rendering for Shimeath's son in [2 Kings 12:21](#). See Jozacar, Jozachar.

### **Jozacar, Jozachar**

An alternate name for Jozabad, son of Shimeath the Ammonitess. He was one of the royal servants who plotted against the murdered King Joash of Judah ([2 Kings 12:21](#)). He is also called Zabad in [2 Chronicles 24:26](#).

*See* Zabad.

### **Jozadak**

Seraiah's son and one of the exiles transported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylonia ([1 Chr 6:14-15](#)). He

was the father of Jeshua (also called Joshua), the high priest in postexilic Jerusalem during the days of Zerubbabel ([Ezr 3:2,8; 5:2; 10:18](#); [Neh 12:26](#); [Hg 1:1-14; 2:2-4](#); [Zec 6:11](#)). Jozadak is alternately called Jehozadak.

## Jubal

A son of Adah, wife of Lamech, and descendant of Cain. The Bible says he was the first person to play music and make musical instruments like harps and flutes ([Genesis 4:19-21](#)).

## Jubilee Year

Year of emancipation and restoration to be kept every 50 years. For Israel, the seventh year expressed at length the values of the seventh day Sabbath ([Lv 25:1-7](#)). When a series of seven years reached the perfection of seven sevens, the 50th year was heralded by the trumpet of jubilee and a whole additional year was set aside as belonging to the Lord.

The word “jubilee” simply means a ram’s horn; it came to mean a trumpet made from or in the shape of a ram’s horn. Such horns were exclusively for religious use. The sacred trumpet gave its name to the year of the ram’s horn, the jubilee year—a year to which the people of God were summoned in a striking and holy way. It was not simply a release from labor, not just a rest, but a year belonging to the Lord. In [Leviticus 25](#) this exact expression occurs in connection with the seventh year rather than expressly with the jubilee year. Functionally such a year was a Sabbath rest for the land, and it brought enjoyment “to the Lord” ([Lv 25:4](#)). But nothing could more directly express the implications and orientations of the 50th year.

## Lordship

The first principle of the jubilee is God’s lordship over the whole earth, acknowledged by his people in their obedience to his command to set the year aside in this way. Just as the Sabbath expressed his right to order life, giving it the shape of six days’ work and one day’s rest, and just as the seventh year, linked in [Deuteronomy 31:9-13](#) with the reading of his law, expressed his right to command the obedience of his people, so the 50th year expressed his sovereign possession of all: land, people, means of production, and life itself. Take

the typical case of debtor and creditor. When God brought his people into possession of the land, he gave to each his inheritance. In a given circumstance a man might be compelled to sell his land in whole or part, but it must come back to him: “The land must never be sold on a permanent basis because it really belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenants living with me” ([Lv 25:23](#), nlt). In this verse “foreigners” carries the meaning “stateless persons,” “refugees,” “those who have sought political asylum”—in a word, those who have no rights except what mercy concedes. Such are the people of God and such they must acknowledge themselves to be when the jubilee year comes around. When a piece of real estate changed hands, the seller might congratulate himself on the astuteness with which he had solved his problem, and the buyer might rejoice in his skillful acquisitiveness, but in the Year of Jubilee seller and buyer alike are compelled to confess a different truth: neither is master, either of his own welfare or of the person and goods of another. Each has a Master in heaven.

## Redemption

According to the ordinance, the trumpet that heralded the year was sounded on the Day of Atonement ([Lv 25:9](#)). That was the day on which the Lord proclaimed his people clean before him from all their sins ([16:30](#)). Forgiveness of sins ushered in the jubilee year. The verb “to redeem” and the noun “redemption” had a strong commercial use in the recovery of property pledged against loans of money, and in the 50th year these words would have sounded and resounded as debtors confessed that they could not “redeem” and creditors forewent their “redemption” rights, each using the very vocabulary of the Lord’s action at the exodus ([Ex 6:6](#)). This is what the Lord had done for his people, and the divine action must be the norm of the human. Brotherly generosity is urged ([Lv 25:35-38](#)), liberty is granted (vv [39-43](#)), and slavery in perpetuity is forbidden (vv [47-55](#)) simply because the divine redemptive act makes the redeemed into brothers, brings them into the Lord’s servitude, and cancels the bondage that would otherwise be theirs forever.

## Rest

The correlative of redemption is rest. This rest is vividly illustrated and enforced as Moses legislates rest from all the toil connected with promoting next year’s crop ([Lv 25:4](#)); rest from the toil of

harvesting, for the people of God were to live hand to mouth, gathering only what and when need dictated (vv [5-7](#)); rest from the anxious burden of debts incurred; and rest from slavery (v [10](#)). Like the Sabbath, this rest would have meant exactly what it said: freedom from toil; relaxation, refreshment, and recreation. Very likely tiredness was as endemic among the people of God then as now, and grace drew near to give them a holiday. But equally with the Sabbath, release from the preoccupations of staying alive created time to be preoccupied with the Lord, his worship, his Word, and the life that pleases him. We can understand [Isaiah 58](#) as binding the ideals of Sabbath and jubilee together. The Lord frees his people not for unbroken idleness but for the redirection of life toward himself. The jubilee year was thus a deliberate opting out of the rat race; it called a halt to acquisitiveness; it abandoned concern over the pressure to stay alive. It reordered priorities, giving a chance to appraise the use of time and the selection of objectives. For a whole year the people of God stood back, rested, ceased from the good in order to attain the best.

### Faith

But this standing back from life was not in the style of a dropout. It was the action of responsible faith. No one on earth can escape questions such as "What shall we eat?" The Lord foresees and provides ([Lv 25:20](#)); grace provides so that God's people can enjoy the ordinances of grace (cf. [Ex 16:29](#)). When he commands a year off, he enables them to take it. The 50th year was a living testimony to his faithfulness. The last season of sowing and reaping would have been the 49th year; in the final 7th year in the series the people would live off the casual growth; and in the 50th year nothing but the sheer attentive faithfulness of their God could provide for them ([Lv 25:21](#)). Here indeed their faith would be put to the test, for God spoke a word of majestic promise and called on them to believe. At the heart of their jubilee they took God at his word and found him faithful.

### Obedience

Biblically, it is a central characteristic of the people of God that they do what he commands for no other reason than that he commands it. In the ordinance of the 50th year the people of God must show themselves as his obedient ones, and in fact their obedience is the guarantee of continuance in the land he has granted to them. Thus, for example, [Leviticus 26:34-35](#) teaches that loss of tenure and

loss of liberty is directly related to contravention of the principle of the Sabbath, found on the seventh day, seventh year, and jubilee year. Refusal to obey goes hand in hand with loss of possession, leaving behind an empty land, which then enjoys the Sabbath rest it never received from its disobedient inhabitants.

### Hope

In the 50th year the people lived in the light of the forgiveness of sins, walked by obedience in harmony with the God who redeemed them, and in freedom from toil, received from the ground its life-sustaining benefits without any sweat on their brows ([Gn 2:16](#); [3:19](#)). It was a sort of Eden restored, the curse momentarily held in abeyance—but also a prolonged foretaste of the coming day when the promises would all be fulfilled, the blood of the covenant efficacious without hindrance, the prisoners of hope (i.e., who had waited in hope for their release) freed, and the trumpet of liberation heard throughout the world ([Is 27:13](#); [Zec 9:11-14](#)). The Year of Jubilee in a limited but real way foreshadowed what would yet be the eternal inheritance and bliss of the people of God.

*See also Feasts and Festivals of Israel.*

## Jucal

Alternate name for Jehucal, Shelemiah's son, in [Jeremiah 38:1](#) (nlt mg). *See* Jehucal.

## Juda (Person)

1. An alternate spelling of Judas in the King James Version. Judas is Jesus's brother in [Mark 6:3](#). Judas is also called Jude in [Jude 1](#). *See* Jude (Person).
2. An alternate King James Version spelling of Joda, Joanan's son, in [Luke 3:26](#). *See* Joda.
3. An alternate King James Version spelling of Judah, Joseph's son, in [Luke 3:30](#). *See* Judah (Person) #8.
4. An alternate King James Version spelling of Judah, Jacob's son, in [Luke 3:33](#). *See* Judah (Person) #1.

5. An alternate King James Version spelling for Judah's tribe ([Hebrews 7:14](#); [Revelation 5:5; 7:5](#)). See Judah, Tribe of.

## Juda (Place)

An alternate King James Version spelling for Judah's territory (or "Judea") in [Luke 1:39](#).

*See Judah, Tribe of; Judea, Judeans.*

## Judea

*See Judea, Judeans.*

## Judah (Person)

1. The fourth of Jacob's 12 sons ([Genesis 35:23](#); [1 Chronicles 2:1](#)) and Leah and Jacob's fourth son. Leah named him Judah, which means "praise," because she was excited to give Jacob another son ([Genesis 29:35](#)). Judah had five sons:
  2. Er
  3. Onan
  4. Shelah, born to Bathshua the Canaanites ([Genesis 38:3-5](#); [1 Chronicles 2:3](#))
  5. The twins Perez and Zerah by Tamar, his daughter-in-law ([Genesis 38:29-30](#); [1 Chronicles 2:4](#))

He eventually settled his family in Egypt with his father and brothers ([Exodus 1:2](#)). God killed his first two sons, Er and Onan, in Canaan for their disobedience ([Genesis 46:12](#)). Judah became the founder of one of Israel's 12 tribes ([Numbers 1:26-27](#)).

Judah was reckless with Tamar ([Genesis 38:6-30](#)). However, he showed strong decision-making when he took personal responsibility for Benjamin's safety in Egypt and spoke for his brothers before Joseph ([Genesis 44:14-18](#)). At the time of Jacob's blessing, Judah was given firstborn privileges. Judah's family would lead Jacob's family, and the

promised Messiah of Abraham's covenant would be a Judahite ([Genesis 49:8-12](#)). Later, Judah's family was praised at the time of Ruth's engagement to Boaz ([Ruth 4:12](#)), and both the Davidic lines of kings ([1 Chronicles 2:1-15](#); [3:1-24](#)) and Jesus Christ was a Judahite ([Matthew 1:2-3](#); [Luke 3:33](#)).

*See also Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Judah, Tribe of.*

1. The father of a family of Levites who assisted Jeshua, the high priest, with rebuilding the temple during the time after the exile in Babylon ([Ezra 3:9](#)). He is also called Hodaviah in [Ezra 2:40](#) and Hodevah in [Nehemiah 7:43](#). *See Hodaviah #4.*
2. One of the Levites who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his non-Jewish wife ([Ezra 10:23](#)).
3. Benjamite, son of Hassenuah, who was second in command over the city of Jerusalem during the days of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 11:9](#)).
4. One of the leaders of the Levites who returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua to Judah after the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 12:8](#)).
5. One of the princes of Judah who helped dedicate the Jerusalem wall during the time after the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 12:34](#)).
6. One of the priests who played a musical instrument at the dedication of the Jerusalem wall during the days of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 12:36](#)). He is perhaps identical with #5 above.
7. Joseph's son, father of Simeon and an ancestor of Jesus Christ ([Luke 3:30](#)). *See Genealogy of Jesus Christ.*

## Judah, Tribe of

One of the 12 tribes of Israel.

### Geographical Territory

The frontiers of Judah are well defined in [Joshua 15](#), which describes the inheritance of the tribe after

the Conquest. [Second Kings 23:8](#) describes Judah as extending from Geba to Beersheba: Geba is about 8 miles (13 kilometers) north of Jerusalem, and Beersheba about 40 miles (64 kilometers) south. Judah thus held a strip of mountain land on the central spine of southern Palestine, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from north to south and 20 miles (32 kilometers) from east to west. Of this 1,000 square miles, half was desert (on the south and east); the rest was stony and not well watered. The central ridge, upon which are situated Jerusalem, Hebron, and Beersheba, rises to over 3,000 feet (914 meters) in places before tapering off into the desert in the south. Along this ridge, connecting these towns, runs the chief road. To the east, the ridge drops steeply to the Dead Sea, nearly 5,000 feet (1,524 meters) below. To the west it drops less sharply to the "lowlands," actually a plateau some 1,000 feet (305 meters) high, before descending to the Philistine plain, which stretches to the sea.

Judah proper (Jerusalem was a later addition) was remote and secure in its hills. Its true center and capital was Hebron, 3,500 feet (1,067 meters) up. Only on the north was it vulnerable to attackers marching south along the ridge road. However, three great valleys led up from the western lowlands into the hills: the valley of Ajalon, the valley of Sorek, and the valley of Elah. Battles would rage up and down these valleys from the days of Joshua to the time of David and long afterward. The few roads to the east (the one from Jerusalem to Jericho is the best known) were not so important, although it was by this "back door" that Joshua had invaded the hill country ([Jos 10:9](#)). Judah was thus geographically well out of the mainstream of Israelite life, since only the territory of Simeon lay to the south.

The area occupied by Judah falls easily into three natural regions: the central mountain ridge, fairly densely settled, especially on its western side, where rainfall and dew were greatest; the eastern slopes, almost uninhabited and mostly desert; and the southern pastoral region round Beersheba, where the mountains fall away into dry prairie, with sparse settlement throughout.

### *Economic Life*

To Israel, Palestine was a land flowing with milk and honey ([Nm 13:27](#)). Half of Judah might be desert, but the rest had reasonably good soil, and on the western slopes the rain was usually adequate. Wheat, barley, olives, figs, and especially vineyards, grew freely. The land might be stony,

but stones could be collected and used for walls and buildings. Not as rich as the great northern valleys like Jezreel, Judah was still good mixed farming country, although it required hard work. Sheep and goats were plentiful, and that meant wool and milk. Cattle were probably rarer; Judah was not cattle country like Bashan ([Nm 32:1](#)). Wool meant cloth, and hide meant leather. In those days the hills were forested, which meant fuel and building materials. Clay for pottery was readily available for domestic utensils. Copper came from Edom in the south, and iron from Philistia in the west; these could be obtained by bartering agricultural produce. Whether they realized it or not, God had dealt graciously with the people of Judah in giving them adequate resources. Nonetheless, the climate was bracing: a cold, wet winter, with snow and hail at times, and a long, rainless summer, with low humidity and cool nights. This brought heavy dews on the eastern slopes ([Jgs 6:38](#)), and precious rainwater was conserved in rock-hewn cisterns ([Jer 2:13](#)). Permanent streams of any size did not exist in Judah, but springs or "wells" were abundant, from Jerusalem to Beersheba. It was not until Judah got caught up into the economic life of Solomon's trading empire that its simple pattern of life changed; even then, the change in the hills of Judah was far less than elsewhere. Judah had no seaport of its own and controlled no rich caravan routes. It had no coveted raw materials, like the copper of Edom or the cedars of Lebanon; no luxury goods for trade, like the purple dye of Phoenicia or the gold of Ophir; no lush land to tempt the greed of others. In God's mercy Judah's temptations were few. Its faith was also less liable to be corrupted: comparatively few Canaanites had ever settled in this area, while the Conquest had been more thorough in the south than in the north.

### *History and Significance*

The earliest blessings on Judah are recorded in [Genesis 49:8-12](#) and [Deuteronomy 33:7](#). After the exodus, the tribe of Judah took first place in the desert camping arrangement ([Nm 2:3](#)). Caleb, one of the two faithful spies, was a tribal chieftain of Judah ([13:6](#)). In Joshua's invasion of Palestine, the highlands allotted to Judah were the first to be cleared of Canaanites, after the initial fighting around Jericho and Ai ([Jos 6:8](#)). The book of Joshua is a summary account of the whole campaign.

After Joshua's death, Simeon and Judah continued the fight against the Canaanites and marched together against the hill country of the south, led by

Caleb and Othniel. Although God's gift to Judah had been the whole land westward as far as the sea, Judah failed to take anything but the hills. The plain was controlled by iron-protected chariots and fortress cities. The king of Jerusalem was killed and Jerusalem was burned ([Jgs 1:8](#)), but the Jebusites continued to occupy the area until David's day ([v 21](#)). The men of Judah, like other Israelites, might burn Canaanite towns, but they did not usually occupy the old sites themselves. Under the judges, the tribe of Judah was still isolated, though Othniel was of Judah (ch [3](#)). In the great battle against Sisera, Judah is not even mentioned (ch [5](#)). This tribal isolation was soon lost, first through Philistine invasions from the west, and then through David's capture of Jerusalem and the placing of the national and religious capital there. Although in [Judges 15:11](#) the men of Judah are prepared even to hand over Samson to the Philistines, with Samuel as judge, everything changes. The ark returns ([1 Sm 7:1](#)); lost territory is regained ([v 14](#)). Indeed, Samuel's sons act as judges in Beersheba ([8:2](#)), although they are corrupt.

David finally breaks the power of the Philistines in a series of victories and rules as king first in Hebron, Judah's chief town ([2 Sm 2:1-4](#)). When he is crowned king of all Israel, however, he moves the capital to the newly conquered Jerusalem, on the northern frontier of the tribe of Judah ([5:6-10](#)). Here the ark was to be brought (ch [6](#)), and here Solomon was to build the temple ([7:13](#)). All God's promises will henceforth cluster around Jerusalem, the temple, and David's line. Most important, the Messiah would come from Judah ([Gn 49:10](#)).

The division between the northern and southern tribes had begun in David's lifetime, after Absalom's revolt ([2 Sm 20:1](#)); after Solomon's death, the rift became complete ([1 Kgs 12:16](#)). Henceforth for 200 years, until the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 BC, there were two little kingdoms side by side: a larger one in the north and east, called Israel (the "ten tribes" of [1 Kgs 11:35](#)), and a smaller one in the south, called Judah. With this, the history of Judah as a tribe virtually comes to an end, for although still called by the old tribal name, this little kingdom was really a "Greater Judah." It now contained not only the old tribe of Judah but also the newly conquered Jebusite territory of Jerusalem, some of the old Philistine country, and the tribes of Benjamin and Simeon, as well as many Levites ([2 Chr 11:14](#)) and other "loyalists" from the north. Indeed, from now on, "tribe" had far less meaning than before; it was

more important where a person lived than of what tribe the person was, although, within the family, tribal origins continued to be remembered. For 250 more years the little kingdom of Judah persisted alone. Even after the exile it was the tiny province of Judah that emerged under Nehemiah ([Neh 1:2-3](#)), and Judea still remained as a district in NT days ([Lk 3:1](#)). In fact, the vast majority of later Jews were of the tribe of Judah, as the very name "Jew" shows. But the chief glory of the tribe of Judah, now as ever, was that the house of David sprang from it. When Jesus Christ was born, he was to be of David's line and Judah's tribe. So it is that in [Revelation 7:5](#), when 12,000 are sealed from each tribe, Judah has pride of place in the list, as it had in Numbers ([Nm 2:3](#)) so long before.

*See also* Judah (Person) #1.

## Judaism

Religion and culture of the Jewish people from the beginning of the postexilic period (538 BC) to modern times. The term "Judaism" is derived from "Judah," the name of the southern kingdom of ancient Israel, while "Jew" is a shortened form of "Judeans."

*The Period of the Second Temple (515 BC-AD 70)*

### Historical Survey

The united kingdom of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon came to an end shortly after the death of Solomon. Rehoboam, his son, provoked a revolt about 930 BC on the part of the 10 northern tribes by levying unreasonably high taxes ([1 Kgs 12](#)). From that time on, the kingdoms of Israel (or Samaria, the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom) maintained a separate existence. The northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC, and thousands of captives, primarily members of the upper class, were exiled forcibly and taken to Assyria, where they presumably intermarried with the native population and disappeared from history. The kingdom of Judah survived as an independent state until 597 BC, when it came under the control of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. The temple was finally destroyed in 586 BC and many captives were carried off to Babylonia, beginning a period of exile that was to last two generations. The Babylonians were defeated by Cyrus the Persian in

539 BC, and the following year the king issued a decree permitting all captive peoples to return to the lands of their origin ([2 Chr 36:22–23](#); [Ezr 1](#)). At least four waves of Jewish expatriates returned from Mesopotamia to Judea during the century following the decree of Cyrus, under such leaders as Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Many Jews, however, chose to remain in their adopted Mesopotamian homeland. The dedication of the second temple in the spring of 515 BC provided a formal end to the exilic period of 70 years ([Jer 29:10](#)), and was a direct result of the prophetic exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah.

In Judea the Jewish people were ruled by governors who held office at the pleasure of the Persian king. One of the earlier governors was Zerubbabel ([Hg 1:1; 2:1–2](#)), a descendant of David ([1 Chr 3:10–19](#)). In some way he shared rule with the high priest Jeshua ben Jehozadak. Palestine was part of one of the 20 satrapies of the Persian Empire, which lasted from 539 to 331 BC, when it fell to the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Little is known about the historical developments in Palestine during most of the Persian period. When Alexander died in 323 BC, his empire was divided up among his generals; Egypt and Palestine fell to Ptolemy I. The Ptolemies were benevolent despots who allowed the Jews of Palestine a measure of freedom and autonomy. After the battle of Paneion in 198 BC, Palestine came under the rule of the Seleucid Empire, founded by Seleucus I, another of Alexander's generals.

The Seleucid Empire embraced a very large area with a diverse population, extending from Asia Minor and Palestine in the west to the borders of India on the east. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) ascended the Seleucid throne in 175 BC and attempted to unify his vast empire by Hellenizing it (i.e., by forcing the adoption of Greek language and culture). Local cultures and religions were forcibly suppressed as a result of this policy, and the Jewish state in Palestine was perhaps the hardest hit of all. In 167 BC Antiochus IV dedicated the temple in Jerusalem to Olympian Zeus, sacrificed a sow on the altar, destroyed scrolls containing the Jewish Scriptures, and forbade the rite of circumcision. This repression triggered a revolt led by an aged priest named Mattathias and his sons. The Seleucids were repulsed, and finally in 164 BC the temple was retaken by Mattathias's son Judas the Maccabee (an epithet meaning "the hammer"). This Jewish victory has been commemorated annually by the festival of Hanukkah ("dedication"). Judas and his brothers, called Maccabees or Hasmoneans

(Mattathias was of the house of Hasmon), and their descendants ruled Judea from 164 to 63 BC, when Palestine fell to the Roman general Pompey. Thereafter, Palestine remained a vassal of Rome.

Hyrcanus, a Hasmonean, was high priest after the conquest of Judea by the Romans, though Antipater (an Idumean) was the real power behind Hyrcanus. The sons of Antipater, Phasael and Herod, were governors of Jerusalem and Galilee, respectively. Upon the assassination of Antipater in 43 BC, and through his connections in Rome, Herod (later called Herod the Great) was named king of Judea by the Roman senate; he reigned from 37 to 4 BC. When he died, Palestine was divided up by the emperor Augustus (27 BC–AD 14) and placed under the governorship of three of Herod's sons: Herod Archelaus (ethnarch of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria from 4 BC to AD 6), Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 BC to AD 39), and Herod Philip (tetrarch of Batanea, Trachonitis, and other small states from 4 BC to AD 34). These territories were generally placed under Roman procurators after the sons of Herod had died or been deposed. For a brief period (AD 41–44), Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruled virtually the same territory as his grandfather. Upon his death (narrated in [Acts 12:20–23](#)), his territories were placed under Roman procurators. The greed and ineptitude of these procurators provoked the Jewish populace to rebel. The ill-fated Jewish revolt of AD 66–73 resulted in the destruction of the second temple by the tenth Roman legion under Titus in AD 70. The revolt was completely quelled in AD 73, when more than 900 Jews under siege in the desert fortress of Masada near the Dead Sea committed mass suicide rather than fall into Roman hands. These tragic events ended permanently the temple cult and the priestly system in Judaism.

## Social and Religious Developments

The Babylonian conquest of Judea and the destruction of the Solomonic temple in 586 BC produced dramatic social and religious changes in Jewish life. The cessation of the temple cult struck a serious blow at the heart of the Israelite religion, since the Jerusalem temple alone was the legitimate and divinely appointed place for discharging much of the ritual requirement of the Mosaic law, chiefly the sacrificial cult. Even the three annual pilgrimage festivals, Succoth (Tabernacles), Pesach (Passover), and Shavuoth (Weeks) could no longer be observed by pious Jews who had remained in Judea after 586 BC. When

after 538 BC many exiles chose to return to Judea, many others elected to remain in their new homeland. For the latter, the temple cult, even when reinstated in 516 BC, could no longer play a significant role in their religious lives.

During the exilic and early postexilic period, the peculiar Jewish institution of the synagogue (a Greek word meaning "gathering place") began to evolve. The synagogue became such a popular and useful institution for Jewish communities outside Palestine that in the centuries after the dedication of the second temple they sprang up throughout Palestine, many in Jerusalem itself. By the end of the second temple period, the synagogue had come to play three important functions in Jewish life: it served as a house of prayer, a house of study, and a place of assembly. First-century AD synagogue worship is illustrated in [Luke 4:16–30](#) and [Acts 13:13–42](#). The focus of the service was a reading of a selection from the Torah (Law of Moses), then one from the Haphtorah (Prophets). These readings were followed by a homily based on Scripture. Other elements in first-century AD synagogue worship included the recitation of the Shema ("Hear, O Israel"), a combination of biblical passages including [Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21](#) and [Numbers 15:37–41](#), and the Shemoneh Esreh (Eighteen Benedictions) called the Amidah ("standing") because it was recited while standing upright. Jews also wore fringes on their garments in obedience to [Numbers 15:38–39 \(Mt 23:5\)](#), and phylacteries on their foreheads and left arms. Phylacteries are little boxes containing the portions of Scripture recited in Shema; they were used in literal fulfillment of the command in [Deuteronomy 6:8](#). Archaeologists have discovered first-century phylacteries in the ruins of Masada.

Outside of Palestine, Mesopotamia became the second most important center of Judaism. The Babylonian Jewish community was known as the Golah ("captivity"), and its titular head was called the Resh Galuta or Exilarch (both terms mean "leader of the captivity"). By the end of the exilic period, the descendants of the ancient original captives had forgotten Hebrew and had adopted Aramaic, the international language of the ancient Near East and sister language to Hebrew, as their first language. Even in Palestine, Aramaic was the primary language spoken. Thus, when portions of Scripture were read in synagogue services in Hebrew, most of those present were unable to understand what was read. This problem was solved by providing a methurgeman (translator) who would translate orally short sections of

Scripture. Eventually these targums ("translations") were reduced to writing, beginning in the second century AD.

By the first century AD, it had been estimated that there were from four to seven million Jews in the Greco-Roman world, perhaps three to four times the population of Palestine. Jews in lands outside of Palestine came to be known collectively as the Diaspora ("scattering"). After the Greeks dominated the Mediterranean world through Alexander and his successors, Greek became the common language throughout this region. Just as Mesopotamian Jews spoke Aramaic in place of Hebrew, so Jews in the Greco-Roman world came to speak Greek. By the middle of the third century BC, Hellenistic Jews began to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This translation, called the Septuagint (a term meaning "seventy," based on a legend that it was translated simultaneously by seventy Jewish scholars), contained a more extensive canon of Scripture than that recognized by Palestinian Judaism. This reflects the more liberal attitudes of Hellenistic Jews.

During the second century BC, most of the major sects within Palestinian Judaism came into being. The Hasidim ("pious") were members of a religious association that aided the Hasmoneans in the revolt against the Seleucids ([1 Macc 2:42; 7:13](#)) but later opposed them when they claimed rights to the priesthood. Both the Pharisees and Essenes may have their origin in this religious sect. The Sadducees were perhaps connected with Zadok, a high priest appointed by David. Zadok's descendants were regarded as the only legitimate priestly line; they were devoted above the Levites in [Ezekiel 40–48](#). The Sadducees were a wealthy, aristocratic class that monopolized the high priesthood. They did not believe in angels, spirits, life after death, or the resurrection ([Acts 23:8](#)), nor did they accept the validity of the oral law as developed by the Pharisees. They left no writings and disappeared with the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

The Pharisees ("separated ones") first appear in our sources toward the end of the second century BC and were involved primarily in political affairs. They represented the common people against the tyrannical Hasmonean ruler Alexander Janneus (103–76 BC), who had hundreds of Pharisees executed in reprisal. By the first century AD, the Pharisees seem wholly concerned with religious matters and were noted for the scrupulous observance of the Mosaic law as traditionally

interpreted. On grounds of ritual purity, they separated themselves from other Jews who were not as scrupulous and who might contaminate them. Pharisees went about in groups called Haberim ("associates") in which they were insulated from those who were lax religiously. In their zeal to remain faithful to the Mosaic law, the Pharisees developed an oral law (later erroneously attributed to Moses) that served as a fence around the Torah. This oral law was an interpretation and expansion of the 613 commands in the Mosaic law; it was finally compiled and reduced to written form as the Mishnah ("teaching") in the late second century AD. Paul ([Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5](#); [Phil 3:5](#)) and many other early Christians were converts from Pharisaism ([Acts 15:5](#)). Pharisaic Judaism survived the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 to form the rabbinic Judaism that dominated Jewish religious life from the second century AD to modern times.

The Essenes were another religious sect within Judaism that had its origins in the second century BC. Like the Pharisees, the Essenes were concerned principally with maintaining ritual purity in obedience to the law of Moses. The Essenes lived and worked in Jewish society; they tried to influence people by the simple, altruistic life they followed. Some Essenes also lived in their own communities, to which they returned each night after work. There were numerous religious factions within Judaism, and one such group, which may only have had vague connections with the Essenes, established a community on the western shore of the Dead Sea. This group regarded itself as the true Israel and in the wilderness prepared for the final visitation of God by keeping themselves pure from all defilement. Many documents written by members of this sect were discovered in caves near the Dead Sea where they had been hidden just before the Romans destroyed the settlement. These documents, the Dead Sea Scrolls, have provided detailed information about this religious sect and its beliefs.

The Zealots were another Jewish sect, who may be related to the Sicarii ("dagger men"). This group of political activists flourished from AD 6 to 66. Regarding God alone as their sovereign, they attempted to overthrow the Romans and those who collaborated with them by violent means, including assassination. They helped to foment the Jewish revolt of AD 66–73 and perished with Jerusalem in AD 70.

Social class and status in first-century AD Palestine were determined in accordance with the rules of ritual purity. The upper class comprised members of the religious establishment, such as the Sadducees, scribes, Pharisees, and Jerusalem priests. The Sanhedrin was a deliberative body whose membership was drawn from these groups. For all practical purposes there was no middle class. The lower class consisted primarily of the Am Ha Arez ("people of the land")—Jews who were ignorant of the law through lack of education and who did not scrupulously observe those commandments with which they were familiar. The generally hostile attitude of the Pharisees toward the Am Ha Arez is expressed in [John 7:49](#): "But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed" (rsv). There was yet another social class in first-century Palestine, which can be designated as "untouchables." This group was composed of Samaritans, tax collectors, prostitutes, shepherds, lepers, Gentiles, and perhaps worst of all, Jews who became as Gentiles (e.g., the prodigal son of [Lk 15:11–32](#)). The rules of ritual purity as generally observed prevented any form of social contact between the upper class and the untouchables, and made contacts with the Am Ha Arez highly undesirable. Against this background, the horror of the Pharisees over Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners is thoroughly understandable ([Mk 2:15–17](#)).

A further consequence of this religious criterion for determining social class and status was an uneasy tension between Jerusalem and the rural areas of Palestine, particularly Galilee, during the last two centuries of the second temple period. Those in Jerusalem regarded Galilee as a place where ignorance of the Torah was the rule ([In 1:46](#)). Jerusalem was primarily a religious center, whose major industry was the temple cult. The total population of Jerusalem in the first century AD has been estimated at 25,000 to 40,000. Most of these were either artisans and craftsmen devoted to building and adorning the temple (still incomplete before it was destroyed; see [In 2:20](#)) or priests and Levites involved in the many ritual activities of the temple. Though Jews were expected to travel to Jerusalem for each of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, this requirement proved difficult for rural Palestinian farmers.

Further, the tithe demanded by Mosaic command was only on the produce of the land, not upon wages or bartered goods. The rural farmers, therefore, bore the brunt of this taxation and quite naturally resented the privileged position of urban

artisans, merchants, and priests who were not obliged to tithe. The temptation not to tithe the produce of the land was very great, and many farmers succumbed to it. Their untithed produce was not kosher, and thus to be avoided by those, like the Pharisees, who were religiously scrupulous. In addition to the first and second tithes demanded of farmers (the second tithe had to be spent in the vicinity of Jerusalem), it has been estimated that Roman tax levies amounted to 10 to 15 percent of an individual's income. Religious taxes, together with Roman taxes, added up to a crushing tax burden of from 25 to 30 percent. The fact that the Jews finally revolted against their Roman oppressors in AD 66 is not difficult to comprehend. Throughout the first century AD, in fact, minor revolts in Palestine occurred with predictable frequency. Many of these occurred during the three annual pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem, when the normal population of 25,000 to 40,000 swelled to 500,000 or more. These festivals provided ideal opportunities for uprisings, and the Romans were particularly alert for such eventualities. Jesus was executed during one such Passover festival because he was suspected of being a political revolutionary ([Mk 15:26](#)).

The second temple period provided the setting for the rise and fall of apocalypticism within Judaism. Apocalypticism (from a Greek word meaning "revelation") was a kind of eschatology ("account of final events") that assumed that ideal conditions could not be restored on earth unless God first intervened climactically to destroy evil (particularly foreign oppressors) and vindicate the righteous (Israel). Apocalyptic visionaries composed many documents, called apocalypses, in which they attempted to read the signs of the times and predict the coming of the visitation of God. Since there was a widespread consciousness that the era of prophecy was over, these apocalypticists wrote not under their own names but under the names of ancient Israelite worthies, such as Moses, Abraham, Enoch, and Ezra. Among the more significant expectations of Jewish apocalypticism were (1) the coming of a Messiah; (2) the coming of a great period of tribulation, sometimes called the messianic woes; (3) the resurrection of the just; (4) the judgment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. Apocalyptic beliefs probably provided the motivation for most—if not all—of the Jewish revolts against the Romans.

Some portions of the Hebrew Scriptures were still in the process of composition at the beginning of

the second temple period. The last three prophetic books—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—were written from the end of the sixth century to the mid fifth century BC. Later rabbis expressed the opinion that the Spirit of God had been taken from Israel when these prophets ceased their labors. The Chronicler ends his work by referring to the decree of Cyrus (538 BC), and both Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther appear to have been written in the fifth century BC.

The second temple period witnessed not only the completion of those writings that were later regarded as inspired and authoritative in Judaism but also the full recognition of all 24 sacred books. Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the Mosaic law had not been observed with any consistency (according to [2 Kgs 22](#) it had been mislaid for an unknown period of time), nor had the classical prophets always received appropriate recognition. But after 586 BC the Torah occupied a position of unquestioned sanctity in the lives and thoughts of the Jewish people, replacing in many respects the temple cult even before its final dissolution in AD 70.

The Jewish Scriptures are divided into three sections, designated by Jews with the acrostic "Tanak": (1) Torah ("Law" or "Revelation"), (2) Nebi'im ("Prophets"), and (3) Kethubim ("Writings"). It is generally claimed that while the Law and Prophets enjoyed canonical status prior to the second century BC, the Writings were finally declared canonical at the rabbinic council of Jamnia (c. AD 90), though the historicity of this is disputed. The rabbis are thought to have discussed whether certain biblical books should continue to be part of Scripture. In reality, the Jewish canon of Scripture was fully defined from traditional usage by the first century BC. The Law consisted of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Prophets consisted of two sections, the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets). The Writings included Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ruth, and Daniel. The total number of books in this canon is 24, identical with the Protestant canon of 39 books, since Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and the 12 are each counted as only one book. The Alexandrian canon of Hellenistic Judaism was more extensive, and the extra books (called Apocrypha by Protestants) are all found in the Roman Catholic OT canon of 46 books.

## The Talmudic Period (AD 73–425)

### Historical Survey

According to Jewish legend, when the Romans were about to conquer Jerusalem in the revolt of AD 66–73, a prominent Pharisee, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, feigned death and his disciples were permitted to carry him out of the besieged city in a coffin. The more likely scenario is that he received permission from the Romans to move his school from Jerusalem to Jamnia, on the coast of Palestine. The temple cult and the priestly system had disappeared, and rabbinic academies such as that of Rabbi Johanan set themselves to the enormous task of reconstructing Judaism. The older Sanhedrin was reinstated as the Beth Din ("Court of Law"), and Gamaliel II, a grandson of Hillel, who had presided over the old Sanhedrin, became its leader with the title Nasi ("prince"), or Patriarch. The patriarchate continued until AD 425, when Emperor Theodosius II abolished the office upon the death of the last patriarch, Gamaliel VI. In Mesopotamia, Babylonian Judaism experienced a renaissance that lasted until the end of the fifth century AD. This period was called the Age of the Gaonim ("excellencies") after the heads of the two great rabbinic academies at Sura and Pumpeditha. It was there that the great Babylonian Talmud was compiled by the fifth century AD.

In AD 115 various Jewish communities throughout the eastern Mediterranean, including Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrene, revolted against the Roman emperor Trajan. Without exception these revolts were all put down by Roman legions. Finally, when the emperor Hadrian was on the brink of founding the new city of Aelia Capitolina on the site of old Jerusalem, the Jews again revolted in AD 132, led by a self-proclaimed messiah, Simeon Bar Koziba, who was called Bar-Kochba ("Son of a Star") by his followers as an allusion to the messianic passage in [Numbers 24:17](#). Bar-Kochba was aided by the famous rabbinic scholar Akiba. This revolt, though initially successful, was put down by the Romans under Julius Severus in 135. Shortly thereafter, Hadrian issued a decree banning all Jews from the new Aelia Capitolina.

### Social and Religious Developments

During this period, the result of generations of rabbinical scholarship bore fruit with the compilation of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. The rabbinic sages consciously saw themselves as the heirs of the ancient Israelite

prophets, who in turn were the heirs of the Mosaic law. They distinguished consciously between their own legal interpretations of the Mosaic law (which they called Halakah, or "walking," i.e., a guide for life), and the commands in the Torah itself (called Mitzvah, or "commandment"). The oral law, developed through generations of rabbinic discussion, was finally compiled and written down through the efforts of the patriarch Judah ha-Nasi (c. AD 135–220) during the last quarter of the second century AD and became known as the Mishnah ("teaching"). This is a topical arrangement of rabbinic discussions on such subjects as the Sabbath, firstfruits, sacrifices, and women. The Mishnah became the basis for further rabbinic discussion in both Palestine and Babylonia. The decisions of sages who flourished after the writing of the Mishnah were compiled about AD 450 in Palestine and about 500 in Babylonia. This second stage beyond the Mishnah was called the Gemara (meaning either "completion" or "repetition"). The Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemara make up the Babylonian Talmud, while the same Mishnah with the Jerusalem or Palestinian Gemara comprises the Jerusalem Talmud. Yet another type of rabbinic literature is the Midrashim ("interpretations"), which either follow the order of a particular biblical book or consist of homilies on particular biblical texts. The Targums, paraphrastic translations of Scripture into the Aramaic language, finally came to be written down beginning in the late second century AD.

After the destruction of the temple, rabbinic Judaism concentrated on the religious significance of the Torah and elevated scholarship to the central role that it still plays in Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism gradually exerted its influence upon diaspora Judaism under the initial leadership of Rabbi Johanan until a kind of rabbinic orthodoxy emerged during the second century. Christianity was one of the major ideological foes of rabbinic Judaism. In order to purge Jewish Christians from their midst, the rabbis introduced an additional benediction to the eighteen benedictions customarily recited at synagogue services. This 19th benediction was a curse upon the *minim* (Christians and other heretics), which Jewish Christians who attended synagogue services found impossible to recite. The line was firmly drawn between Judaism and Christianity by this device, which was employed late in the first century.

*See also* Dead Sea Scrolls; Essenes; Diaspora of the Jews; First Jewish Revolt; Israel, History of; Jew; Judah, Tribe of; Judaism; Pharisees; Philo, Judaeus;

Postexilic Period; Sanhedrin; Talmud; Torah; Tradition; Tradition, Oral.

## Judaizers

Judaizers were a group of Jewish Christians in the early church who taught that non-Jewish Christians (gentiles) were required to follow Jewish religious customs. The word "Judaize" means "to live according to Jewish customs and traditions."

In the Bible, the word "Judaize" appears only once ([Galatians 2:14](#)). In this passage, Paul confronts Peter about trying to make non-Jewish believers follow Jewish customs. Paul says to Peter: "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Paul's main concern was not whether people chose to follow Jewish customs. Instead, he was worried that some people wrongly believed they needed to follow these customs to receive salvation. Paul taught that salvation comes through faith in Jesus, not by following Jewish customs.

### *Early Christianity as a Jewish Movement*

When Christianity began, most Christians were Jewish people who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah (God's chosen leader). Even the few non-Jewish people who became Christians, like Nicolaus of Antioch, had first converted to Judaism ([Acts 6:5](#)).

At this time, to become Jewish, a person needed to do three things:

1. Male converts had to be circumcised.
2. All converts had to take a ritual bath in water.
3. All converts had to promise to follow the law of Moses (613 religious rules) and the teachings of Jewish religious leaders.

For Jewish Christians, following Jewish customs was normal and natural. They believed that accepting Jesus as the Messiah made their Jewish faith more complete, not that it replaced it. They did not see Christianity as a separate religion from Judaism. Instead, they saw it as the truest form of Judaism.

These Jewish Christians:

- were circumcised (either as babies or when they converted to Judaism)
- followed Jewish food laws (called kosher laws)
- followed Jewish rules about staying ritually clean
- worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem until the Romans destroyed it in AD 70 ([Acts 3:1; 21:26](#))
- some continued to meet in synagogues (see [James 2:2](#))

### *Christianity Spreads Throughout the Greco-Roman World*

While earliest Christianity began as a Jewish movement, it expanded into the Greco-Roman world. Persecution forced Jewish Christians to leave Jerusalem ([Acts 8:1; 11:19-24](#)). As they traveled to new places, they shared the gospel (the good news about Jesus). Philip brought the gospel to Samaria, where many Samaritans became Christians ([8:4-25](#)). On the Day of Pentecost, many Jews from different parts of the Roman world became Christians ([2:5-11](#)). When these new believers returned to their homes, they likely shared the gospel there. This is probably how the good news about Jesus first reached Rome, though we do not know for sure.

The book of Acts shows how Christianity changed from a small Jewish group in Jerusalem to a faith that spread throughout the Roman world. As this happened, many Jewish people rejected the gospel, while many non-Jewish people accepted it.

A major change happened in [Acts 10](#). In this chapter, Peter shared the good news about Jesus with a Roman military officer named Cornelius. Cornelius and everyone in his house believed the good news and received the Holy Spirit. The Jewish believers who were with Peter were surprised that God also gave the Holy Spirit to non-Jewish people ([Acts 10:45](#)).

### *Questions About Circumcision and Other Jewish Customs*

As more non-Jewish people became Christians, the early church faced a difficult question: Did non-Jewish people need to become Jewish first before they could become Christians?

Different groups had different answers to this question:

- The "circumcision party" (a group of Jewish Christians) said yes. They believed non-Jewish people must first convert to Judaism and follow all Jewish laws to become Christians ([Acts 11:2; Gal 2:12](#)).
- Other leaders like Peter, Barnabas, and especially Paul strongly disagreed. They believed non-Jewish people could become Christians without first becoming Jewish.

This disagreement could have split the early church into two separate groups, but it did not. Luke, the author of Acts, tells the story of how the question was resolved. Paul and Barnabas went on a successful journey to tell non-Jewish people about Jesus ([Acts 13:1–14:28](#)). When they returned to the church in Antioch, they reported how God had made it possible for non-Jewish people to believe in Jesus ([Acts 14:27](#)).

But some Judaizers in the circumcision party came from Judea to Antioch. They taught that all men must be circumcised to be saved ([15:1](#)). Many Jewish Christians, like Paul, had once been Pharisees. The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that emphasized carefully following the law of Moses and oral traditions. Some of these former Pharisees insisted that new non-Jewish converts must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (verse [5](#)). In other words, they wanted non-Jewish people to convert to Judaism before they could become Christians.

### *The Council of Jerusalem*

To solve this problem, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and church leaders ([Acts 15:4–12](#)). James, who was Jesus's brother, led this important meeting. Both sides presented their views.

The leaders made a decision that would work for everyone. They wrote a letter to the non-Jewish Christians with three main rules they should follow:

1. Do not eat meat that has been offered to idols (false gods).
2. Do not eat meat that still has blood in it.

### 3. Do not engage in sexual immorality (verses [23–29](#)).

Why did they choose these three rules? According to Jewish tradition, God had made these rules part of an agreement with Noah long ago. Since Noah was the ancestor of all humans, both Jewish and non-Jewish people, such laws applied to everyone.

However, the special agreement God made with Moses and the people of Israel (the Mosaic covenant) only applied to Jews. The Jerusalem Council ruled that only those three rules applied to all Christians. Christians do not need to be circumcised because it was part of the Mosaic covenant.

### *Conflict Between Judaizers and Non-Jewish Christians Continues*

However, the conflict between Judaizers and non-Jewish Christians did not end with the Jerusalem meeting. Paul's letters show that some members of the circumcision party continued to cause problems:

- Paul briefly summarizes the results of the Jerusalem Council for the Galatian Christians ([Galatians 2:1-10](#)). But even after the Jerusalem Council, the Judaizers were so influential that even Peter and Barnabas stopped eating with non-Jewish Christians for a time. According to Jewish purity laws, eating with non-Jewish people made someone religiously unclean.
- Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians because members of the circumcision party had come to the churches in Galatia after he left. They convinced some Christians there that they needed to be circumcised and closely follow the law of Moses ([Galatians 5:12; 6:13](#)).
- At least some of the problems experienced by the Corinthian church appear to have been caused by Judaizers ([2 Corinthians 11:12-15, 22](#)).
- Judaizers also influenced the Christian community at Philippi ([Philippians 3:2-3](#)).
- Judaizers also appear to have made some progress in the church at Colossae. In [Colossians 2:16-17](#), Paul writes, "Therefore let no one judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a feast, a New Moon, or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the body that casts it belongs to Christ."

### *Paul Opposes the Judaizers*

Of all the early apostles and elders, Paul most often spoke against the idea that non-Jewish people must become Jewish to be Christians. His own dramatic conversion to Christianity is described three times in Acts ([9:1-9](#); [22:6-16](#); [26:12-23](#)). Paul occasionally mentioned it in his letters ([1 Corinthians 9:1](#); [15:8](#); [Galatians 1:11-17](#)). This experience convinced Paul that people can only be saved through faith in Jesus. If Jesus is the only way to salvation, then no other way (including following the law) could save people. Paul

understood that being an observant Jew had not made him right with God ([Philippians 3:2-11](#)). Only his faith in Jesus did that.

Because the circumcision party kept teaching their message, Paul had to keep explaining that faith alone makes someone right with God. This is the main message in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians.

### *The Decline of Jewish Christianity*

Over time, Jewish Christianity and the Judaizers' movement slowly disappeared. The idea that non-Jewish Christians must first become Jews in order to be Christians also became less influential over time.

Jerusalem had been the center of Jewish Christianity. But in AD 66-70, the Jewish people revolted against Roman rule. Just before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, many Jewish Christians left the city. They went to a place called Pella because they believed God had warned them to leave. Later, in AD 132-135, another revolt happened. A Jewish leader named Bar-Kochba led this uprising. During this time, Jewish Christians faced persecution from their own people who had joined the revolt.

After these events, Jewish Christianity became less popular and eventually disappeared. When this happened, the Judaizers' teaching that non-Jewish people must become Jewish to be Christians also ended.

*See also* Acts of the Apostles, Book of the; First Jewish Revolt; Galatians, Letter to the; Jerusalem Council; Jew; Paul, The Apostle.

## Judas

1. Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus's 12 disciples. His father was Simon and his last name was Iscariot. It is not clear why he is called Iscariot. Iscariot probably means he was born in a town called Kerioth. There are two towns with this name. Kerioth of Moab is east of the Jordan ([Jeremiah 48:24](#); [Amos 2:2](#)). Kerioth-hezron or Hazor is in southern Judah ([Joshua 15:25](#)). A less likely idea connects Iscariot with an Aramaic word meaning "assassin" (a person who commits murder, especially for political reasons or for money). According to this idea, after Judas betrayed Jesus, people started calling him "Judas Iscariot." Judas Iscariot's name is listed last among the disciples ([Matthew 10:4](#); [Mark 3:19](#); [Luke 6:16](#)). This is likely because of the shame connected with his name. It is less likely that it shows his original importance among the Twelve. During Jesus's public ministry, he managed the treasury of the group ([John 13:29](#)). He was known to steal their money ([12:6](#)). Judas made a deal with the priests to deliver Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He identified Jesus by kissing him in the garden of Gethsemane ([Matthew 26:14-47](#); [Mark 14:10-46](#); [Luke 22:3-48](#); [John 18:2-5](#)). People have different ideas about why Judas betrayed Jesus:
  2. Judas wanted to remove the Romans from power. When he realized Jesus did not plan to do this or to start a Jewish state, he betrayed Jesus.
  3. Judas believed Jesus was the Messiah (God's chosen leader). Judas planned Jesus's arrest in the hope of getting Jesus to start his kingdom.

4. He was a liar who had planned evil since the start of Jesus's public ministry.
5. Judas was guided by Satan to betray Jesus. After recognizing that he was tricked by Satan, he took his own life because he regretted what he had done.
6. Jesus shamed and humiliated Judas when he corrected him. Judas was originally a loyal disciple, but he turned against Jesus.
7. Judas was moved by his greed. He gave into his own evil desires. He did not realize that Jesus would be tried and killed. When he found out Jesus had died because of him, he repented and killed himself.

Judas was sad over his actions. He went out and hung himself in a field. He bought the field with his 30 pieces of silver ([Matthew 27:3-10](#)). [Acts 1:18](#) adds the specific detail that his body split open. His intestines spilled out of his body. This is why the field was called the "Field of Blood" ([Acts 1:19](#)). Matthias later took Judas Iscariot's place among the Twelve ([1:26](#)).

1. Jesus's brother Judas. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. His other brothers were James, Joseph, and Simon ([Matthew 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#)). At first, Judas and his brothers did not believe Jesus was the Messiah ([John 7:5](#)). They believed after Jesus came back to life ([Acts 1:14](#)). Many believe Judas or "Jude" authored the letter in the New Testament named Jude.
2. The son of James. He is another one of the 12 disciples ([Luke 6:16](#); [John 14:22](#); [Acts 1:13](#)). [Matthew 10:3](#) and [Mark 3:18](#) call him Thaddeus. See Thaddaeus, The Apostle.

3. A man from Galilee who led a Jewish revolt against the Romans. This revolt resulted from the census taken by Quirinius in AD 6. In [Acts 5:37](#), one of the religious leaders, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, talked about Judas as an example of one who tried but failed to get Jewish people to follow him. Josephus said Judas him started a group called the Zealots. This group wanted to remove Roman control and bring back a free Jewish kingdom (*War 2.8.1*).
4. The owner of a house on a street named "Straight" in Damascus. Saul, who was later called Paul, stayed at this house after he changed his beliefs. He stayed there after a man named Ananias helped him see again ([Acts 9:11](#)).
5. A prophet and leader in the early Jerusalem church. Judas Barsabbas was chosen with Silas to join Paul and Barnabas on their trip to Antioch. In Antioch, they told the Antioch church the Jerusalem Council's decision about the gentile church. After sharing the decision, they supported its believers there ([Acts 15:22-32](#)). See Joseph #12.
6. The King James Version spelling of Judah. He is Jacob's son ([Matthew 1:2-3](#)). See Judah (Person) #1.

### **Judas Barsabbas**

*See Judas #6.*

### **Judas Iscariot**

*See Judas #1.*

### **Judas Maccabeus**

*See Maccabeus, Judas.*

### **Judas Maccabeus**

Judas Maccabeus was the third son of Mattathias. He led a Jewish revolt (a fight for freedom) against foreign rulers in 166 BC.

His family name, Maccabeus, may come from an Aramaic word that means "the Hammerer." Later, people used this name for his whole family. His family is also called the Hasmoneans. They helped lead the Jewish people during this time.

#### **A Strong Leader Against Syria**

Judas Maccabeus was one of the great military leaders in Jewish history. He had only a few thousand followers, but they fought against a much larger army from Syria. These armies were sent by a ruler named Lysias, under the command of generals Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias. They followed orders from Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He said to, "wipe out and destroy the strength of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem; ... to banish the memory of them from the place, settle aliens in all their territory, and distribute their land" ([1 Maccabees 3:35-36](#), Revised Standard Version).

Even though the Syrians had over 40,000 foot soldiers and 7,000 horse riders, the Jewish fighters did not give up. They said, "It is better for us to die in battle than to see the misfortunes of our nation and of the sanctuary. But as his will in heaven may be, so he will do" (verses [59-60](#)). [First Maccabees 4:1-25](#) records their decisive victory over Gorgias, "Israel had a great deliverance that day" (verse [25](#)).

#### **Cleansing the Temple and Honoring God**

Judas won peace from Lysias in 165 BC. In 164 BC, his army took control of Jerusalem. They cleaned the temple, removing everything used for the worship of Zeus. They also restarted the daily Jewish sacrifices. This important event is remembered during the Jewish festival called Hanukkah. It is also known as the Feast of Dedication ([John 10:22](#)).

Judas did not stop fighting. He protected Judea from nearby enemies and became a stronger leader. He also extended Jewish control north to Galilee and east to Gilead. In 163 BC, Syria gave official recognition to the religious freedom of the Jews. As 1 Maccabees says, Lysias told his people: "Let us come to terms with these men, ... and agree to let them live by their laws as they did before; for it was on account of their laws which we abolished

that they became angry and did all these things" ([1 Maccabees 6:58–59](#)).

### **From Religious Freedom to Political Independence**

The fight that began with Judas's father, **Mattathias**, started as a protest against religious oppression. Over time, it became a war for political freedom. To help his cause, Judas made a friendship agreement with Rome ([1 Maccabees 8:1](#) and following).

But things changed when **Demetrius I** became the new king of Syria. A Jewish man named **Alcimus** wanted to become high priest. He did not support Judas and brought false charges against him to Demetrius.

In response, Demetrius sent Bacchides and Alcimus with an army to attack Judas ([7:1](#) and following). They tried to trick Judas and his supporters, but their plan failed. Instead, they killed 60 innocent men from a faithful group called the Hasidim.

### **Judas's Final Battles and Death**

So they sent Nicanor, "who hated and detested Israel" ([1 Maccabees 7:26](#)), with another Syrian army. Judas also defeated Nicanor and his army in 161 BC and "the land of Judah had rest for a few days" ([1 Maccabees 7:50](#)).

Later, Bacchides and Alcimus returned with another Syrian army. Judas and his men fought them again. But this time, most of his army had left him. The Jews were outnumbered 20 to 1. Judas was killed in the battle at Alasa ([9:1](#) and following). Israel was deeply sad. They people cried, "How is the mighty fallen, the savior of Israel!" (verse [21](#)). After Judas died, his brothers Jonathan and Simon became the new leaders of the Maccabees.

### **Judas of Galilee**

*See Judas #4.*

### **Jude (Person)**

Brother of James and author of the general epistle named Jude. Jude is the English form of the Greek name Judas (Hebrew Judah). Most scholars think Jude was the brother of Jesus called Judas. *See Judas #2.*

*See also Brothers of Jesus; Jude, Letter of.*

### **Jude, Letter of**

Short, hard-hitting letter to a church being infiltrated by teachers who practiced all types of moral evil. Jude reveals the inner situation of a Jewish-Christian community and also presents some great difficulties for the Christian interpreter.

#### **Preview**

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

#### **Author**

The Letter of Jude states that it was written by "Jude . . . [the] brother of James" ([1:1](#)). Many scholars understand this nomenclature to designate Jude (Greek "Judas"), Jesus' brother, whose brother James became the leader of the Jerusalem church. But other scholars think that perhaps another Jude wrote it, or some later author wrote it in the spirit of the leader whom he revered. The hypothesis that another Jude wrote it seems unlikely, for the apostle Jude ([Lk 6:16](#); [Acts 1:13](#)) is the son of a certain James, not a brother of James; besides, [Jude 1:17](#) appears to distinguish Jude from the apostles. And since there was only one James who was prominent in the early church, James the Lord's brother, it would be hard to believe that some other Jude would have a brother named James and would use such an identification in the title; it would have been too confusing. The title "brother of James" most likely means that Jude was James of Jerusalem's brother and therefore Jesus' brother; he did not use the title "brother of our Lord," perhaps, as Clement of Alexandria said, out of modesty.

The idea that a later author wrote using Jude's name presents a major problem: Why would he pick such an obscure name, instead of Paul or Peter or James, and why would he not use a more exalted and authoritative title? We must conclude that, despite the difficulties of date and background, Judas the Lord's brother wrote this letter.

### Date, Origin, and Destination

About date, origin, and destination, the letter says nothing directly. Since the content of the faith is clearly fixed ([Jude 1:3](#)) and the recipients have personally heard the apostles (who may have died already, v [17](#)), the date is probably between AD 60 and 100.

Presumably, Jude traveled (with his wife and family) to promote the faith ([1 Cor 9:5](#)). Throughout his travels, he may have established some churches—or, at least, he probably taught at various local churches. It may be that he heard of false teachers infiltrating these churches and was prompted to write them this epistle.

Jude may have written from Galilee in his old age, or perhaps he had returned to Jerusalem. The best guess we can make about the recipients would be that they were members of Jewish-Christian churches in Syria. Still, these locations remain little more than guesses.

### Background

Three facts about the Letter of Jude make its background difficult to reconstruct. First, it is hard to be sure what type of heresy it was combating. Some scholars believe that this was early Gnosticism, and others that it was simply teaching infiltrated with ethical error. If the heretics were Gnostics, they believed in a hierarchy of angels or demigods. In this case they probably saw Jesus as a lower rung on the way to salvation. Perhaps they also considered God to be the lower creator (the demiurge) and spoke of wanting to serve the true God ([Jude 1:4](#)). This might explain the interest in angels and demons (v [8](#)) and the stress on the unity of God (v [25](#)). But probably these were simply people who had found a way to rationalize immoral behavior and were unwisely mocking the evil powers. There is no clear evidence that they were Gnostic, while there is plenty of evidence that people turned the freedom of the gospel into an excuse for sin (e.g., [Rom 6](#); [1 Cor 5–6](#)). These teachers probably denied Christ by failing to follow his ethical teaching, and their blasphemy of angels (while they themselves were deep in sin) was another ethical sin. Such depravity is enough to explain the letter; however, knowing that doctrinal and ethical error often go hand in hand, we must not discount the possibility that some doctrinal error was also involved.

Second, Jude surprises us by quoting from two apocryphal books, the Assumption of Moses ([Jude](#)

[1:4](#)) and 1 Enoch ([Jude 1:14–15](#) quotes 1 Enoch 1:9). This fact and other allusions in the book reveal that Jude and probably his readers were well read in Jewish apocryphal literature. Moreover, it also shows that Jude regarded books outside the canon of the OT as transmitting true traditions and authoritative prophecy. That Jude accepted these books is not surprising, since many apocryphal books were used by Jews of that period, alongside the OT, as a type of devotional literature. Early Christians often included apocryphal literature along with canonical books as part of their Bibles (sometimes they would also omit NT books that were not yet considered authentic). The canon of NT Scripture was not firmly established until the third century, long after Jude's epistle was written.

It is important to realize that while Jude probably believed in the historicity of these citations, the teaching of the letter does not depend on that historicity. Jude wrote about neither Moses nor Enoch but about how one should behave toward authorities ([Jude 1:8](#)) and what God will do to ungodly people (v [13](#)). The citations illustrate Jude's teaching and probably carried weight with his first readers, but the fact that they are apocryphal should bother us no more than Paul's quotations from pagan writers or the writer of Hebrews' allusions to 2 Maccabees ([Acts 17](#); [Ti 1:12](#); [Heb 11:35](#)). The authority of Scripture rests in the point the author is making.

Third, Jude shows such a close relationship to [2 Peter 2](#) that either Jude is an expansion of 2 Peter 2 or else 2 Peter 2 is an abbreviation of Jude. Words, phrases, and illustrations are essentially identical in the two works. While it is hard to determine who borrowed from whom, probably the author of 2 Peter has adapted the strong denunciations of Jude to the more instructive tone of his work. It would be hard to imagine anyone writing Jude if 2 Peter already existed. Christians should have no problem with this borrowing, for no writer of Scripture believed himself so original that he could not borrow from other Scriptures, from hymns, or from noncanonical literature. It is no more a problem for God to inspire a quotation or adaptation from another writing than for him to inspire a new composition. Indeed, some passages in Scripture are total repetitions of others (e.g., [Ps 18](#) and [2 Sm 22](#)).

### Purpose and Theological Teaching

Jude describes his work in terms of exhortation or encouragement ([Jude 1:3](#)). Obviously he wanted to

strengthen the churches against false teachers who were perverting the gospel. Thus, he repeatedly urged the believers to hold fast or guard their purity and the gospel (vv [3, 20–21, 24](#)). Yet he did not want the teachers simply kicked out, for he had hopes that the believers would be able to rescue some from this danger, although the rescue itself would be dangerous work (v [23](#)).

In framing his exhortation the author did not produce any new doctrines; rather, he underlined some old ones: (1) He stressed the ethical nature of the gospel and the need to maintain purity in life and speech. (2) He showed a high regard for salvation through Christ and a strong belief in one God. (3) He demanded respect for authority, both temporal and spiritual (vv [8–11](#)). (4) He had a clear apocalyptic belief, stressing the coming last judgment (vv [14–15](#)) and affirming that the last days had already come (v [18](#)). (5) He warned of the necessity to persevere in the faith both doctrinally and ethically (vv [19–21](#)). (6) He demonstrated zeal to reclaim those who had erred, for they were outside the grace of God (v [23](#)).

## *Content*

### **Salutation (1:1–2)**

The author identifies himself humbly as a servant of Jesus Christ and addresses his letter to the faithful in the church—those who are loved, guarded, and called by God and Christ.

### **Called to Hold to the Faith (1:3–4)**

Jude had been planning to write these Christians about “the salvation we all share” (v [3](#)). We will never know what instruction he had planned to give, for in the middle of his preparations he heard news that forced him to change his plans. Instead, he penned an epistle in defense of “the faith”—that is, the true apostolic teachings concerning Jesus Christ that all genuine believers embrace. Some people had joined the church, perhaps with ulterior motives, who were dangerous to the church. The Christians must fight hard to keep pure the body of doctrine (meaning ethics as well as theology) that they had received from Jude and the apostles. Jude makes two charges against these false believers: (1) they had perverted God’s grace into licentiousness, perhaps openly flaunting sexual sins as a sign of freedom they had in Christ (cf. [Rom 6; 1 Cor 5–6](#)); and (2) they denied the Lord Jesus (by failing to follow his teachings).

### **Reminder of God’s Judgment (1:5–7)**

Since the recipients were probably Jewish Christians, they had learned the OT and Jewish tradition well. The author chose three illustrations of the results of apostasy: (1) Judgment can come to those once considered as God’s people (as it did to those “saved” from Egypt, [Ex 32:28](#); [Nm 11:33–34; 14:29–35](#)). (2) The consequence of apostasy is eternal damnation (as in the case of the fallen angels of 1 Enoch 6–16—these ideas appear in other Jewish traditions as well). (3) Ethical corruption is in fact a type of apostasy and thus merits damnation (as in the case of Sodom—[Gn 19; 2 Pt 2:4–6](#)). The author stressed the homosexuality of Sodom rather than its injustice, which [Ezekiel 16:49](#) condemns, so perhaps sexual misbehavior was a problem with the false teachers. These three illustrations drive home the seriousness of the problems that the church was facing.

### **Denunciation of the False Teachers (1:8–16; cf. 2 Pt 2:10–17)**

The false teachers claimed to have received revelations in dreams as the basis of their evil behavior. Their sins were (1) sexual impurity (including, but not limited to, homosexuality); (2) rejection of Christ’s authority (as embodied in his ethical teaching); and (3) evil speech about angels (whether good ones, which is probably the case, or evil). This latter practice is shown to be sin by an example from the Assumption of Moses: even an archangel rebuking the devil himself would not use the language these teachers used about angels. But since these people were unspiritual, they were totally ignorant of what they insulted (cf. [1 Cor 2:7–16](#)), yet they were experts in bodily sin—like savage animals. Their sin was destroying them.

Therefore, the teachers were just like Cain (the embodiment of violence, lust, greed, and rebellion against God in Jewish tradition), Balaam (who tried to make money by leading people into sin—[Nm 31:16; Dt 23:4](#)), and Korah (who rebelled against God’s authority in Moses—[Nm 16](#)). They were also dangerous to the believers, for they were turning the meal, which was part of the love feast and Lord’s Table (Eucharist), into an orgy (cf. [1 Cor 11:20–22](#)), and would thereby corrupt the practice of the rest of the church. They cared only for themselves and were devoid of real spiritual gifts from God (like waterless clouds or the dead trees of winter, cf. [Lk 13:6–9](#)), being ready for the second death (their fate was so sure that it is seen as having already happened). They produced only evil

deeds; in this they are like the fallen angels (stars are considered angels in Jewish tradition—1 Enoch 18:13–16; 21:1–10).

The prophecy of Enoch in 1 Enoch 1:9 shows the certainty of their doom. Originally, the prophecy spoke of God coming in judgment, but Jude made it refer to Christ, who for Christians is the coming judge ([Mt 25:31](#)). Christ will come with the angelic hosts and execute justice on sinners for their sins (both evil deeds and evil words). That prophecy pertains to people who grumble or accuse God, as Israel did ([Ex 16:7–12](#); [17:3](#)); it also applies to people who do whatever they desire, are loud-mouthed, yet flatter when it is to their advantage.

### Instructions for the Faithful ([1:17–23](#))

Faithful Christians must remember that the apostles (here meaning the Twelve, not the wider circle of apostles that included Paul, Barnabas, and others) had predicted just such a situation when they were alive: in the last days there would be scoffers, who would do any ungodly act they desired ([2 Pt 3:3](#)). These false teachers are such people. They divide the church, and although they claim to be spiritual and receive dreams, they are totally worldly, for they do not possess the Holy Spirit. The faithful must watch out that they remain in the love of God and do not drift into rebellion as these heretics have. This is done by (1) building themselves up (as opposed to causing divisions) on the basis of the faith, the apostolic teaching, and example; (2) praying in the Holy Spirit ([Eph 6:18](#)), which sets them off from those not having the Spirit; and (3) waiting expectantly for the mercy Jesus would show them in the soon-coming Last Judgment (1 Enoch 27:3–4).

Yet the Christians must still deal with those influenced by the false teaching. While the Greek text here is very uncertain (it is not clear whether Jude had two or three groups in mind), Jude probably intended that the church should act mercifully toward those who were wavering over whether to follow the false teaching, restore those it could from the followers of the false teaching as if snatching them from hell, and while keeping a merciful attitude (a readiness to accept them back quickly if they repented), strictly avoid any social contact with the unrepentant out of fear of God's judgment.

### Benediction ([1:24–25](#))

Jude closes with a doxology very much like that found in [Romans 16:25–27](#). In the midst of many

who have fallen from the faith, God is praised as the one who is able to keep the believers from falling and to bring them safely into his very presence. It is to this one who is alone God our Savior through Jesus Christ (meaning God saves us by means of Jesus) that the four attributes—glory, majesty, dominion, and authority—belong, now and forever.

*See also* Apostasy; Brothers of Jesus.

## Judea, Judeans

Judea was the land where the Jewish people lived. The name comes from the tribe of Judah. Around 538 BC, many Israelites returned home after being held captive in Babylon. Most of these people were from the tribe of Judah, so they became known as Judeans or Jews. Their land became known as Judea.

Judea is a very important area in the Bible. It contains several significant places, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Many events from Jesus's life took place here.

### *The Meaning of the Name "Judea"*

The name "Judea" first appears in [Ezra 5:8](#). At that time, Judea was part of the Persian Empire. Later, when the Greeks took control from the Persians, Judea is mentioned in the book of 1 Maccabees ([1 Maccabees 5:45](#); [7:10](#)). When the Romans ruled the area, they joined Judea to their province of Syria. This lasted until about 37 BC, when Herod the Great became king of Judea. The word "Judea" could mean different things depending on how it was used. Sometimes, it referred to all the land where Jewish people lived in western Palestine ([Luke 23:5](#); [Acts 10:37](#); [26:20](#)). Non-religious writers from this time, like Strabo, Tacitus, and Philo, used "Judea" in this broad way. However, most often, "Judea" meant just the southern region of Palestine. The other two main regions were Galilee in the north and Samaria in the middle.

### *The Location of Judea*

The borders of Judea changed over time. However, it always included land that had belonged to four tribes of Israel: Judah, Dan, Benjamin, and Simeon. The border between Judea and Samaria in the north was not very clear. Unlike other borders, there were no natural dividing features like valleys, rivers, or changes in the land. However, historians

believe the northern border went from the city of Joppa by the Mediterranean Sea to a point on the Jordan River. This point was about 16 to 19 kilometers (10 to 12 miles) north of the Dead Sea.

The southern border of Judea started near the coast, about 11 kilometers (seven miles) southwest of Gaza. From there, it went through the city of Beersheba and ended at the Dead Sea. The Bible tells us that Beersheba marked the southern edge of the nation ([Judges 20:1](#)), so it also marked the southern edge of Judea. The Dead Sea formed Judea's eastern border, and the Mediterranean Sea formed its western border. The shape of Judea was roughly square, with each side being about 72 km (45 miles) long.

### *The History of Judea*

The history of Judea as a distinct region began in 539 BC during the Persian period. At this time, King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jewish people to return home and rebuild both their temple and their holy city of Jerusalem.

Later, from 334 to 167 BC, the Greeks took control of the area. The Seleucids, who ruled from Syria, took power. They were descendants of one of Alexander the Great's military leaders. When the Seleucids tried to stop the Jewish people from practicing their religion, the Jews fought back. This revolt was led by the Hasmonean family. After winning their freedom, the Jewish people ruled themselves for almost 100 years, from 167 to 63 BC.

In 63 BC, a Roman leader named Pompey took control of the land. Later, Rome made Herod the Great the king of Judea. He ruled from 37 to 4 BC. After him, his son Herod Archelaus ruled until AD 6.

Then Rome began sending governors (called procurators) to rule Judea, Samaria, and Idumea (a region south of Judea). This system lasted until a Jewish revolt in AD 66 to 70. There was one exception: from AD 41 to 44, Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruled all of Palestine.

After the time of the New Testament, many different groups ruled over Judea and the rest of Palestine:

- Rome controlled the region until AD 330.
- Then the Byzantine Empire took control and ruled until AD 634. During this time, many Christian churches were built.
- From AD 607 to 629, the Persians invaded again. They destroyed many churches and killed many people.
- Then came the Arab period from 634 to 1099, when Muslim rulers controlled Judea.
- The Crusaders took control from 1099 to 1263. The Crusaders were European Christians who wanted to take the Holy Land from Muslim control.
- After the Crusaders were defeated, Muslim rulers controlled the area again until 1917.
- After World War I, the League of Nations gave Britain authority to govern Palestine under the British Mandate.
- In 1947, the United Nations proposed dividing the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state. In 1948, British rule ended, and the State of Israel was established.
- As a result of Israel's victories in the Six-Day War of June 1967, Judea was captured by Israel and has been under Israeli control since then.

*See also* Diaspora of the Jews; Judaism; Palestine; Postexilic Period.

### **Judge**

An official with authority to decide matters brought before a court.

The judge had many tasks. Most tasks were legal but some were political. In the period of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the elders of the tribes decided arguments. Moses appointed other judges to assist him but took the difficult cases for himself ([Exodus](#)

[18:13–26](#); [Deuteronomy 1:9–17](#)). Samuel traveled to different places to judge cases ([1 Samuel 7:16–17](#)). His sons also became judges ([8:1](#)). When kings ruled Israel, judges were official leaders with clear roles and duties.

In the New Testament period, there were two types of courts in Palestine: Jewish courts and Roman courts. Cases that could lead to death were heard by Roman judges. People had to bring witnesses to court trials ([Matthew 18:16](#); [2 Corinthians 13:1](#); [1 Timothy 5:19](#)). Jesus was put on trial before Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor ([Matthew 27:11–25](#); [Mark 15:2–5](#); [Luke 23:2–3](#); [John 18:29–40](#)). Paul was also put on trial before two Roman governors: Felix and Festus ( [Acts 24:1–26](#); [25:1–26](#)).

*See also Civil Law and Justice; Criminal Law and Punishment.*

## Judges, Book of

Old Testament book named after the prominent leaders raised up by the Lord to deliver his people. The word “judge” in Hebrew also denotes the activity of governance, including warfare. Some scholars have argued that there were two kinds of judges: charismatic deliverers (or major judges) and local judicial sages (minor judges). It is uncertain why some judges receive cursory attention, whereas the exploits of other judges are given in great detail.

### Preview

- Author
- Date
- Literary Framework
- Purpose and Theological Teaching
- Content

### Author

The book reflects a final editing of the material in the period of the early monarchy. It may well be a polemic for the righteous rule of David over against the kingship of Saul, which was molded by a secular, Canaanite conception of kingship rather than by the law of God. The author was almost certainly not Samuel, as traditionally thought, but a later compiler who relied on ancient written materials.

### Date

Though the judges succeeded in giving the tribes some rest from the incursions of surrounding enemies, the Israelites were continually harassed over long periods of time. Scholarly opinion differs on the duration of the period of the judges. The dating of the exodus affects the dating of the beginning of the judges. Those who take an early date for the exodus put the beginning around 1370–1360 BC, whereas others propose a date close to the end of the 13th century BC. A related issue pertains to the chronology of the judges. Does Judges give a chronological, sequential account of the period, or is the book a representative account of judges from various parts of Canaan and Transjordan who “judged” a region, a tribe, or several tribes simultaneously?

### Literary Framework

There is no doubt that the stories in the book bear the marks of literary creativity. The stories are classics in their own right. The poetry of Deborah’s song ([Jgs 5](#)) is very moving, and the fable of Jotham ([9:8–15](#)) is a fine example of figurative speech. The care given to the stories is also reflected in the construction of the book. There are two introductions: a political one ([Jgs 1:1–2:5](#)) and a socioreligious one ([2:6–3:6](#)). The political introduction connects Judges with the story of the Conquest, when the tribes attempted to occupy the land. It prepares the reader for the political and military problems of the era of the judges. The socioreligious introduction explains why Israel had so many adversities, why the institution of the judges arose, and why the Lord never gave Israel the promised lasting rest from its enemies. The main body of the book is the story of the judges ([3:7–16:31](#)). References to the minor judges (six in all) are set within the stories of the major judges in increasing frequency. As is evident from the schema, the number of minor judges increased in frequency in proportion to the decrease in number of major judges: two major, one minor; two major, two minor; one major, three minor; one major. There is a total of 12 judges, representative of the 12 tribes of Israel.

The purpose of the listing of 12 judges, representative of the various parts of Canaan and Transjordan, is to demonstrate that all tribes throughout the conquered territories experienced grave difficulties from a variety of enemies: Arameans, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Canaanites, and Philistines. Israel was hard

pressed on nearly all its frontiers. The appendixes (chs 17–21), together with the two introductions, form the framework of the book. The political and socioreligious problems (1:1–3:6) are presented by way of several stories in the last chapters. The final editor who gave the book its canonical shape purposefully framed the stories of the judges so as to show lack of movement. The successes of the previous stages in redemptive history came to a standstill in the ebb and flow of the judges. Though the Lord delivered his people in many ways, they returned to the problems described in 1:1–3:6. The appendixes describe Israel's problems representative of the period of the judges, when "there was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

### *Purpose and Theological Teaching*

The cycle of apostasy, judgment, cry for deliverance, and God's raising up of a judge reflects a deuteronomistic perspective with its warnings concerning disobedience and judgment. The repetitiveness of the cycle supports the contention of the anonymous narrator that Israel remained unchanged by the grace of God. However, in spite of the moral, religious, and political anarchy as well as the civil wars, the last chapter shows that the tribes are still concerned with each other's welfare. Though the unity of God's people has been gravely challenged, the situation is not hopeless. The book ends on a note of hope—hope for a king who may deliver Israel.

Thus, there are several purposes of the book: (1) to demonstrate the meaninglessness of this stage in Israel's development; (2) to explain why the tribes did not occupy all the land promised to the patriarchs; (3) to justify the way of God, who was gracious and patient with Israel's repeated acts of disobedience; (4) to set forth the legitimacy of a "shepherd" king in contrast to a despotic form of kingship; and (5) to explain the urgent need for a new momentum, lest Israel succumb to the Philistines and intertribal warfare.

### *Content*

#### **The Political Introduction (1:1–2:5)**

In [Joshua 1–12](#) the warfare under Joshua is portrayed as a mobilization of Canaanite forces against Israel. By the intervention of the Lord, the Canaanite resistance was put down and the land was occupied by the tribes (chs 13–21). [Joshua 13–21](#), however, clearly shows that each tribe had

problems ridding its territory of pockets of Canaanite resistance, which were usually centered around heavily guarded and well-fortified cities (cf. 13:2–6, 13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12–18).

The book of Joshua emphasizes the successes and minimizes the problems, whereas the prologue to Judges sets the stage for the whole book by openly addressing Israel's problems and failures. As the book unfolds, it is precisely these problems and failures that in due time bring Israel to the brink of disaster.

The period of the judges began with the death of Joshua ([Jgs 1:1; 2:8–9](#)). The Israelites had inherited a legacy from Joshua: the law of the Lord ([Jos 23:6; 24:26](#)), the land, a challenge to obey the Lord ([24:14–27](#)), and a promise of God's presence and help in subduing the Canaanites ([23:5, 10](#)).

#### **Judah and Simeon ([Jgs 1:2–20](#))**

The prominence of Judah and Caleb parallels the position of Judah in Joshua ([Jos 14:6–15:63](#); cf. also the house of Joseph, [Jgs 1:22–29](#); cf. [Jos 16–17](#)). Judah was victorious over the cruel Adoni-bezek, who ruled over Bezek, a town of uncertain location. Judah successfully occupied the hill country, the Negev, and the western foothills. They even took Jerusalem, or an outlying suburb identified with Jerusalem ([Jos 1:8](#)), but could not retain control there (v 21) until David's conquest of the city ([2 Sm 5:6–9](#)). Judah was victorious over the Canaanites in the region of Hebron, already conquered under Joshua ([Jos 10:36](#)). Hebron, also known as Kiriath-arba ("city of four" or "tetrapolis"), was a powerful ally of Jerusalem (v 3) and had been able to rally military support for a new assault on Israel, even after its first defeat. Caleb received Hebron, as Moses had promised ([Jgs 1:20](#); cf. [Jos 15:13](#)). After the victory over Hebron, Judah extended its control over the southern hill country by an attack on Debir ([Jgs 1:11–15](#); cf. [Jos 15:14–19](#)).

The Kenites ([Jgs 1:16](#)), descendants of Jethro and therefore related to Moses by marriage, settled in the Negev around Arad and the City of Palms, which here probably refers to Tamar rather than Jericho.

Judah secured the southern border by a victory over the Canaanites at Hormah ([Jgs 1:17](#); cf. [Nm 14:45; 21:3](#); [Dt 1:44](#)) and the coastal plain by victories at Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron. However, Judah's successes in the coastal plain were resisted by a well-armed Canaanite force ([Jgs 1:18–19](#)). It occupied the Judean hill country and the Negev, but could not retain control over the plains. The Philistines were soon to take control over Gaza,

Ashkelon, and Ekron, and incorporate them into their pentapolis.

### Benjamin (1:21)

Jerusalem was situated on the border between Judah and Benjamin. Judah took the city or a suburb ([Jos 1:8](#)) but was too far removed to retain control over it. Benjamin was too weak to subdue the Jebusites. Only David succeeded in this ([2 Sm 5:6-9](#)); he incorporated it into Judah (cf. [Jos 15:63](#)), even though it originally was allotted to Benjamin ([Jos 18:28](#)).

### Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh (1:22-29)

Ephraim took Bethel, known from the patriarchal stories as a significant cultic site ([Gn 12:8; 13:3-4; 28:19; 31:13; 35:1-15](#)). However, Manasseh was unsuccessful in taking the fortified cities in the valley of Jezreel (Esdraelon): Beth-shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo. These cities controlled traffic along the east-west and north-south roads as well as the important passes through the Carmel range and the ford of the Jordan. Ephraim could not take full possession of the coastal plain, controlled by Gezer. The success of both Ephraim and Manasseh was limited.

### The Other Four Tribes (1:30-36)

The other four tribes in Canaan receive brief mention. They, too, were only partially successful. Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and especially Dan did not fully succeed in driving out the Canaanites. At best they later subjected most of them to forced labor.

### The Failure of Israel (2:1-5)

The failure to subdue the land and to wipe out the Canaanites and their culture led to intermarriage and idolatry (cf. [Ex 23:33; 34:12-16; Nm 33:55; Dt 7:2-5, 16; Jos 23:7, 12](#)).

The identity of “the angel of the Lord” who appears at Bokim is far from certain. It may be a reference to the Lord himself, to an angelic messenger, or to a prophet (cf. [Jgs 6:8](#)). He rebuked the people in the prophetic spirit and pronounced God’s judgment as taking the form of continual confrontation between Israel and the Canaanites ([2:3](#)). Their weeping and sacrificing were to no avail ([2:4-5](#); cf. [Mal 2:13](#)). Israel stood condemned within a generation after Joshua’s death.

### The Theological Introduction (2:6-3:6)

The theological introduction begins where Joshua left off ([Jos 24:28-31](#)). The generation of Joshua

was characterized by loyalty, but their loyalty to the Lord did not last long after the excitement of the Conquest and the demonstration of God’s presence ([Jgs 2:10](#)). Israel served Canaanite gods (Baal and Astarte) instead. Baal was the storm god, symbolic of rain and fertility, and Astarte was his cohort. The plural (Baals and Ashtaroth, [2:11-13](#)) signifies the many local ways in which the Canaanite gods were worshiped. The religious unity was broken up into a great diversity. Thus Israel angered the Lord (vv [12-14](#)), who sent them enemies and plunderers. Israel was unsuccessful in dealing with them, as Moses and Joshua had forewarned ([Dt 28:25, 33; Jos 23:13, 16](#)). The cycle of apostasy, judgment, cry for mercy, and deliverance is found throughout Judges. The people were rooted in the apostasy of their forefathers, even though the previous generation had been sensitive to God. Israel did not submit to the leadership of the judges, except to free itself from the oppressors. In fulfillment of the curses of the covenant, God swore not to give his people rest but to test them and to train them for warfare ([Jgs 3:1-4](#)), so that they might learn to respond to the challenges of a real world.

### The Judges of Israel (3:7-16:31)

#### Othniel (3:7-11)

Othniel is a transitional figure, linking the Conquest and the judges. He had involved himself in the conquest of Kiriath-sepher and was related to Caleb as his cousin and son-in-law ([1:13](#)). He repelled the Arameans led by Cushan-rishathaim, so that the land enjoyed peace for some 40 years.

#### Ehud (3:12-30)

The Moabites, allied with the Ammonites and Amalekites, came against Israel from the east and oppressed them for 18 years under the leadership of Eglon. Ehud led the mission to bring tribute to Eglon at his palace, located probably by Jericho (the City of Palms). Ehud was uniquely qualified for this mission; being left-handed, he was able to use his double-edged sword in an unsuspecting manner to stab the king. Ehud’s success was the result of careful plotting and the element of surprise. He paid the tribute and left, only to return with a supposed oracle from the gods. The king fell for the deception and was murdered. The delay at the Moabite court gave the Israelites an opportunity to bring their forces together at the fords of the Jordan. Ehud’s success was complete; no Moabite escaped, and Israel enjoyed peace for 80 years.

Shamgar ([3:31](#))

Shamgar's exploits were against the Philistines in the coastal plains. He had a non-Israelite name but was probably an Israelite by birth. Like Samson he fought the Philistines with an unconventional weapon (an ox goad). His name is also mentioned in the song of Deborah ([5:6](#)).

Deborah and Barak ([4:1-5:31](#))

The narrative now turns to the Canaanite aggressors in the north under the leadership of Jabin, king of Hazor, and Sisera, of Harosheth-haggioim ([4:1-3](#)). The ruins of Hazor ([Jgs 11:13](#)) had been rebuilt, and another Jabin (cf. v [1](#)) ruled over the region. He had regained his military power, as he had as many as 900 chariots of iron. He oppressed Israel for 20 years ([Jgs 4:3](#)).

God had a prophetess in Israel who led his people during this dark time ([4:4](#)). She rendered judgments under a palm tree in southern Ephraim near Benjamin (v [5](#)). She called on Barak to muster the armies of Naphtali and Zebulun, the tribes affected by the Canaanite raids, and to engage Sisera in a surprise attack by the Kishon River (vv [6-7](#)). Barak's hesitancy led him to request Deborah's presence, which resulted in his forfeiture of the honor of killing Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite forces (vv [8-10](#)). The Lord gave success to the surprise attack from Mt Tabor, so that the Canaanites were routed, unable to use their heavy chariots, which were mired down in the swamps of the Jezreel Valley ([5:20-22](#)). The Canaanites were routed, and Sisera was killed by Jael, the wife of Heber, a Kenite who had separated from the Kenites around Arad ([4:17-18](#); cf. [1:16](#)). She offered him hospitality, as her family had friendly relations with the Canaanites, but heroically put him to death with a tent peg ([4:18-21](#); [5:26-27](#)). In successive campaigns the Israelites gained freedom from Jabin, until they destroyed his power ([4:24](#)).

The song of Deborah (ch [5](#)) celebrates, in poetic fashion, the victory over Jabin. It is one of the oldest poems in the Bible. It praises the God of Israel as the King who comes to protect his covenant people, and before whom the mountains move ([5:2-3](#)). He is the God of Mt Sinai ([Jgs 5:4-5](#); cf. [Dt 33:2](#); [Ps 68:7-8](#); [Hb 3:3-4](#)). Though the oppressors had despoiled Israel and had made the roads unsafe for travel, and Israel was unable to defend itself ([Jgs 5:6-8](#)), the Lord raised up Deborah and Barak to lead the nobles to war (vv [9-13](#)). They came from Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, and

Naphtali (vv [14-15a](#), [18](#)), but the Transjordan tribes and Asher did not want to get involved (vv [15b-17](#)). The song then moves to the battle scene, where torrential rains bogged the chariots down (vv [19-23](#)). Jael is celebrated as "most blessed of women," who used her simple way of life to bring an end to Sisera (vv [24-27](#)). She stands in contrast to Sisera's mother, who is portrayed with all her culture waiting in vain for Sisera's return with all of his spoils (vv [28-30](#)). The Lord has used the simple to confound the powerful. The conclusion is a prayer for God's judgment on all of Israel's enemies ([Jgs 5:31a](#); cf. [Ps 68:1-3](#)).

Gideon ([6:1-8:35](#))

Israel's rest for 40 years ([Jgs 5:31b](#)) was disturbed by the invasion of Midianites and Amalekites from the East ([6:1-3](#)). They destroyed the economy by invading the country at harvesttime (vv [4-6](#)). In response to Israel's cry, God sent a prophet with a message similar to that of the angel of the Lord ([2:1-5](#)). Then an angel appeared to Gideon and called him to lead the people in battle ([6:11-14](#)). The Lord assured him of his presence (v [16](#)) by a sign (vv [17-22](#)). Gideon knew that he had been visited by the Lord and built an altar called "The Lord Is Peace" in Ophrah (v [24](#)). He responded by destroying the cultic site dedicated to Baal and Asherah at Ophrah (vv [25-28](#)) and by initiating worship at the new altar (v [28](#)). Baal did not protect his own altar (vv [29-32](#)), even when challenged by Gideon's father (v [31](#)). Consequently, Gideon was known as Jerubbaal (meaning, "let Baal contend with him," v [32](#)).

Next, Gideon mustered an army of 32,000 men from Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali ([6:35](#); cf. [7:3b](#)). In order to assure himself of the Lord's presence, he asked for another sign: the sign of the fleece ([6:36-40](#)). It must be kept in mind that Gideon lived in an area in which the wonders of God had been scarce (v [13](#)) and that he, like Moses, needed reassurance that God was with him. God responded to his growing faith. Gideon went forth with a greatly reduced army of 300 against the enemy. Of his original army, 22,000 had left because they were afraid ([7:2-3](#); cf. [Dt 20:8](#)). Another 9,700 were sent home, though they were valiant men ([7:4-8](#)). After assuring Gideon by a dream of an enemy soldier, God used the 300 in a marvelous way to confound the Midianites (vv [9-15](#)). God gave Israel victory over the Midianite leaders Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna ([7:16-8:21](#)). Gideon wisely avoided a possible military confrontation with Ephraim ([8:1-3](#)), pursued the enemy deep

into the Transjordan, and punished the leaders of Succoth and Penuel, who did not assist him (vv [4-9](#), [13-16](#)).

This glorious victory created a new wave of interest in the idea of kingship. The men of Israel wished to establish the family of Gideon as their royal dynasty ([8:22](#)). Gideon refused, and instead wrongly set up an ephod, cast from the gold taken in battle (vv [23-27](#)). The ephod was probably used for cultic practices, possibly divination (cf. [17:5](#)).

Gideon's era also came to an end. He was God's instrument, giving Israel rest for 40 years. He fathered 70 sons and died in old age. God had richly blessed him, even though he had led Israel astray with his ephod. Thereafter, Israel returned to Baal worship ([8:33-35](#)).

In the wake of Gideon's era, his son Abimelech attempted to establish dynastic continuity by having himself installed as king at Shechem ([9:1-6](#)). With the support of his relatives at Shechem, Abimelech had all his brothers killed except Jotham (vv [4-5](#)). After Abimelech's coronation, Jotham set forth his opposition to his brother in a proverbial manner (vv [7-20](#)), and went into hiding. Three years later Abimelech's evil schemes entrapped him when the citizens of Shechem rebelled. He furiously attacked the city and destroyed it. A short time later, however, he was wounded at Thebez by a millstone dropped by a woman from the tower in which she had sought refuge from him. His servant put him out of his misery as per his request. This episode demonstrates how bad a despotic king may be. Again, God's justice prevailed.

#### Tola ([10:1-2](#))

Tola was a minor judge from Issachar who judged Israel for 23 years.

#### Jair ([10:3-5](#))

Jair was a minor judge from Gilead who judged Israel for 22 years.

#### Jephthah ([10:6-12:7](#))

A recapitulation ([10:6-16](#)) of the cycle (idolatry, enemies, cry for help, momentary repentance) sets the introduction to the Jephthah narrative. Under attack from the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead requested help from Jephthah ([10:17-11:8](#)), who promised to help them on the condition that he remain their leader even after the war (vv [9-10](#)). At a solemn ceremony he becomes their "head" at Mizpah (v [11](#)). Jephthah opened up correspondence with the Ammonite king, in which

he argued for Israel's rights on the basis of the Israelites' historic claim to the land as granted to them by the Lord (vv [12-27](#)). Instead of going out immediately to war, he hoped that "the Lord, the Judge" would settle the dispute (v [27](#)); but the Ammonite king was unimpressed. When the Spirit of God came over him, Jephthah led Israel into battle, but only after making a rash vow. He was victorious but found out that his vow to sacrifice whatever came first out of his house required him to sacrifice his daughter. Debate continues as to whether he offered her up as a human sacrifice or whether she sacrificed marriage (see discussion under Jephthah).

The Ephraimites seemed to have had an insatiable desire for war. Earlier they had complained to Gideon, who successfully defused their threats ([8:1-3](#)). Jephthah fought them, however, because the Israelites living in Transjordan had been reviled as "renegades" ([12:1-4](#)). Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed by the fords of the Jordan in this civil war. Thereafter, Jephthah ruled for only six years.

#### Ibzan ([12:8-10](#))

Ibzan was a minor judge from Bethlehem who ruled Israel for seven years.

#### Elon ([12:11](#))

A minor judge from Zebulun, Elon ruled Israel for ten years.

#### Abdon ([12:13-15](#))

Abdon was a minor judge from Pirathon, the location of which is uncertain. He ruled for eight years.

#### Samson ([13:1-16:31](#))

Samson's greatness in the history of redemption is due to his miraculous birth ([13:1-24](#)), his service as a Nazirite ([13:7](#); cf. [Nm 6:1-21](#)), the repeated overpowering by the Spirit of the Lord ([Jgs 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14](#)), the single-handed exploits against the Philistines (Ashkelon, [14:19](#); the fields, [15:1-6](#); Ramath Etam, [15:7-17](#); Gaza, [16:1-3, 23-30](#)), and his occasional dependence on the Lord ([15:18-19; 16:28-30](#)). However, his personal life was flawed because of his weakness for Philistine women (chs [14, 16](#)). Having been seduced by Delilah, he was imprisoned at Gaza. He died in the collapse of Dagon's temple, praying that the Lord would permit him to get revenge ([16:28-30](#)). He was buried in his father's tomb in the territory of Dan ([16:31](#)).

## Epilogue (17–21)

The cyclical nature of Israel's existence was without movement. Rest from enemies was always temporary. Israel was not yet ready for dynastic kingship, and whatever one may say of the three years of Abimelech, it was a kingship of the worst sort. Israel vacillated between idolatry and belief in the true Lord. The period of the judges was unstable, marked by petty individualism and provincialism. Yet God remained sovereign in the affairs of his people. The epilogue contains two stories: the story of Micah and the Danite migration (chs 17–18) and the civil war (chs 19–21). The epilogue is bound together by the phrase "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25, niv). The symmetric recurrence (two times in each narrative) emphasizes the anarchy and inability of the tribes to unite together to serve God as a covenant people.

### Micah and the Danites (17–18)

Micah was an Ephraimite who established a shrine and hired one of his own sons, and then a Levite from Bethlehem, to serve as its priests (ch 17). Unable to keep their patrimony, the Danites left to establish themselves at the foot of Mt Hermon. They took the idols and the Levite from Micah's shrine and set up a cultic city at the newly established city of Dan, built on the ruins of Laish (ch 18). Thus, they set up a cultic center that rivaled the tabernacle at Shiloh (18:31).

### The Civil War (19–21)

The people of Gibeah, which belonged to Benjamin, sexually abused the concubine of a Levite so that she died. Like the Levite of chapters 17 and 18, she was from Bethlehem (19:1). Dramatically, the Levite sent pieces of her corpse to all the tribes, which assembled against the Benjamites because they protected the criminals of Gibeah (19:29–20:19). In the ensuing battle the population of Benjamin was decimated (20:20–48). The 11 tribes gave them 400 virgins taken in a civil war against Jabesh-gilead (21:6–15). These were not enough, however. Because of the threat of the extinction of Benjamin and the vow not to give their daughters in marriage to any Benjamite, the Israelites devised a plan by which the Benjamites could take Israelite virgins dancing in the festival at Shiloh. Benjamin thus was able to rebuild its towns and settlements.

*See also* Gideon; Jephthah; Samson.

## Judges, Period of

*See Judges, Book of.*

## Judgment

Concept in Scripture closely related to the concept of God's justice. In all his relationships God acts justly and morally. Human beings, created by God, have a moral dimension, so that they may positively respond to God's righteous demands in their lives. Divine judgment, involving God's approval or disapproval upon each human act, is a natural consequence of the Creator-creature relationship. Thus judgment, simply defined, is the divine response to human activity. God the Creator must also be God the Judge. Since God is just, he responds with either punishment or reward to what each person does. A human's moral accountability to God (a quality not shared by the rest of creation) is an essential ingredient of being created in God's image. Creation in the divine image means that God and man can communicate with each other in such a way that all people are able to understand God's moral requirements and willingly respond to them. Among the various positive commands given to people in his original creation—including marriage, the subduing of the earth, and enjoyment of the Garden of Eden—was the negative command prohibiting the eating of the fruit from one tree. Defiance of this prohibition carried the threat of death as punishment (Gen 2:16–17). *Genesis 3* contains the account of God's first judgment, the one against Adam. He was punished by death since he had not lived within the moral regulations set by God (3:17–19). In a purely technical sense, judgment includes God's approval upon acts that please him; more frequently, judgment is understood negatively in the sense that God punishes those who violate his commands. Since the fall, all human activity stands under God's negative judgment (Rom 2:12).

### Judgment in This Life

The Christian idea of the atonement, that Christ died for sin in the place of man, depends on the premise that God holds humans accountable for their sins. But God sent his Son to deal with this problem. The Son willingly placed himself under God's judgment, and in people's place he received the divine punishment (Gal 3:13). Christ's death for sin may therefore be considered the extreme manifestation of divine judgment. God as judge

visits upon the soul of Christ in his crucifixion the total divine judgment against sin.

Through faith, brought about by the Holy Spirit and fed by the Word, a believer becomes one with Christ and thus escapes divine judgment and is rescued from punishment ([Rom 3:22](#)). Those who, by faith, share in the benefits of Christ's death stand before the divine Judge and receive a verdict of "not guilty," and instead of punishment and divine retribution, receive a sentence of eternal life. Jesus says of those who believe in him that they have already passed through judgment, have escaped death, and are already sharing in eternal life ([In 5:24](#)).

Though sins have been atoned for by Christ, each person—believer and unbeliever alike—still suffers certain consequences of his or her sins here in this life. For every human action there is a divine reaction ([Rom 2:6](#)). Paul speaks about the conscience, which carries out a series of judgments even upon the actions of those who do not know the true God (v [15](#)).

Governments are also manifestations of divine judgment upon man's public performances with respect to the law. Civil justice, though often corrupted, is a means through which God carries out temporal judgment upon any infringement of the law in this life ([Rom 13:1-2](#)). Public crimes against society are not the only sins subject to divine judgment.

In addition to the accusations of the conscience against even the most private of sins, each human action carries with it potential reward or punishment. Living within the moral bounds established by God, especially as they are revealed in the Ten Commandments and further explicated in the rest of Scripture, results in certain physical benefits in this life. Living in disregard of the moral law results in penalties and hardships appropriate to the infraction ([Gal 6:7-8](#)). For example, refusal to work can result in poverty, and overindulgence can result in poor health. Some activities bring their own penalties. Christians should not conclude, however, that the presence of calamities in a person's life must indicate a specific judgment of God against a particular sin. God can use calamities in the life of a Christian to guide him providentially to the goal of eternal life ([1 Pt 4:12-13](#)).

On account of Adam's sin, the creation was subject to a judgment of corruption ([Gn 3:17](#)). All of human life participates in a deterioration that is a

manifestation of divine judgment against the sin that originated with Adam. God remains sovereign even over the universal corruption and is able to direct and control it for his ultimate purposes ([Rom 8:20](#)). Thus he can use calamities for the benefit of the Christian's life (v [28](#)), but he can also use them to manifest his anger on those who persist in deliberate sin and who reject his Son Jesus Christ as the Redeemer from sin. Pharaoh, who recognized Moses as God's prophet and still rejected him and his message, is a prime example of a person who received God's judgment ([Ex 10:20](#)). The Jews who saw the miracles of Jesus and rejected his claims to be the Messiah are also among those who received God's judgment while living ([Mt 12:22-32](#)).

Through wars and the creation and destruction of nations, God carries out judgment collectively against entire peoples. The OT records the rise and fall of nations and of kings. The refusal to acknowledge and worship the true God and to follow his laws eventually and most certainly results in national extinction. The destruction of Nineveh and Israel in the OT and Jerusalem in the NT are clear examples of God's judgment against entire peoples who reject his message of salvation. Public disregard of the moral law must result in national disintegration, which is then frequently compounded by invasion by a foreign nation. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was the direct result of immoral license ([Jude 1:7](#)).

### *Last Judgment*

Judgment in its final and ultimate sense is best understood as the appearance of Jesus Christ on the last day. At that time believers will inherit eternal life and unbelievers will be damned. The Christian does not fear this moment, because he has already been acquitted in Christ Jesus. The unbeliever rightfully fears death. The cause of horrible and unchangeable judgment is the persistent rejection of God's offer of salvation. This is the sin against the Holy Spirit ([Mt 12:32](#)). Those who fall under its condemnation are those who have heard God's special message to them and are convinced of its truth but who nevertheless persist in rejecting this salvation. As the unbeliever has rejected God in this life, so God rejects him in his death forever.

In addition to this individual judgment, all nations will appear before Jesus ([Mt 25:31-32](#)). The fate of all those who appear before the Judge has already been sealed. The Scriptures teach that there is a

judgment on that last day that will be made on the basis of works (vv [31-46](#)). This should not be seen as a denial and contradiction of the principle that one is saved by faith alone. People enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ through faith alone, without works. Faith is known only to God and of itself is not visible to others. The evidence for the presence of faith is works.

God's judgments upon people in this life can be of benefit because through these judgments he is calling them to repentance. The judgment of the last day will be final; no one will be permitted to repent or change his or her mind about God. On that day all will recognize the truthfulness of God's claims in Christ Jesus, but only those who have believed in him and carried out his will in their lives will receive the invitation to enter eternal life ([v 34](#)).

### *Practical Implications*

Christians live a positive and confident life knowing that Jesus has taken the divine judgment for them and thus they are free from any further divine retribution. At the same time they are aware of God's judgment against all sins, including those of Christians, and that apart from Christ they would suffer the worst possible divine punishment. They see the evil and calamities of this life as God's continued displeasure with sin. When they come, Christians use them as opportunities for searching their own souls and for repentance. Though they are not aware of the exact date of the last day, they prepare themselves each day for the final judgment.

### *Conclusion*

The concept of judgment covers the entire history of the human race—from the fall to the last day. God, as a just God who sees a decisive difference between good and evil, has no choice but to carry out judgment upon all people in their daily lives and especially at life's conclusion. God in his grace has sent his Son to suffer the judgment we deserved, and in his mercy delays the final Day of Judgment so that we can come to repentance by faith in Jesus Christ ([2 Pt 3:9](#)). The great concepts of creation, justice, law, salvation, and atonement reach their climax in the divine judgment of the last day.

*See also Hell; Judgment Seat; Justification, Justified; Last Judgment; Second Coming of Christ; Wrath of God.*

## Judgment Seat

The place before which people will give an account of their lives to God.

### *In the Old Testament*

The concept of divine judgment in the New Testament comes from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God is seen as the Judge of the whole world, especially of his own people.

When Abraham asked God to spare the city of Sodom, he spoke of God as "Judge of all the earth" ([Genesis 18:25](#)). Moses's role as a judge over the Israelites was based on the belief that God was giving judgments through him. A similar relationship existed between God and the judges who led Israel after the conquest of the promised land. This understanding of God as Judge is clearly seen in Jephthah's message to the king of Ammon: "May the LORD, the Judge, decide today between the Israelites and the Ammonites" ([Judges 11:27](#)). When God called Samuel, he told him that he (God) would judge Eli's household.

The idea of God as the Judge of his people is common in the Psalms and Prophets. In [Psalm 9:4](#), David said of God, "For You have upheld my just cause; You sit on Your throne judging righteously." He continued, "But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment. He judges the world with justice; He governs the people with equity" ([Psalm 9:7-8](#)). Isaiah described a future time when God will judge the nations ([Isaiah 2:4](#)). Joel also spoke of God as the Judge of the nations ([Joel 3:12](#)).

### *In the New Testament*

These Old Testament statements form the background for the New Testament understanding of the judgment seat of God or Christ. The image of a judgment seat came from the Roman practice where judgment took place on a platform (in Greek, *bema*) or tribunal, from which a judge would hear and decide cases. This is why most New Testament references to a judgment seat occur when Jesus or the apostle Paul was brought before a ruling authority. For example, Pilate sat on his judgment seat when he tried Jesus ([Matthew 27:19](#); compare [John 19:13](#); [Acts 18:12, 16-17; 25:6, 10, 17](#)).

Two New Testament passages speak directly of the judgment seat of God or Christ: [Romans 14:10](#) and

[2 Corinthians 5:10](#). In [Romans 14:10](#), Paul addressed the urgent issue of unity within the church—unity based on loving acceptance of those with different views on how faith affects daily life. Paul urged both Jewish and gentile Christians to accept one another despite differences about eating certain foods and observing certain days. He reminded them that all must eventually stand before the judgment seat of God to account for how they have lived. Since God is the ultimate Judge, Christians should not judge one another. Similarly, in [2 Corinthians 5](#), Paul explained why Christians strive to please the Lord: all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be rewarded for their deeds. The judgment seat of Christ or God, therefore, represents the ultimate accountability of the Christian.

*See also* Bema; Judgment; Last Judgment; Second Coming of Christ.

## Judgment, Hall of

The King James Version translation of the New Testament word *praitorion* in [John 18:28, 33; 19:9](#); [Acts 23:35](#). Some Bible versions translate this word as “Praetorium.” Others translate it as “common hall.”

The word was first used for the place where the Roman general’s tent stood in an army camp. It was a reference to the main office of the camp. It then came to mean the military council that met in the general’s tent. Later, it was used for to the palace where the Roman governor or procurator lived while ruling a region. It also identified the army’s main office and camp that housed the army in connection with the governor’s living place.

In Jerusalem, it was the palace that Herod the Great had built for himself. When the Roman governor came from his normal house in Caesarea to Jerusalem, he lived in Herod’s palace. He did his official business there. It was there that Pilate questioned Jesus ([John 18:28; 19:9](#)). It was at another place called the “Pavement” where Pilate sat in judgment and gave Jesus to the Jews.

## Judith (Person)

1. A daughter of Beeri the Hittite and one of the wives of Esau ([Genesis 26:34](#)). [Genesis 36:2](#) calls her “Oholibamah.”  
*See* Oholibamah.
2. The main character in the book of Judith. She was a brave, beautiful Judean widow from Bethulia. She beheaded the Assyrian general Holofernes and saved her people from destruction.  
*See* Judith, Book of.

## Julia

1. Woman greeted by the apostle Paul ([Rom 16:15](#)). Her name follows that of Philologus, who may have been her brother or husband.
2. According to a variant reading, a woman noted by Paul as being one of his coworkers, as well as a distinguished apostle ([Rom 16:7](#), nlt mg). She was probably Andronicus’s wife. The couple, like Aquila and Priscilla, formed an apostolic team. In other manuscripts, the reading is Junia—which, in the Greek, can be understood as a masculine name or feminine, depending on the accent. However, the most ancient manuscripts do not have an accent mark on this name; therefore, the interpreter must decide if this apostle was male or female.

## Julius

Roman centurion of the Augustan cohort who escorted the apostle Paul and other prisoners from Palestine to Rome ([Acts 27:1](#)). Jewish leaders in Jerusalem accused Paul of teaching false doctrine and defiling the temple. Because indecision by two successive Roman governors kept Paul in prison for more than two years, he finally appealed to Caesar. Julius was a kind man. He allowed Paul to leave the ship in Sidon to be comforted by his friends (v 3). However, in his eagerness to get his prisoners to Rome, Julius ignored Paul’s advice to spend the winter in Fair Havens. Instead, he ordered the ship to sail to Phoenix, another harbor in Crete, which was more suitable for harboring in winter (vv 9–12). During the trip, a storm wrecked the ship. The soldiers on board wanted to kill the

prisoners for fear of their escaping, but Julius prevented that massacre, ordering all to jump ship and swim to shore. This decision spared Paul's life (vv [42-44](#)). Some scholars have conjectured that Julius was the soldier who stayed with Paul in Rome ([28:16](#)).

## Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was a powerful leader in ancient Rome. He was born in 100 BC and died in 44 BC. Julius was not officially called an emperor, but he ruled like one. For almost 500 years, Rome had been a republic. This meant that elected leaders made the laws. But in reality, wealthy men held most of the power. The people of Rome did not want a king. They believed kings had too much power.

Caesar became very popular and gained strong political and military power. He took a government position, but he ruled with complete control. The Roman Republic still existed in name, but Caesar acted like a dictator (a ruler with full power). Some leaders feared Caesar wanted to make himself king. They hoped to protect the republic by removing him. On March 15, 44 BC, a group of senators stabbed and killed Caesar as he entered the Senate. This day became known as the *ides of March*.

The plan to save the republic failed. A civil war followed Caesar's death. His grand-nephew Octavian won the war. In 31 BC, Octavian became the first official emperor of Rome. He later took the name Augustus.

*See also* Caesars, The.

## Junia

A Jew who, along with Andronicus, was greeted by Paul in his letter to the church in Rome. This is according to the text in some manuscripts ([Romans 16:7](#)). Paul recognized Junia as an apostle who had been a prisoner with Paul for the sake of the gospel. Scholars are not certain whether Junia was a woman or a man.

*See* Julia #2.

## Juniper

The plant referred to in [Jeremiah 17:6](#) and [48:6](#) is likely a type of juniper, possibly the Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*) or the savin juniper (*Juniperus sabina*).

- *Juniperus phoenicea* grows in rocky, dry regions of Arabia and the Mediterranean.
- *Juniperus sabina* is more common in the deserts and rocky highlands of Syria and Palestine.

Both are hardy, drought-resistant shrubs or small trees that grow in barren places. This fits with the biblical image of a person who does not trust in the Lord and lives in dry, uninhabited lands. These references in Jeremiah may describe what is sometimes called the brown-berried cedar or sharp cedar, which are traditional names for certain types of juniper. In the King James Version, it is translated as "heath."

The King James Version incorrectly translated the Hebrew word for "broom" (a desert shrub) as "juniper" in several places ([1 Kings 19:4-5](#); [Job 30:4](#); [Psalm 120:4](#)).

*See* Broom.

## Jupiter

Jupiter is the supreme god in Roman beliefs. He is the same as Zeus in Greek mythology. Jupiter was the son Saturn and husband and brother of Juno.

Jupiter (also called "Jove") was the god of destiny. His weapon was the thunderbolt. The people considered the eagle, oak tree, and olive tree holy in his worship. A temple of Jupiter stood in Rome on the Capitoline Hill. During the time when Hadrian ruled (from AD 117–138), the people built a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on top of the ruins of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

During their first missionary journey, the apostles Barnabas and Paul went to Lystra. The people of Lystra thought they were gods who had come down to visit them ([Acts 14:12-13](#)). They thought Barnabas was Zeus (or Jupiter) and Paul was Hermes (or Mercury).

## Jushab-Hesed

One of Zerubbabel's seven sons ([1 Chr 3:20](#)). Jushab-hesed means "lovingkindness is returned."

## Just

The word "just" means righteous or morally good.

*See* Righteousness.

## Justification, Justified

The act by which God brings sinners into a new covenant relationship with Himself through the forgiveness of their sins. It is when God declares a person righteous, meaning they are in a right and true relationship with Him.

Since the Reformation, this term has been key in Christian theology. Martin Luther emphasized the doctrine of justification by faith alone. For Luther, it was a return to the Apostle Paul's teachings. It challenged medieval Catholicism, which stressed good works and indulgences for salvation. The doctrine of justification by faith alone stresses that all people are completely sinful. They cannot deal with their sins. It highlights God's gift of atonement through Jesus Christ. People accept it by trusting, without any merit.

The words "justification" and "justify" are not common in the Bible. For example, in the King James Version, the verb "to justify" appears fewer than 25 times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, both words appear only 40 times. The Bible uses "righteousness" and "to declare (or make) righteous" more often. They translate the same Hebrew and Greek terms. Therefore, understanding justification also involves understanding the biblical concept of righteousness.

In everyday Greek, "justification" and "justify" were often legal terms. They referred to declaring someone innocent or virtuous in the courtroom. However, these terms also have a broader meaning related to the norms of any relationship.

### *In the Old Testament*

In the Old Testament, righteousness is about relationships and the responsibilities within those relationships. Sometimes, a person is called righteous because they are in a right relationship

with another person. Other times, a person is considered righteous because they fulfill certain responsibilities within a relationship ([Genesis 38:26](#)). More importantly, these terms are often used to describe God, who is seen as just. God rules with justice ([Genesis 18:25](#)), and His judgments are true and righteous ([Psalm 19:9](#)). Both the innocent and the guilty recognize God's justice; the innocent expect to be shown to be clean, and the guilty know that God's law will prevail.

Justification and righteousness are closely linked to God's saving actions on behalf of His covenant people. God's righteousness is more about His intervention for His people under the covenant than about strict justice. Justification should be understood in terms of the covenant, not just the law. The most important example of this is Abraham, who was considered righteous because he responded in faith to God's covenant ([Genesis 15:6](#)). Abraham could not make himself righteous; God made him righteous based on the covenant. All people are as helpless as Abraham. In God's sight, no one can be justified on their own ([Psalm 143:2](#)). Humanity's hope lies in God remembering His covenant. Righteousness comes from God's mercy or grace, as He deals with His people according to His lovingkindness ([Isaiah 63:7](#)). Justification is based on God's nature and is mainly a religious concept, not just an ethical one.

### *In the New Testament*

The New Testament discusses justification mostly in the letters of Paul, especially in Romans and Galatians. In these letters, justification by faith is a key concept Paul uses to explain the impact of Christ's work on sinful humanity. Paul contrasts justification by faith with Jewish legalism, which tried to make the law the basis of salvation. Paul strongly condemns this approach ([Galatians 1:6-9](#)). He reminds his readers that righteousness, or justification, is a gift from God through the blood of Jesus Christ (*covenant* blood, [Hebrews 13:20](#)), not something achieved through the law ([Romans 3:21](#)). The law cannot lead to righteousness and was not intended to do so.

[Galatians 3:15-25](#) explains the role of the law, which came 430 years after the covenant that brought Abraham into a relationship with God. Whatever purpose the law had, it was not given to bring about righteousness: "For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law" ([Galatians 3:21](#)). Christ justified people, and this

should be understood in terms of the covenant, not the law. Since the time of Abraham, justification has always come through faith in the God who keeps His covenant, not through the law. Righteousness is a relational term, confirmed by those who, by faith, are brought into a right relationship with God. The law brings judgment and exposes our inability to deal with sin ([Acts 13:39](#); [Romans 8:3](#)). Justification, however, addresses the problem of sin and guilt, offering salvation. The believer is set free from condemnation ([Romans 8:1](#)). The main understanding of justification comes from focusing on the covenant and grace, not the law and judgment. Paul's references to Abraham in Romans and Galatians show that the covenant has always been humanity's only hope. God remains faithful to His covenant, even when His people break it daily.

In Paul's teaching, God is both just and the one who justifies. Sin demands judgment and must be addressed. God's way to bring people to Him is revealed apart from the law. It is in the life and death of Christ, whom God made an atoning sacrifice ([Romans 3:21–26](#)). Sin was dealt with in Jesus's death, who took on sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God ([2 Corinthians 5:2](#)). In His death, Christ bears the guilt of all humanity so that by trusting in Him, people can come to know God in a true relationship.

For Paul, justification in light of human sinfulness is rooted in God's nature, for only God can heal and redeem humanity. Justification is by grace alone. Rooted in God's nature, it is made available through the work of Christ as God's gift. Therefore, we often confess that Christ died "for us" ([Romans 5:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:10](#)) or "for our sins" ([1 Corinthians 15:3](#)). The way to receive this gift is by faith and faith alone ([Romans 3:22](#); [5:1](#)). This faith is a simple trust in Christ's work. It is a trust that freely identifies with Christ, loves His Word, and lives by God's kingdom values. The justified person knows that their right relationship with God depends on nothing but grace, not effort or deeds. It is entirely a gift of God's infinite love. Their powerlessness is overcome by the power of the gospel, in which God's saving work is revealed ([Romans 1:17](#)).

Justification is mentioned in the Gospels in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee highlighted his religious works and moral superiority. The tax collector, feeling deep guilt and unworthiness, could only ask for mercy. According to Jesus, the tax collector went home justified ([Luke](#)

[18:14](#)).

This is the only direct reference to justification by faith. Yet, Jesus's entire ministry dealt with people focused on their piety. They sought to justify themselves before God. They set themselves apart from sinners and undesirables. They were so focused on their own works that they were offended by the message of grace and the full pardon of sinners ([Luke 7:36–50](#)). Jesus addressed the same issue that Paul later confronted. Only those who humble themselves before God will be exalted ([Matthew 18:4](#); [23:12](#)). Only sinners hear the message of grace ([Luke 5:32](#); [15:7, 10](#); [19:7](#)). The unworthy are the ones who find healing ([Matthew 8:8](#)).

We must always reaffirm justification by faith. Everyone tends to seek personal righteousness to stand before God based on their own character and piety. But, the church's revival and health (as seen in Martin Luther and John Wesley) depend on the belief that "the just shall live by faith" ([Romans 1:17](#); [Hebrews 10:38](#); [11:7](#)).

*See also* Adoption; Faith; Law, Biblical Concept of; Sanctification.

## Justus

1. A family name for Joseph Barsabbas ([Acts 1:23](#)).  
*See Joseph #12.*
2. A godly Corinthian man. He was probably a convert of the apostle Paul. Justus opened his home to Paul and other Christians after the Jewish synagogue leaders would not allow Paul to continue preaching there ([Acts 18:7](#)). The ancient manuscripts of the Bible do not all agree on his exact name. Some versions call him Justus while others call him Titius Justus. Some scholars think he might be the same person as Gaius mentioned in [Romans 16:23](#).
3. A family name of a believer named Jesus, a Jewish Christian ([Colossians 4:11](#)).  
*See Jesus #3.*

## **Juttah**

One of the cities of refuge assigned to Aaron's descendants ([Jos 21:16](#)). It was in the hill country of Judah's territory and in the district of Maon ([15:55](#)). It has been identified with modern Yatta, about five and a half miles (8.8 kilometers) southwest of Hebron.

*See also* Cities of Refuge.