

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

### **Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary**

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## Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

### I

*Ibex, Ibhar, Ibis, Ibleam, Ibneiah, Ibnijah, Ibri, Ibsam, Ibzan, Ichabod, Iconium, Idalah, Idbash, Iddo, Idols, Idolatry, Idumaea, Idumea, Idumeans, Iezer, Iezerites, Igal, Igdaliah, Igeal, Ignatius and His Epistles, Iim, Ije-abarim, Ijon, Ikkesh, Ilai, Illness, Illyricum, Image of God, Imalkue, Imlah, Immanuel, Immer (Person), Immer (Place), Immersion, Imna, Imnah, Imnite, Impalement, Imprecatory Psalms, Imputation, Imrah, Imri, Incantation, Incarnation, Incense, Incest, India, Infirmary, Inheritance, Iniquity, Ink, Inkhorn, Inn, Inner Man, Innocents, Slaughter of the, Inscriptions, Insect, Inspiration, Installation Offering, Instruct, Instructor, Intercede, Intercession, Intercession of Christ, Interest, Intermediate State, Interpreter, Intertestamental Period, Iob, Iphdeiah, Iphtah, Iphtah-El, Ir, Ir-Nahash, Ir-Shemesh, Ira, Irad, Iram, Iri, Irijah, Iron, Iron (Place), Ironsmith, Irpeel, Irrigation, Iru, Isaac, Isaiah (Person), Isaiah, Book of, Iscah, Iscariot, Ishbah, Ishbak, Ishbi-benob, Ishbosheth, Ishhod, Ishi, Ishiah, Ishijah, Ishma, Ishmael, Ishmaelite, Ishmaiah, Ishmeelite, Ishmerai, Ishod, Ishpah, Ishpan, Ishtar, Ishtob, Ishuah, Ishuai, Ishui, Ishvah, Ishvi, Ishvite, Isis, Ismaiah, Ismakiah, Ispah, Israel (Person), Israel (Place), Israelite, Issachar (Person), Issachar, Tribe of, Isshiah, Isshijah, Issue of Blood, Isuah, Isui, Italian Regiment, Italian Band, Italian Cohort, Italy, Ithai, Ithamar, Ithiel, Ithlah, Ithmah, Ithnan, Ithra, Ithran, Ithream, Ithrite, Ittah-Kazin, Ittai, Ituraea, Iturea, Itureans, Ivah, Ivory, Ivvah, Iye-abarim, Iyim, Izehar, Izeharites, Izhar, Izharite, Izliah, Izrahiah, Izrahite, Izri, Izziah*

See also Birds; Great Owl.

### Ibex

Species of wild goat, declared ceremonially clean in the Law ([Dt 14:5](#)). See Animals (Goat).

### Ibhar

A son born to David during his rule in Jerusalem ([2 Samuel 5:15](#); [1 Chronicles 3:6](#); [14:5](#)).

### Ibis

The ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopica*) is a wading bird with a long, curved bill. This water bird is rare in the Holy Land today, but it might have lived there during Bible times. The ancient Egyptians considered the ibis sacred to their god Thoth (a god of wisdom and writing). The ibis has almost disappeared from Egypt now because the swamps along the Nile River have dried up.

Some Bible translations have identified the bird in [Leviticus 11:17](#) as the ibis, which is classified as ceremonially unclean to eat. The same Hebrew word appears in [Deuteronomy 14:16](#) and [Isaiah 34:11](#), where most Bible translations use "great owl" instead of "ibis." Most Bible scholars today prefer the "great owl" translation.

### Ibleam

City in Manasseh's territory ([Jos 17:11](#); [Jgs 1:27](#); [2 Kgs 9:27](#)), perhaps identifiable with Bileam, a Levitical city west of the Jordan River between Samaria and Jezreel ([1 Chr 6:70](#)). See Levitical Cities.

### Ibneiah

Jeroham's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 9:8](#)).

### Ibnijah

Forefather of Meshullam from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 9:8](#)).

### Ibri

Merarite Levite and Jaaziah's son, who lived during David's time ([1 Chr 24:27](#)).

## Ibsam

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

## Ibzan

Judge who ruled over Israel, or part of it, for seven years ([Jgs 12:8-10](#)). Ibzan was a native of Bethlehem, probably of Zebulun, and was buried in his place of birth. Jewish tradition identified Ibzan with Boaz and consequently understood his native city to be Bethlehem in Judah. Ibzan had 30 sons and 30 daughters and was a man of wealth and high social standing.

*See also* Judges, Book of.

## Ichabod

Name given to Phinehas's son (Eli's grandson) to commemorate the glory that had departed from Israel, after the ark of God was taken by the Philistines ([1 Sm 4:19-22](#); [14:3](#)).

Phinehas was killed in the battle of Aphek, at the same time the Philistines had captured the ark. When Phinehas's wife heard of the tragedy, she went immediately into labor, and when the child was born, she named him Ichabod (meaning "no glory") to express her despair.

## Iconium

A city in the southwest part of central Asia Minor. Its location was about 153 kilometers (95 miles) from the Mediterranean coast. Today, Iconium is the Turkish city of Konya, which is also the capital of the province of Konya.

### *Economy*

Iconium was an agricultural center. It was famous for its wheat fields and apricot and plum orchards. It had an ideal location and climate. This helped establish Iconium as a major link in the trade routes between Syria, Ephesus, and Rome.

### *History*

The origin of the city is uncertain. A group of immigrant tribes from northern Greece called the Phrygians founded it. The Greek historian Xenophon, who lived from around 428 to 354 BC,

mentions Iconium. He says it was a Phrygian city visited by King Cyrus. Those from Iconium spoke the Phrygian language. So the inhabitants must have considered that they originated from there. The name of Iconium was first Phrygian.

Yet, a later myth added a Greek meaning to the name. According to this legend, a great flood destroys humankind. Life is restored when Prometheus and Athena breathe life into human images. These images are made from mud left by subsiding waters. The Greek word for "image" is *eikon*. According to the legend, this is where Iconium gets its name.

In the third century BC, the Seleucid kings of Syria governed Iconium. They advocated for Greek culture. The Seleucids soon turned Iconium into a Hellenistic city where they spoke Greek. Each year, two appointed magistrates ruled the people. Later the Gauls and Pontic kings dominated Iconium from about 165 to 63 BC. Yet, it retained its Hellenistic character until New Testament times. In 36 BC, Mark Antony gave the city to King Antymas. When he died in 25 BC, Iconium joined the neighboring cities of Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch. These cities became part of the province of Galatia. Then they incorporated into the Roman Empire.

### *Iconium in the Bible*

The apostle Paul visited Iconium on his first missionary journey. After he left Pisidian Antioch ([Acts 13:51](#)), Paul came to the synagogue in Iconium. At first, his preaching won the approval of both the Jews and Greeks. But "unbelieving Jews" soon incited a riot against him ([14:1-7](#)). Paul fled to Lystra, but the Iconian Jews followed him. They stoned him and left him for dead (verse [19](#); compare [2 Timothy 3:11](#)). Cared for by friends, Paul joined Barnabas in Derbe. There they made many disciples. Then later they returned to Iconium to strengthen the Christians there ([Acts 14:20-23](#)). Later Paul went on a second missionary journey. The Christians at Iconium commended Timothy to Paul and Silas ([16:1-2](#)).

## Idalah

Town assigned to Zebulun's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:15](#)). It is generally identified with Khirbet el-Hawarah, northwest of Nazareth.

## Idbash

One of the descendants of Etam from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:3](#)).

## Iddo

1. Father of Ahinadab, Solomon's official at Mahanaim, who provisioned the royal household ([1 Kgs 4:14](#)).
2. Gershonite Levite, descendant of Joah and forefather of Zerah ([1 Chr 6:21](#)); perhaps alternately called Adaiah in verse [41](#). See Adaiah #2.
3. Zechariah's son and the chief officer of Manasseh's half-tribe in Gilead during David's reign ([1 Chr 27:21](#)).
4. Prophet and seer who recorded the events of Solomon's reign concerning Jeroboam, Nebat's son in a book of visions ([2 Chr 9:29](#)), Rehoboam's acts in his genealogical records ([12:15](#)), and Abijah's life as part of a commentary ([13:22](#)).
5. Grandfather of Zechariah the prophet ([Zec 1:1, 7](#)). Iddo was a well-known priest who returned to Jerusalem from exile in 538 BC, and whose household was headed by Zechariah during Joiakim's reign as high priest during the postexilic era ([Neh 12:16](#)). According to [Ezra 5:1](#) and [6:14](#), Zechariah, and not Berechiah his father, was considered Iddo's successor. See Zechariah (Person) #20.
6. Leading Levite at Casiphia in Babylonia to whom Ezra sent a delegation of men requesting priests and temple servants to join Ezra's caravan returning to Palestine for service in the Jerusalem temple ([Ezr 8:17](#)).

## Idols, Idolatry

Man-made images or natural representations worshiped as deities; anything receiving worship other than the one true God. Idolatry is the spiritual worship of an idol. Many idolaters literally serve idols: in ancient Egypt statues of gods were regularly and ritually clothed and fed. Some concept of the worship of a false god, Baal, is given in the account of the contest on Mt Carmel: the priests of Baal cried aloud, they "limped" (rsv) around the altar, they cut themselves with swords and lances ([1 Kgs 18:26-29](#)). Baal worship was

widely followed by Israel during the period of the monarchy.

### *In the Old Testament*

Abraham's ancestors were worshipers of idols in Mesopotamia ([Jos 24:2](#)). Archaeological excavations in that area have revealed the images of numerous deities, and Mesopotamian religious literature reveals the gross polytheism out of which Abraham came. The tendency of the Israelites toward idolatry was in part the expression of the universal human longing for a god one can see and know through the physical senses.

Most of the idolatry of the Israelites was borrowed from their neighbors. During the more than 400 years that the descendants of Jacob spent in Egypt, they were exposed to polytheistic idolatry, which influenced their religious mind-set. At Sinai, while Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from the Lord, the people were demanding that Aaron make gods for them ([Ex 32:1-6](#)). He fashioned a golden calf, following an Egyptian form, for the whole bovine family was worshiped in Egypt—the Apis bull, the Hathor cow, and the Mnevis calf.

It was after his stay in Egypt ([1 Kgs 11:40](#)) that Jeroboam became king of Israel and set up golden calves, one at Bethel and one at Dan ([12:26-33](#)), an action that earned him the label as being the one who made Israel sin ([2 Kgs 3:3](#)).

Already in patriarchal times there are references to the teraphim, or household gods. Examples of these idols have been found at Ur of the Chaldees, Nuzi, and other sites, and are referred to in the cuneiform tablets. The teraphim that Rachel stole from Laban could be hidden in her camel's saddlebag ([Gn 31:34](#)). It seems, however, that in the time of David such idols were larger, for when Saul's men came to kill David, Michal, David's wife and the daughter of Saul, helped David to escape and then took such an image and placed it in a bed to make the men think that David was sick ([1 Sm 19:11-16](#)).

The prohibition of idolatry is explicitly stated in the second commandment ([Ex 20:4-5](#), nlt): "Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish. You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god!" (cf. [Ex 34:17](#); [Lv 19:4](#); [26:1](#); [Dt 4:15-19](#); [27:1-5](#)). This commandment is an extension or auxiliary of the first, for it seeks to

preserve God's uniqueness and to protect his glory. The definition of idolatry was broadened during the time of Samuel, who confronted King Saul with the charge that stubbornness is the same as idolatry ([1 Sm 15:23](#)).

Previous to the conquest of Canaan, the Lord kept warning Israel against marrying members of the native populace, which he had ordered Israel to annihilate. This measure was intended to prevent the weakening of moral life in Israel ([Ex 34:16](#); [Dt 7:3-4](#)). This principle is again expanded in the NT (cf. [1 Cor 15:33](#); [2 Cor 6:14](#)). The history of Israel demonstrated the practicality of the prohibition against such marriages, for they inevitably led to apostasy. Perhaps the saddest example is Solomon ([1 Kgs 11:1-8](#)). When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart to other gods, so that he was not wholly true to the Lord his God (v 4).

In the time of the judges there was an infamous case of idol worship ([Jgs 17:1-18:31](#)). The mother of an Ephraimite named Micah took 200 pieces of silver and had a silversmith make them into a graven image for her son. He also had a shrine, an ephod, and teraphim. He hired a wandering Levite to be his priest, but men from the tribe of Dan came along and took the Levite, the image, and all the accoutrements and set up this idol at Dan and used it as an object of their worship ([18:30-31](#)).

In Scripture the kings of Israel are evaluated on the basis of what they did with respect to the "high places" and idols. Asa removed all the idols his ancestors had made ([1 Kgs 15:12](#)) and would not let Maacah be queen mother because she had an abominable image made for Asherah. He cut down and burned the image (v 13). The Israelite king Ahab, however, was an idolater ([1 Kgs 21:26](#); cf. [16:30-33](#)).

Hezekiah destroyed the high places, broke down the pillars, and cut down the Asherim ([2 Kgs 18:4](#); [2 Chr 31:1](#)). He also put an end to a strange cult that illustrates the insidious nature of idolatry. The bronze serpent that Moses lifted up on a pole to save the Israelites from death by snakebite ([Nm 21:9](#); cf. [Jn 3:14](#)) had been preserved until the time of Hezekiah. It had been given the name Nehushtan, and people venerated it and burned incense to it. Hezekiah destroyed it ([2 Kgs 18:4](#)) because what had been an instrument for good had become a thing of evil.

The prophet Isaiah described the making of an idol in human form ([Is 40:19-20](#); [44:9-17](#)). Images were cast in a mold using molten metal ([40:19](#);

[44:10](#)). Statues were forged by smiths ([44:12](#)), carved from wood ([44:13-17](#)), and overlaid with precious metal ([40:19](#)). Small clay images and plaques were also molded and fired in a kiln, and statues were sculptured from stone. The psalmist spoke out against idols and images ([Pss 96:5](#); [97:7](#); [106:34-39](#)) and the helplessness of idols is described in [Psalms 115:4-8](#) and [135:15-18](#).

The northern and southern kingdoms of Israel went into captivity because they forsook God and served idols. The Jews were well aware that idolatry had brought them into captivity, and during their time in Babylon, they developed an abhorrence to idols that has characterized Judaism to this very day.

### *In the New Testament*

The fullest discussion in the NT on idolatry (eidololatreia) and the idol worshiper (eidololatreis) is found in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. In an earlier (no longer extant) epistle, Paul had told the Corinthians not to associate with those who called themselves believers but were still idol worshipers ([1 Cor 5:9-11](#)). After that letter the Corinthians must have asked Paul for clarification on this matter. Thus, in this epistle Paul provides a response to their question; the "idol worshiper" is mentioned in [5:10-11](#), [6:9](#), [10:7](#), and "idolatry" is spoken of in [10:14](#).

The terms, "idolatry" and "idol worshiper," are related to two other expressions: (1) "idol" (eidolon), found in [1 Corinthians 8:4](#); [10:19](#); [12:2](#); and (2) "food sacrificed to idols" (eidolothutos), found in [1 Corinthians 8:1, 4, 7](#); [10:19](#). The kind of idolatry that Paul condemns is that which involved Christians offering sacrifices to idols and then partaking of the food that had been sacrificed to them. The participants are called idol worshipers because their involvement in idolatrous sacrifices was perceived as having fellowship with demons. Paul strictly prohibited the eating of sacrificial food at the popular temples in the presence of idol-demons. As such, he shared the same view about idols as most Jews in his day. For the Jews, idols and heathen deities were identical. (See [1 Thes 1:9](#), where Paul contrasts "idols" with "the living and true God.") To Paul, idols in and of themselves were nothing ([1 Cor 8:4](#)); behind the idol, however, was a demon ([10:20](#)).

The eating of sacrificial food at the cultic meals in pagan temples was censured by Paul because it was understood that the participants thereby became united to demons (see [1 Cor 10:19-21](#)).

However, Paul had no problem with those who purchased food that had been left over from these events and that was later sold in the marketplace. In his judgment, if they ate it at home, they were not participating in idolatry. They could eat this food with a good conscience—unless, of course, in doing so they would be the means of destroying a weaker believer. For the sake of such believers, one should abstain. This was a matter of conscience ([10:25–29](#)). But going to pagan festivities and eating meals offered to idols was not permitted in any form.

The Corinthians had participated in these meals regularly before they became Christians and apparently had continued to do so after their conversion. In Corinth such meals were the regular practice both at national festivals and private celebrations. The “gods” (whom Paul considered “demons”) were thought to be present at these events because the sacrifices were made to them. Thus, to participate in these events was to join oneself to demons and thereby become an idol worshiper. The ancient Israelites had been carried away into idolatry by their pagan neighbors on several occasions when they were enticed to participate in these pagan celebrations (e.g., [Nm 25](#); cf. [Ex 32:6](#)). The festivities involved all sorts of licentiousness. In [1 Corinthians 10](#), Paul referred to this apostasy of the Israelites and used it as a negative example. Because the Israelites became involved in pagan festivities, they were carried away into idolatry and fornication, which incited God’s wrath and brought destruction.

In other Pauline Epistles, idolatry is mentioned but not with the kind of definition and extended discussion that is found in 1 Corinthians. Nonetheless, Paul speaks out against actual idolatry and what we might call figurative idolatry (i.e., idolatry in the sense of desiring something above God).

In [Romans 1:18–32](#) sexual licentiousness and other sins are ultimately traced to idolatry. The Gentiles, who should have known that God existed, as evidenced in creation and conscience, abandoned the immortal, invisible God in exchange for mortal, visible images (i.e., idols). Because of this abandonment, God gave them over to do the filthy things their hearts desired ([Rom 1:24](#)). Thus, idolatry is included in Paul’s list of what he calls “the works of the flesh” (see [Gal 5:19–20](#)). And those who are idol worshipers are included in the catalog of all those evil people who will not inherit the kingdom of God (see [1 Cor 6:9](#)).

In [Ephesians 5:5](#) Paul again includes idolaters among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. However, such idolaters are not just those who go to pagan temples and worship idols; they are those who are greedy or covetous. According to superior manuscript evidence, the verse reads, “No fornicator or impure person or greedy person, which is the same as an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” The point seems to be that the greedy, covetous person who makes his desires his god is much the same as an idolater. Thus, covetousness and idolatry are made synonymous. The parallel passage, [Colossians 3:5](#), makes this explicit, which literally says covetousness is idolatry.

See also Canaanite Deities and Religion; Gods and Goddesses; Grove; High Place.

## Idumaea, Idumea, Idumeans

Term derived from the Greek form of Edom (“red”). The change from Edomite to Idumean resulted from the conquests of Alexander the Great, which made Greek the common language of the area. The name was applied to the former country of the Edomites and to the portion of south Judah occupied by the descendants of Esau after the Jews had been deported to Babylon following the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. The country known as Idumea in the intertestamental period had its northern boundary at Bet-sur (Beth-zur), a few miles north of Hebron, and included some of the Shephelah (low country) extending down into the former Philistine country ([1 Macc 4:15, 22, 61](#); [5:65](#)).

First known as Edomites, then as Nabateans, and finally as Idumeans, the ancestors of the Idumeans trace their lineage to the elder brother of Jacob, Esau, who was cheated out of both his birthright and his blessing ([Gn 27:1–45](#)). This led to conflict between the children of Israel and the descendants of Esau throughout the entire biblical period.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Edomites rejoiced when the Babylonians conquered Israel. The Edomites then occupied the territory vacated by the Israelites following the subjugation of the kingdom by the Babylonians after 586 BC.

About 300 BC Arabian tribes invaded and took the Edomite capital Petra, forcing the remaining Edomites into the area south of Judah, which then became included in what was known as Idumea.



The invaders, known as Nabateans, made Sela or Petra the center of their caravan trade both from east to west and north to south. These desert traders, influenced now by Greek ideas, fashioned the bowl-like “crater” at Petra into a fantastic city with a concentration of rock-hewn temples, tombs, and buildings made from the colorful red sandstone of the area. In addition to creating the world’s most unique city, the Nabateans were excellent traders and farmers. As Josephus says, they were not warlike but skilled in commerce, art, and agriculture. The Nabateans created the strategic desert stronghold of Avedat, which, with Petra, commanded the caravan routes. The Nabateans flourished from about 100 BC to AD 100, when the Romans gradually caused their demise by changing the caravan routes from south of the Dead Sea to the area around Damascus and Palmyra.

During the intertestamental period the returning Jews had border skirmishes with the Idumeans. Hebron was captured by Judas Maccabeus ([1 Macc 5:65](#)). John Hyrcanus compelled the Idumeans to become Jews and submit to circumcision. The governor of Idumea, Antipater, who had been made procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar, was an Idumean. Antipater assigned his son Herod as governor of Galilee. This paved the way for Herod to become king of Judea, under the title of Herod the Great. With the conquest of Judea by the Romans, first in AD 70, and later in AD 135, Idumea disappears from history. Only in recent years have archaeologists begun to uncover some of the secrets of the Idumeans and of the Nabateans, their conquerors.

*See also* Edom, Edomites; Judaism.

## Iezer, Iezerites

Iezer and Iezerites are shortened forms of the names Abiezer and Abiezrite. Abiezer was a son of Gilead, and the Abiezrites were Abiezer’s descendants ([Numbers 26:30](#)).

*See* Abiezer #1.

## Igal

1. A son of Joseph from the tribe of Issachar. He was one of the 12 spies sent by Moses to search out Canaan ([Numbers 13:7](#)).
2. A son of Nathan and one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:36](#)). In [1 Chronicles 11:38](#) he is called Joel, the brother of Nathan. In Hebrew, this name is only one letter different from Igal.
3. A son of Shemaiah and a descendant of King David through King Jehoiachin ([1 Chronicles 3:22](#)).

## Igdaliah

Hanan’s father. Hanan’s sons had a room adjacent to the temple during Jehoiakim’s reign ([Jer 35:4](#)).

## Igeal

KJV spelling of Igal, Shemaiah’s son, in [1 Chronicles 3:22](#). *See* Igal #3.

## Ignatius and His Epistles

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch in Syria in the late first century. His writings were very close to the thoughts of the New Testament writers. He wrote seven letters while being taken to Rome as a prisoner. He was going there to die for his faith (probably AD 107).

He wrote letters to churches in cities through which he passed, Philadelphia and Smyrna. He wrote letters to churches that sent representatives to visit him during this final journey—namely, Ephesus, Tralles, and Magnesia. He sent a letter to the church in Rome before he arrived. He asked them not to try to stop the Roman leaders from killing him for his faith. He also wrote a letter to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.

These letters are similar to the New Testament letters. They reveal a strong commitment to Christ and to the physical facts of his birth, death, and resurrection. The letters of Ignatius parallel the

gospels in several places and appropriate language from a number of the Pauline letters.

The letters of Ignatius are evidence of the rapid development of the episcopal structure in the early church of Asia Minor and Syria. In the New Testament, the local church was governed by a body of equal officers called elders or bishops. In these letters, there is a reference to a single ruling bishop in each city except Rome. Ignatius is the first writer to use the term “catholic” (meaning “universal”) to describe the church. His use of the term showed that churches were connected. They believed the same things about Jesus and worked together. When one church had problems or ideas, they would send people to talk with other churches.

Ignatius opposed the Ebionite heresy. This heresy demanded the keeping of the Jewish regulations as the way of salvation. According to Ignatius, to affirm Christ the believer must reject Jewish practices. The Christian must worship on the Lord’s Day, the day of his resurrection, rather than observe the Jewish sabbaths. Yet he did view the church as the continuation of the Old Testament people of God and the prophets as disciples who looked forward to Christ.

Ignatius also attacked Docetism. This view held that Christ only appeared to have real birth, death, and resurrection. In reciting the facts of Christ’s life, Ignatius was the first one outside the New Testament writers to speak of the virgin birth of Jesus. Ignatius also emphasized the fact that the apostles touched the body of their risen Lord. Ignatius said it was the real suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross and his physical resurrection that made it possible for him to face martyrdom.

## Iim

1. The King James Version spelling of Iyim. Iim is a shortened form of Iye-abarim. ([Numbers 33:45](#)).  
*See Iye-abarim, Iyim.*
2. A town located near Edom. It was in the southern part of the land that was assigned to the tribe of Judah ([Joshua 15:29](#)).

## Ije-abarim

The King James Version spelling of Iye-abarim. This was one of the places Israel stopped at during their journey through the wilderness ([Numbers 21:11](#) and [33:44](#)).

*See Iye-abarim, Iyim.*

## Ijon

Town assigned to Naphtali’s tribe in the extreme north of Palestine. Some identify it with Tell ed-Dibbon between the Litani River and Mt Hermon, but this is disputed. Ijon was one of the towns taken by Ben-hadad of Damascus during Baasha’s reign (c. 900 BC; [1 Kgs 15:20](#); [2 Chr 16:4](#)). Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria captured the town and deported its people during Pekah’s reign (c. 733 BC; [2 Kgs 15:29](#)).

## Ikkesh

A man from Tekoa whose son Ira was one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:26](#); [1 Chronicles 11:28](#)). He was head of a division of 24,000 men during the sixth month of the year ([1 Chronicles 27:9](#)).

## Ilai

Alternate name for Zalmon, a renowned warrior, in [1 Chronicles 11:29](#) (see nlt mg). *See Zalmon (Person).*

## Illness

*See Disease; Medicine and Medical Practice.*

## Illyricum

Roman province northwest of Macedonia. During the height of the Roman Empire (c. AD 117), when it included Dalmatia, Illyricum was bounded by the Adriatic Sea on the west and by the provinces of Pannonia on the north, Upper Moesia on the east, and Macedonia on the south. Today Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Yugoslavia occupy that territory.



Throughout the fourth century BC, the people of Illyricum warred with the Macedonians, until the Macedonian ruler Philip II defeated them in 359 BC. During the third century BC, their acts of piracy against Greek and Roman ships led to a war with Rome that continued on and off for 60 years (229–168 BC). After a series of revolts and sporadic Roman rule, Illyricum was officially made part of the empire in 11 BC and renamed Dalmatia. It took another 20 years for the people to be fully integrated into Roman culture.

In 229 BC the Roman historian Polybius stated that “the Illyrians were not the enemies of this people or that, but were the common enemies of all.” Later Strabo, a first-century Greek geographer, was still describing the people of Illyricum as savage and rapacious.

The sole NT reference to Illyricum is found in the apostle Paul’s statement that he had preached the gospel from Jerusalem to as far as Illyricum ([Rom 15:19](#)). Although Acts does not document a ministry in that region, Paul may have visited Illyricum during his visit to Macedonia and Achaia just before returning to Jerusalem ([Acts 20:1–2](#)). Paul expressed a desire to continue his ministry in Spain, a totally Latin environment ([Rom 15:28](#)); in Illyricum he would have had his first experience in a culture that was more Latin than Greek.

*See also* Dalmatia.

## Image of God

The phrase “image of God” means that human beings reflect God’s nature in special ways. This is the most important thing we can say about what it means to be human from a Christian viewpoint. Among all created things, only humans are like God in ways that allow them to have a close relationship with God.

### *The Original Creation*

God decided to create men and women to be like himself. The Bible tells us this in [Genesis 1:26–27](#), where God uses two words to describe how humans would be like him: “image” and “likeness.” These two words mean almost the same thing. God also gave humans authority to take care of the animals.

[Genesis 2:7](#) clearly states that God made the first human become a living being. This passage does not describe humans developing from previously

living creatures. It also does not suggest that the image of God evolved from a lower form of life. From the moment God created the first man and woman, they reflected God’s image. Both men and women equally share this special likeness to God ([Genesis 1:27](#)).

Other passages that talk about people being created in the image of God are found in:

- [Genesis 5:1](#)
- [Genesis 9:6](#)
- [1 Corinthians 11:7](#)
- [James 3:9](#)

[Ephesians 4:24](#) and [Colossians 3:10](#) refer to humanity’s redemptive re-creation (through Jesus, humanity is restored or renewed in a way that reflects God’s original intention for creation). The passages are also important for understanding humanity’s original likeness to God. Even though the Bible does not mention this idea often, it is very important. It affects everything about how God and humans relate to each other.

### *What Makes Humans Special?*

Only humans are made in God’s image ([Genesis 1](#)). Animals, fish, and birds do not have this special quality. Some theologians think that angels are also made in God’s image because angels are morally good, but the Bible does not tell us this directly.

Humans are made from the dust of the ground, so we share some things with the earth and other living creatures. Our bodies work in ways similar to animals. But humans are unique in every way. The whole person (not just one part) is made in God’s image. The biblical concept is not that the image is *in* man and woman, but that man and woman *are* the image of God.

### *How Do Humans Reflect the Image of God?*

Humanity’s connection with the earth is most clearly visible in the human body. So, we can best see how humans reflect God’s image in our spiritual nature. We can think, make choices, and take responsibility for our actions. These abilities make us different from animals and show how we are like God. While animals exist because God made them, humans have a special relationship with God. The animals have their existence *from* God, but humans have their being *in* God. Humans are God’s “offspring” ([Acts 17:28–29](#)).

[Ephesians 4:24](#) and [Colossians 3:10](#) show us another important part of being made in God's image. These verses explain how God makes believers new by restoring his image in them. This happens by giving them:

- righteousness (doing what is right),
- holiness (being set apart for God), and
- true knowledge of God.

In other words, Paul says that when God redeems people, God re-creates them to be like Jesus. Jesus shows God's image perfectly without any sin. When humans first sinned, sin damaged the image of God in humans. But, through salvation, God works to restore this image. While Ephesians and Colossians tell us about this renewal in God's image, other parts of the Bible explain more about how Jesus helps make this possible.

### *Jesus and the Image of God*

Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#); [Colossians 1:15](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#)). This is often understood as a reference to Jesus's divinity (being like God). When we see Jesus, we see what God the Father is like ([John 14:9](#)). However, in these passages, Jesus is shown as both God and human (this is called the incarnation, which means God taking human form). As the perfect human, Jesus completely shows us what God wanted all humans to be like, starting with the first human, Adam. This is why Jesus is called the "last Adam." He perfectly fulfilled God's original plan for humanity.

As the last Adam and the Mediator of the new covenant, Jesus helps his followers become more like him ([Romans 8:29](#)). Even though he was perfect, he became like us in every way except sin. He did this so he could remove our sin and help us reflect his own glory. The Holy Spirit works in believers to make them more and more like Jesus ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)). The believer is to "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 13:14](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); compare [Ephesians 4:24](#); [Colossians 3:10](#), "the new self" in the image of God). This action is also described as Christ "formed" in the believer ([Galatians 4:19](#)).

This process of becoming like Jesus (called sanctification) continues throughout a believer's life. It will only be fully complete when Jesus returns and raises believers from the dead. At that time, even our physical bodies will be changed to be like Jesus's glorious body ([Philippians 3:21](#)).

This final transformation will make us even more wonderful than when God first created humans in his image. As the Bible says, we will exchange our earthly image for a heavenly one ([1 Corinthians 15:49](#)).

*See also* Man; Woman.

## **Imalkue**

An Arab chieftain who was in charge of Antiochus, the son of Alexander. Trypho, who had once supported Alexander, sought the aid of Imalkue to have Antiochus crowned king instead of Demetrius. Trypho succeeded and Antiochus became King Antiochus VI. Demetrius's troops supported the new king and routed Demetrius ([1 Macc 11:39–55](#)).

## **Imlah**

Father of Michaiah, a prophet during King Ahab's reign, whom the king despised for speaking the truth ([1 Kgs 22:8–9](#); [2 Chr 18:7–8](#)).

## **Immanuel**

Hebrew masculine name that means "God with us." It appears only twice in the OT ([Is 7:14](#); [8:8](#)) and once in the NT ([Mt 1:23](#)), where it is sometimes transliterated "Emmanuel." In the OT the name was given to a child born in the time of Ahaz as a sign to the king that Judah would receive relief from attacks by Israel and Syria. The name symbolized the fact that God would demonstrate his presence with his people in this deliverance. The greater application is that this is a prophecy of the birth of the incarnate God, Jesus the Messiah, as shown in Matthew.

### *The Prophecy in Isaiah's Day*

In focusing on the birth of Jesus as Immanuel, there has been some neglect of the historical fulfillment that occurred in the time of Ahaz. Ahaz was the son of a good king, Jotham and the grandson of another godly ruler, Uzziah, but his reign was marked by apostasy and idolatry. He made "molten images" for the Baals, offered incense in the Hinnom Valley, and even burned his sons as an offering ([2 Chr 28:2–4](#)). Because of this, the Lord gave him into the hand of Rezin, king of Syria, and of Pekah, king of Israel. The Edomites also invaded Judah, and the

Philistines attacked the Shephelah and the Negev and took several cities (vv [17-18](#)).

Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (745-727 BC) for help against Israel and Syria. Tiglath-pileser accepted tribute from Ahaz, but attacked him instead of helping him ([2 Chr 28:20-21](#)). When he went to Damascus to meet the Assyrian king, Ahaz saw an altar, upon which he made offerings to the gods of Syria (v [23](#)). He had a replica of this made and placed in the temple of Jerusalem ([2 Kgs 16:10-12](#)). The prophet Isaiah was directed to accost Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool. God's message to the king was to "take heart," for the attacking kings would fall ([Is 7:7-9](#)). Isaiah directed Ahaz to ask the Lord for a sign of this, but the king demurred, having a sudden attack of piety (v [12](#)).

Upon this refusal, the Lord gave to Ahaz a sign: a young woman would conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel ([Is 7:14](#)). That son would be able to distinguish good from evil by the time he was old enough to eat curds and wild honey, but even before that, the two kings would be removed and the king of Assyria would devastate their lands. The people would be taken away captive, so that the land would lie desolate and uncultivated. A man would have a cow to provide milk for curds, and wild honey would be gathered from the tangle of brush in the untended land.

The identity of this woman and child in Isaiah's time is uncertain. It has been proposed that the woman was Abijah, the wife of Ahaz, and that their son, Hezekiah, was this Immanuel. This is not demonstrable, and it seems inappropriate that a man like Ahaz should be the father of Immanuel.

It has also been suggested that the wife of Isaiah was the mother of Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14](#) tells of the prospective birth of Immanuel; [8:3](#) tells of the conception and birth of Isaiah's son, whose name, Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("swift to plunder and quick to spoil") is related to the prediction of the fall of Judah's enemies, for before the child would learn to talk, the lands of Syria and Israel would be taken by the king of Assyria ([Is 8:4](#)). Isaiah's statement that he and his children were "signs and portents in Israel from the Lord" (v [18](#), rsv) enhances the view that it was his son who was also named Immanuel.

The Lord then directed a message to Immanuel ([Is 8:5-10](#)). Because the people had refused the gracious invitation of the Lord, the Assyrians would scourge and fill the land of Immanuel. The

plotting and plans of the people would come to nothing, for "God is with us" ('immanu'el). This is a play on words, using the name Immanuel to express the truth of the Lord's presence.

### *The Prophecy Fulfilled in Jesus*

In the fullness of time God sent forth his son; more than 700 years after Ahaz, Jesus was born and here all ambiguities fade away. His mother was a virgin from Nazareth named Mary (Miriam), betrothed to a solid citizen named Joseph. [Matthew 1:23](#) cites [Isaiah 7:14](#) as being fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. The Scripture is very explicit in stating that Mary had no sexual contact with her husband prior to the birth of Jesus ([Mt 1:25](#)). The same precision is seen in the Gospel of Luke. When the announcement of this child's conception was made to Mary, she asked, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" ([Lk 1:34](#), rsv). The angelic messenger explained that this conception would be brought about by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon her and by the overshadowing power of the Most High (v [35](#)). For this reason the child would be not only Jesus and Immanuel but he would be called holy, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh ([Jn 1:18](#)); the child would be unique, being both God and man.

There were great distinctions between the Immanuel of Isaiah's day and Immanuel the son of Mary. The first was a type; the other, the antitype. The first was the shadow; the other, the reality. The one symbolized deliverance from foreign oppression; the second was the Deliverer from the oppressor. The first represented God's presence for but a few years; the second Immanuel is the son who lives forever.

The concept of "God with us" was often reiterated by Jesus. He told his disciples that where two or three gathered in his name he would be present ([Mt 18:20](#)). Before his ascension, he assured them that he would be with them until the end of the age ([28:20](#)).

He spoke also of the promise of the Holy Spirit, who "lives with you now and later will be in you" ([Jn 14:17](#), nlt), who will abide with them forever (v [16](#)). The "God with us" indwelling is spoken of in [Colossians 1:27](#): "Christ lives in you." In the consummation of all things, as shown to the apostle John, the Lord said: "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them" ([Rv 21:3](#), nlt).

*See also* God, Names of; Messiah.

## Immer (Person)

Priest in the time of David. He became the ancestral head of a house of priests: Pashhur, the priest who had Jeremiah arrested and placed in stocks, was a descendant of Immer ([Jer 20:1](#)). There were 1,052 priests of the subclan of Immer who returned from the exile ([1 Chr 9:12](#); [Ezr 2:37](#); [Neh 7:40](#)). A descendant of Immer helped rebuild the Jerusalem wall ([Neh 3:29](#)) and 128 priests under Amashsai (also a descendant) helped resettle the city and tend the temple ([Neh 11:13-14](#)).

## Immer (Place)

Place in Babylon. The Jews who returned from Immer had lost the record of their ancestry and could not prove their Jewish lineage ([Ezr 2:59](#); [Neh 7:61](#)).

## Immersion

Method of baptism whereby the believer is submersed under water. *See* Baptism.

## Imna

Helem's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:35](#)).

## Imnah

1. Asher's son ([Gn 46:17](#); [1 Chr 7:30](#)) and founder of the Imnite family ([Nm 26:44](#)).
2. Levite and Kore's father. Kore was a temple assistant during King Hezekiah's reign ([2 Chr 31:14](#)).

## Imnite

Any descendant of Imnah from the tribe of Asher ([Numbers 26:44](#)).

*See* Imnah #1.

## Impalement

The insertion of a pointed stake into a human body. It was likely practiced in ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and possibly also in Israel. There are, however, many problems in understanding what impalement means in the Old Testament. Its meaning varies in different passages.

Greek documents can be unclear. They use the same word for both impalement and crucifixion. (In crucifixion, they fasten the body to a stake rather than puncturing it.) It is also not clear whether the impalement is done to a living body or to a corpse. Probably, both types of impalement were used. The former was for execution. The latter was to expose the corpse to the elements, beasts, and disgrace. Furthermore, it is not clear to what extent "hanging" in the Old Testament refers to impalement. Its typical use with "on" (not "from") may suggest a desire for some form of impalement.

Mesopotamian sources shed some light on impalement. It was a method of execution. One case was for a woman who caused her husband's death (Code of Hammurabi 153). Another was for a woman who aborted herself (Middle Assyrian Laws 53). The latter law states that the woman should be impaled, regardless of whether she survived the abortion. Assyrian kings claimed to have hung war captives on stakes. Assyrian art shows impaled bodies in battle scenes. The stake could be pushed up into the chest, with the body facedown, or between the legs, with the body upright.

Darius's decree in [Ezra 6:11](#) to rebuild the Jerusalem temple allowed for punishing violators, possibly by impalement. If the expression "hang on a tree [stake]" (for instance, [Genesis 40:19](#); [Deuteronomy 21:22](#); [Joshua 8:29](#); [10:26](#); [Esther 2:23](#)) refers to impalement, a corpse was being impaled ([Joshua 10:26](#)). This interpretation also applies to [Deuteronomy 21:22](#). There, the victim is first killed and then "hung." The similarity to Christ's crucifixion ([Galatians 3:13](#)) is the disgrace, not the method. Other possible examples of impalement are found in [2 Samuel 4:12](#) and [21:6-13](#).

*See also* Criminal Law and Punishment.

## Imprecatory Psalms

The psalms that contain curses or wishes for bad things for their enemies. These elements appear in 18 psalms:

- [Psalm 5](#)
- [Psalm 17](#)
- [Psalm 28](#)
- [Psalm 35](#)
- [Psalm 40](#)
- [Psalm 55](#)
- [Psalm 59](#)
- [Psalm 70](#)
- [Psalm 71](#)
- [Psalm 74](#)
- [Psalm 79](#)
- [Psalm 80](#)
- [Psalm 94](#)
- [Psalm 109](#)
- [Psalm 129](#)
- [Psalm 137](#)
- [Psalm 139](#)
- [Psalm 140](#)

These elements are usually expressed as a prayer or wish for judgment to happen to their enemies.

To the casual reader, such wishes might seem to contradict the rest of Scripture, especially with the teaching of Jesus. [Leviticus 19:17-18](#) says, "You must not harbor hatred against your brother in your heart. Directly rebuke your neighbor, so that you will not incur guilt on account of him. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against any of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus argues that "neighbor" includes everyone ([Luke 10:29-37](#)). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" ([Matthew 5:44](#); compare with verses [38-48](#)). This idea agrees with the Old Testament, which teaches us to help our enemies ([Proverbs 25:21-22](#); compare [Romans 12:20](#)).

[Psalm 109](#) appears to contradict Jesus' teachings because it has the most curses and some of the harshest. Some people think this psalm is too harsh for the Bible. But this psalm has been seen as both prophetic and messianic by scholars like Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, and others.

Thomas Horne writes the past tenses of this psalm as future tenses, making it a prophetic text. His inspiration was Peter's quotation of [Psalm 109:8](#) when picking a successor for Judas ([Acts 1:20](#)). The psalm speaks about the trials of Jesus, which makes it predictive of Christ rather than imprecatory.

Another troubling passage is [Psalm 137:8-9](#), which happily speaks of the violent death of Babylonian children. Horne believed this was a prediction of the invasion of Babylon in 539 BC.

These psalms calling for justice are not at odds with the rest of the Bible. Jeremiah prayed for revenge ([Jeremiah 11:20](#)). He was answered by the Lord (verses [21-23](#)). The righteous seeking justice will be answered ([Luke 18:1-8](#)). In Revelation, the martyrs call out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You avenge our blood and judge those who dwell upon the earth?" ([Revelation 6:10](#)). Their cries are answered. David defeated his enemies, and he saw his enemies as the enemies of God. The enemies of the psalmist should receive judgment. The desires of the writer aligned with the judgment of God.

*See also* Judgment; Psalms, Book of; Wrath of God.

## Imputation

### *What Is Imputation?*

Imputation means charging to an account. It is used in the Bible with legal reference to sin and salvation being recorded by God. The teaching on imputation is a key part of the Christian faith.

Although the noun "imputation" does not appear in the Bible, the verb "to impute" is often found in both the Old and New Testaments. The basic meaning of "impute" is "to record in a ledger or account." In the context of salvation, the word is consistently used in a legal sense. A good example of this is in [Philemon 1:18](#), where the apostle Paul takes on the debt of Onesimus, saying, "if he...owes you anything, charge it to my account."

When the Bible talks about imputing good or evil, it does not mean that a person's moral character



changes. Instead, it means that, from God's perspective, righteousness or sin is credited to a person's account. In the broadest sense, the Bible teaches that both God ([Psalm 32:2](#)) and people ([1 Samuel 22:15](#)) participate in this process. Good deeds were often credited for reward ([Psalm 106:30-31](#)), while evil deeds were credited for punishment ([Leviticus 17:3-4](#)).

### *Three Ways the Bible Explains Imputation*

The Bible explains imputation in three main ways:

1. Adam's original sin is imputed to all people. In God's plan, Adam's first sin was credited to every person. So, everyone shares in the guilt and penalty of that sin.
2. The sin and guilt of all people were imputed to Christ. Although Jesus was sinless, he took on the penalty for sin.
3. The Bible teaches that Christ's righteousness is credited to believers because of his work on the cross. Even though believers are not perfectly holy, they are justified (declared right with God) before God's law and are "clothed" with Christ's righteousness.

### *Imputation and Salvation*

Paul explained that Christ took the punishment for believers' sins on the cross. He wrote that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Paul also said that Christ took on the curse of the Mosaic law ([Galatians 3:13](#)). Peter, reflecting on [Isaiah 53](#), said that Christ "bore our sins in His body on the tree" ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). The idea that the world's guilt was placed on the sinless Savior helps explain Christ's cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" ([Matthew 27:46](#)).

Imputation also means that Christ's righteousness is credited to believers. An example from Abraham's life illustrates this. After God promised Abraham blessings, [Genesis 15:6](#) says that Abraham "believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness." The Bible teaches that no person naturally has the level of righteousness God demands ([Psalm 130:3](#); [Isaiah 64:6](#); [Romans 3:10](#)). But in his salvation plan, God provides the needed righteousness ([Isaiah 45:24](#); [54:17](#); [Hosea 10:12](#)).

When a person accepts Christ's work by faith, God credits Christ's righteousness to them.

The imputation of divine righteousness to believers is a major theme in Paul's Letter to the Romans ([Romans 3:21-5:21](#)). Paul talks about the joy of a sinner who is declared righteous ([Romans 4:6](#)). The imputation of Christ's righteousness also leads to justification in God's law court ([Romans 5:18](#)). Christ's death, credited to the sinner, is the reason for acquittal by the holy God. The Bible teaches that the harmful effects of Adam's sin, which were imputed to humanity, are reversed for those who believe in Christ. The imputation of human sin to Christ allows his righteousness to be credited to believers.

*See also* Adam (Person); Christology; Fall of Man; Sin.

## **Imrah**

Zophah's son, a chief of Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:36, 40](#)).

## **Imri**

1. Ancestor of Uthai, one of the postexilic Jews of Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 9:4](#)). In the genealogy of [Nehemiah 11:4](#), Imri and Amariah are probably the same person.

2. Father of Zaccur, a rebuilders of the Jerusalem wall ([Neh 3:2](#)).

## **Incantation**

Chant used in magic. *See* Magic.

## **Incarnation**

Literally, "in flesh"; theologically, the doctrine that in Jesus of Nazareth God took on human flesh and became the God-man. Historically, the doctrine of incarnation was central in the christological debates of patristic times and has recently come to the fore again in academic circles. Biblically, it expresses the mystery of Jesus' identity.



## New Testament Testimony

### The Synoptic Gospels

The Gospel of Mark has no account of the Incarnation and stresses Jesus' messiahship more than his deity. As a result, some believe that it represents an earlier stage in the development of the church's theology, before the doctrine of incarnation had evolved. That is doubtful for two reasons: Incarnation passages like the Philippians hymn ([Phil 2:6-11](#)) probably antedate Mark's Gospel, and Mark has a well-developed theology of the two natures of Christ. Although he stresses Jesus' humanity, Mark accents it with an emphasis on divinity. Jesus was called the "beloved Son" by a heavenly voice at his baptism and transfiguration ([Mk 1:11; 9:7](#)); demons called him divine ([3:11; 5:7](#)), as did a Roman centurion ([15:39](#)). Jesus' "Abba" prayers ([14:36](#); cf. [Mt 26:39](#); [Lk 22:42](#)) indicate his sense of divine identity, and at his trial he was charged with claiming the title "Son of the Blessed" ([14:61-62](#)). Thus, though the Incarnation is nowhere explicitly stated in Mark, it is implicitly affirmed.

Matthew and Luke express the Incarnation. The birth narratives, of course, stress the event itself, with Matthew emphasizing Jesus' royal messiahship, and Luke, the divine witness of the Holy Spirit. Matthew's Gospel is Christ-centered; Luke concentrates on Christ as Savior, or more precisely, on salvation-history. Although Matthew presents Jesus' humanity, he emphasizes his lordship ([Mt 23:6-10](#)) and divine sonship. The Incarnation thus becomes the means whereby the divine becomes human in a universal sense ([1:23; 18:20; 24:14; 28:18-20](#)). Luke shows the greatest interest of the three in Jesus' earthly life. Nevertheless, his Gospel does not stress the human side of Jesus as much as Mark's. Luke portrays Jesus primarily as the divine Savior within history ([Lk 2:11; 4:16-30](#)). He combines Jesus' messianic office and divine nature, showing that the incarnate Son of God suffered and was exalted in order to bring people to God.

### John's Writings

The apostle John's doctrine of incarnation is more explicit than any of the others, teaching not only Jesus' God-man status but also his preexistent "glory" ([Jn 1:1-18](#)). Central in this presentation is the oneness between Jesus and God the Father ([10:29-30; 14:8-11; 1 Jn 2:23](#)). The "I am" (the expressed Christ, taken from the OT title for the

one true God and probably signifying God's personal name, Yahweh) came to reveal God to his people ([Jn 1:4-5, 14, 18](#)). Yet John also has the most balanced presentation of the Incarnation. The divine Logos or Word ([1:1-18](#)) is the exemplar of perfect humanity; he "became flesh" (v [14](#)) to enlighten people (vv [5, 9](#)) and generate in them "eternal life" ([3:14-18; 1 Jn 1:1-3; 4:9](#)).

### Paul's Epistles

The apostle Paul presented the Incarnation as Jesus' path to suffering and redemption. In [Galatians 4:4-5](#) the Incarnation ("born of woman") came "in the fullness of time" or at the apex of salvation-history, to "redeem those who were under the law." In the Philippians hymn ([Phil 2:6-11](#), quotes from nasb), the Incarnation is seen in terms of preexistence ("though he was in the form of God"), humiliation ("emptied . . . humbled"), and obedience ("becoming obedient to the point of death"). The goal of the Incarnation was the cross ("even death on a cross"), and its result was Christ's exaltation. The hymn is perhaps the supreme theological statement on the Incarnation in the NT. Jesus' human life was an "emptying," a refusal to seize the prerogatives of his deity ("did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped").

Paul described Christ as a second Adam ([Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:45-47](#)), who brought humanity a new possibility to attain what Adam had forsaken. Through assuming the form of a man, Christ became the Redeemer who reconciles people to God ([Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 Tm 1:15](#)). Paul stressed even more, however, that the exalted Christ provides newness of life ([Rom 6:4-6; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Col 3:1-4](#)). A hymn in the Letter to the Colossians ([1:15-20](#)) employs ideas from Jewish wisdom speculation, and possibly Greek themes, to show Christ as the "firstborn" and the "fullness of God." The one who always existed as God, through his sacrificial death, became the exalted Lord and brought humankind to God (see also the "flesh-spirit" theme in [Rom 1:3-4; 1 Tm 3:16](#)).

### Hebrews

The Letter to the Hebrews strongly speaks of the Incarnation. The opening hymn ([Heb 1:1-3](#)) accents Christ's exalted status as "the very stamp" of God's image and the radiance of his glory. Christ is superior to the angels ([1:4-9](#)), yet he became a man in order to suffer for human salvation ([2:9; 5:7-9](#)). The Incarnation is aligned with sinful humankind's need for a Savior. The purpose of

Hebrews is to show Christ's incomparable superiority to the OT sacrifices, and at the same time to stress his work of salvation. His real temptation (2:18; 4:15) combined with his sinlessness (4:15; 5:9; 7:26) is the human remedy for human sin. The Incarnation was Christ's path to final, once-for-all atonement and victory over sin (7:28; 9:26).

### *Historical Development*

The first group to challenge the traditional doctrine of incarnation was the Gnostics, who in the late first century denied that Jesus was truly human. Their Greek belief that the physical creation was evil led them to deny the Incarnation. They believed Christ to be a quasi-spiritual being who merely appeared human. The theologian Marcion (d. c. 160), trained by Gnostic teachers, also accepted a docetic interpretation of Christ (his humanity was only apparent). Marcion taught his doctrine as an antidote to the OT or Jewish-oriented Christianity in his day. After his excommunication in AD 144, Marcion founded his own church, and his views were widely disseminated in the next two centuries. Partly in reaction to Marcion's christological heresy, the orthodox churches unified their doctrine.

The next challenge to the orthodox view came through the Arian, Apollinarian, and Nestorian controversies in the third and fourth centuries. Arianism held that the Incarnation was total, so that Christ the Logos was no longer fully God. At the same time, he was not fully human, so Christ was someone between two natures. The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) affirmed that Jesus was indeed both God and man. A further question soon arose, however, as to the relation between his two natures. Apollinarius (310?–390?) taught that only the body of Jesus was human; his soul was absorbed completely into the divine Logos. Nestorius (c. 381–451) taught that the two natures must always remain distinct in the person of Christ; they functioned together but were separate in his being. The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) affirmed the unity of the two natures in Jesus. Many opponents of Chalcedon arose, called Monophysites, who believed in one divine nature in Jesus, who was only in a sense human. That movement caused serious political and religious divisions, and the Council of Constantinople (680–81) reaffirmed Chalcedon and established the orthodox incarnation theology.

In the eighth century, Spain and France were centers of the "adoptionist" controversy. Adoptionism taught that at birth Jesus was human, but at his baptism he underwent a "second birth" and was "adopted" as Son of God. It was condemned in a series of synods and never gained many adherents until modern times. During the scholastic age, Peter Lombard (1095?–1160) advocated what became known as "nihilism." The Incarnation supposedly caused no fundamental change in Jesus' deity, but his human nature was both insubstantial and unessential. That view likewise was condemned by Pope Alexander III (1159–81). Another debate at that time centered on the relationship between the fall and the Incarnation. Thomas Aquinas (1224–74) concluded that there was a cause-effect connection; the Incarnation was necessitated by sin rather than predestined apart from the fall.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers follow basically the same orthodox teaching about the Incarnation. The conflict in the Reformation centered more on soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). Several aberrant antitrinitarian movements took advantage of the breakdown in ecclesiastical authority, however. Michael Servetus (1511–53) taught a pantheistic view of the Incarnation, focused on the divine Spirit becoming manifest in the human form of Jesus. Thus the Logos is not a distinct person in the Godhead, nor is it fundamentally different from a "divine spark" in every person. At the same time Laelius Socinus (1525–62) and his nephew, Faustus Socinus (1539–1604), taught a unitarian system. The Incarnation was not a transferral of the divine essence but a communication of divine authority and revelation. Christ thus did not die as an atonement but as a moral example. Both Servetus and Socinianism were condemned by Catholics and Protestants alike.

In the 17th and 18th centuries "kenoticism" (from Greek for "empty") taught that in the Incarnation the Logos totally "emptied himself" (Phil 2:7) of the divine attributes. That doctrine represented the final phase of a dialogue from the scholastic period about the exact communication between Jesus' two natures. Was his human nature omnipotent? If not, how did the man Jesus exercise the divine attributes? The kenotic school believed that Jesus was fully human and that his divine nature was quiescent until after the Ascension. His miraculous powers were external, given by the Spirit. Against that view, the majority of theologians argued that Jesus was at all times both God and man, and that

in [Philippians 2:6-8](#) Jesus did not lay aside the attributes of deity (he still exhibited the “form of God”) but rather the majesty associated with deity.

The 19th and 20th centuries have given rise to a view that the Incarnation was a “myth,” a pictorial way of describing how God spoke through Jesus. The virgin birth was not historical, nor did any of the supernatural events of the Gospels ever take place. Rather, the stories in the Gospels were concoctions of the later church, efforts to portray Jesus’ impact on the movement. The Gospels, however, have too strong a flavor of accurate history for such a view to prevail (see [Lk 1:1-5](#); [In 19:35](#); [21:24](#)).

### Conclusion

The NT teaching on the Incarnation balances the humanity and divinity of Christ. Those two facts must harmonize in any theological system, for both are absolutely necessary parts of God’s redemptive plan. In the Incarnation, Jesus became a perfect human being. As God in human flesh, he suffered the divine penalty for sin as an innocent substitute. Being both God and man, Jesus simultaneously revealed God’s will for human life and reconciled sinful people to God through his own perfect life and death. Because of the Incarnation, therefore, those who believe in Christ have peace with God and new life from God.

See also Christology; Jesus Christ, Life and Teachings of; Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Virgin Birth of Jesus.

## Incense

Fragrant spices and oils or sacrifice that sends up perfumed smoke to God in order to please him.

People of every age have loved fragrant odors. In ancient times, sacrifices included sweet smells to make the deity happy. The aroma was a crucial factor in whether the god would accept the offering. Therefore, aromatic plants and exotic perfumes were precious for both secular and religious purposes.

Spices and precious oils were valued along with silver and gold. The queen of Sheba brought spices to Solomon as a gift ([1 Kgs 10:2](#)). Incense was kept in the royal treasury ([2 Kgs 20:13](#)). The price of spices and oils was extremely inflated because of the difficult work of extracting the juices, transportation costs to import them from faraway

places, and high profits for merchants who sold the perfumes.

Consequently, lovers sometimes compared their beloved to “myrrh,” a “mountain of myrrh” and a “hill of frankincense” ([Sg 1:13](#); [4:6](#)). The fragrance of incense set the right mood ([1:12](#)). Every spice known to a merchant burned beside the couch of Solomon ([3:6](#)). A bridegroom delighted in the perfumes of his beloved. She was his own private garden of incense ([4:10-14](#)). Even a prostitute burned incense beside her bed ([Ez 23:41](#)). No wonder wise men said that “fragrant oil” makes the heart glad and the “sweetness of friendship” comforts the soul (e.g., [Prv 27:9](#)).

### Types of Incense

Frankincense is mentioned most often in the Bible. It was imported from India, Somaliland, and Arabia Felix. Myrrh also came from Arabia Felix. Cinnamon was another important fragrance from Ceylon and China. Galbanum, tragacanth (gum), and laudanum all were grown in the mountains of Asia Minor. Galbanum was the most popular of these three, for it was also found in Turkestan, Persia, Syria, and Crete. Henna, saffron, and balsam came from aromatic plants native to Israel. In postexilic times other plants were introduced to Palestine and cultivated there: the rose, narcissus, and jasmine. Onycha seems to have been produced from the local fauna, and musk (muskin) may have been extracted from a gland of the musk deer.

Incense itself came in many forms. It might be used as granules placed in a bag hung around the neck ([Sg 1:13](#)). In the main, however, perfumes were in a liquid form, dissolved in olive oil. A good example of this is the “holy anointing oil” ([Ex 30:31](#)). Such oils were used to anoint the priests and kings of Israel. Only priests were allowed to prepare and administer them. The incense contained raw spices beaten into a fine consistency and seasoned with salt to make them holy. Stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense were mixed in equal proportions, all according to the art of the perfumer ([Ex 30:34-37](#)). The spices and incense for the sanctuary were donated as gifts ([Nm 7:14-86](#); [Jer 17:26](#); [41:5](#)) and kept in the temple ([Neh 13:5, 9](#)). Josephus described the incense of his day as a much more complicated compound. He listed 13 ingredients in the best incense of the Herodian era.

### *Incense Offering*

Archaeology has demonstrated that incense offerings were common throughout the ancient Near East from the earliest times of organized worship. Egyptian paintings and reliefs from the New Kingdom occasionally show a man holding a censer of burning incense. Incense seems to have been used as well in the rituals of Assyria, Babylonia, and Arabia. Canaanite altars found at Megiddo and Tell Beit Mirsim have horned limestone altars (10th century BC) that may have been designed to hold a bowl of incense. Hence, it is safe to assume that incense offerings also played some part in the worship of Israel from the beginning.

Incense offerings seem to have served a multitude of purposes. They may have been used to drive away evil spirits and thereby sanctify all the utensils of the place of worship ([Ex 30:26-29](#)). Undoubtedly, the sweet smell of incense provided an antidote to the putrid odor of the animal sacrifices. Therefore, if God was to receive a sweet savor and thereby be pleased with an offering, incense was necessary to compensate for the smell of the sacrifices. However, spices were never added to the flesh of the animals or birds.

In some instances, incense itself became a sacrifice. As a supplement to other sacrifices, frankincense alone was burned. To alleviate a plague, Aaron performed a ritual of burning incense ([Nm 16:46-47](#)). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest carried burning incense and hot coals on a pan (censer) into the Holy of Holies ([Lv 16:12-13](#)). The burning incense was thought to protect the life of the high priest, perhaps because the smoke kept him from seeing the full glory of God.

Frankincense was added to grain for offerings on the altar of burnt offering ([Lv 2:1, 15-16; 6:15](#)). It also accompanied the bread of the Presence ([24:7](#)) in two dishes. The bronze serpent destroyed by Hezekiah in his reform had become a profane object to which incense was burned ([2 Kgs 18:4](#)).

Except on the Day of Atonement, the incense was offered on a special altar ([Lv 4:7](#); cf. [Ex 30:9](#)), where it burned morning and evening and came to be called “perpetual incense” ([Ex 30:7-8](#)). Probably the altar of gold in Solomon’s temple ([1 Kgs 6:20-22](#)) was the incense altar.

Offering incense was a holy ritual, and persons who offered it with disrespect for procedures were condemned ([Lv 10:1-2; Nm 16:6-50](#)). Uzziah, the king of Judah, became a leper because he dared to

offer incense ([2 Chr 26:16-21](#)). The burning of incense at “high places” is often criticized (e.g., [1 Kgs 22:43](#)), either because the sanctuaries were idolatrous or because their priests did not take proper care as did the priesthood in Jerusalem. Prophets who criticized the offering of incense ([Is 1:13; 66:3; Jer 6:20](#)) did so to condemn a formalism that was void of devotion to the God of Israel.

### *Meaning of Incense*

Since incense was such a precious commodity, incense was a fitting offering to God ([Mal 1:11](#)). Incense offerings also provided a tangible sense of God’s holiness in which the people could experience atonement for sin ([Nm 16:46-47](#)). The smoke rising to the sky symbolized the prayers of the people ([Ps 141:2; Lk 1:10; Rv 5:8; 8:3-4](#)). At the same time, the smoke in the temple symbolized the presence of God as it had been portrayed by the cloud in the wilderness ([Ex 19:18; 33:9-10; Nm 11:25](#)). Together with the rising sun, the smoke provided a powerful symbol for the glory of the Lord ([Is 6:1-7](#)).

The significance of incense is further enhanced by NT allusions. The Christian’s testimony about Christ is paralleled with the offering of incense ([2 Cor 2:14-15](#)). The sweet smell of the gospel is contrasted with the smell of death that leads to doom. Likewise, money from the Philippian Christians came to Paul in the spirit of an incense sacrifice ([Phil 4:18](#)), a costly expression of love and devotion. Finally, incense seems to sanctify and accompany the prayers of the saints into the presence of God ([Rv 5:8; 8:3-4](#)). None of the NT references call upon the Christian to offer incense, but rather to learn the devotion and dedication to holiness signified by the burning of this precious substance.

*See also* Plants (Aloe; Balm; Calamus; Cinnamon; Frankincense; Galbanum; Henna; Hyssop; Myrrh; Nard; Storax Tree); Perfume; Tabernacle; Temple.

## **Incest**

Sexual relations between close relatives.

Incest is strongly forbidden in [Leviticus 18](#). [Leviticus 20](#) even says some kinds of incest should be punished by death. The Bible treats incest as a very serious offense, calling it dishonorable and perverted.



Examples of incest in the Bible show it comes from bad character:

- Lot's daughters got their father drunk and slept with him. Both became pregnant ([Genesis 19:30–38](#)).
- Amnon tricked and forced himself on his half-sister Tamar ([2 Samuel 13:1–22](#)).
- Paul strongly criticized incest happening in the Corinthian church ([1 Corinthians 5:1–5](#)), showing it was still wrong in New Testament times.

Blood relationship, or consanguinity, is one reason for illegal sexual contact. This applies, for example, to brothers and sisters, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, as well as some aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews. [Leviticus 18](#) also forbids sex with relatives by marriage (affinity) and some aunts and uncles. In ancient Israel, there was one exception: a man could marry his dead brother's widow if she had no son ([Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)).

While there are genetic reasons to avoid incest among blood relatives, the main problem is that it hurts families. Since families are central to God's work on earth, he judges incest very harshly. Families can't survive when there's sexual misconduct among their members.

## India

An eastern land of inconsistent geographical borders in Bible times. The Bible only mentions India in [Esther 1:1](#) and [8:9](#). Ahasuerus's empire stretched from Hoddu to Kush. The term "Hoddu" seems to come from an Old Persian word, Hindush. It was related to a Sanskrit word, Sindhu, meaning "stream," that is, the Indus River. Inscriptions from Persia show that India was a province of the Achaemenid Empire from 559 to 330 BC. This supports the biblical statements in Esther. Even the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century BC seems to have been poorly informed about India (*Persian Wars* 3.94–106; 4.40, 44). Some Hebrew legends and traditions mention Jews in India in the days of King Solomon. Some interpreters have suggested that the Pishon river in the land of Havilah may refer to India ([Genesis 2:11](#)). Some say that goods from Ophir, like sandalwood ("almug wood," [1 Kings 10:11](#); [2 Chronicles 2:8](#)), ivory, and

apes, were Indian in origin. Also, some of the items carried by merchants to Tyre, such as ivory tusks and ebony ([Ezekiel 27:15](#)), may have come from India.

The New Testament does not reference India. However, Jewish writings from before and after the New Testament refer to the land. These include the Targums on Esther, the Midrashim, and the Talmud. It was only after Alexander the Great died in 323 BC that Palestine and Europe began to write about India. [1 Maccabees 6:37](#) says the Seleucid armies used war elephants (who were possibly from India), mounted by Indian drivers in the second century BC. [1 Maccabees 8:8](#) states that the Romans forced Antiochus III to surrender.

India's value is unclear due to textual issues. Moreover, there's no proof that the Seleucid Empire extended to India. However, the Romans traded in India via Egypt and the Red Sea. This makes the lack of references in the New Testament strange. As the Christian centuries passed, references appeared in both Jewish and early Christian literature. It is certain that, early in the Christian era, there were settlements of Jews and monophysite Christians in India. Monophysitism is a belief that Jesus Christ had only one nature, which was divine, rather than both human and divine natures. According to legend, it was the apostle Thomas who took the gospel to India and founded the Mar Thoma Church.

## Infirmary

See Disease; Medicine and Medical Practice.

## Inheritance

Legacy or bequest. Inheritance plays an unusually significant role in the Scriptures when it is used to convey theological truths. As we might expect, these theological applications reflect legal customs in force during OT and NT times.

### *Legal and Historical Aspect*

#### The Patriarchs

We learn something of early-second-millennium BC practices from the patriarchal stories in Genesis. For example, the narrative indicates that the firstborn could normally expect to receive the birthright. Yet exceptions abound. Ishmael ([Gen](#)

[16:15; 17:15–21](#)), Esau ([25:23](#)), and Reuben ([49:3–4](#)) did not receive the birthright. Another item of special interest is Abraham's suggestion that, in the absence of a son, his servant Eliezer might be regarded as the heir ([15:2–5](#)); scholars have found confirmation of this practice in Hurrian legal documents of the second millennium.

### The Hebrew Nation

According to [Deuteronomy 21:15–17](#), Hebrew firstborns were legally entitled to a double portion of the inheritance. Israelite law also made provision for widows through the practice of levirate marriage ([Dt 25:5](#); see [Gn 38:8](#); [Ru 4:5](#)).

According to [Numbers 27:1–11](#), the daughters of Zelophehad argued that they should receive the inheritance since their father had died without sons. Consequently, God decreed that if a man died without sons, the inheritance should be transferred to his daughter; if he had no daughter, to his brothers; if he had no brothers, to his nearest relatives. This particular incident also illustrates the importance of preserving tribal possessions: the daughters of Zelophehad were not allowed to marry outside the tribe of Manasseh, for this would mean transferral of the property to another tribe ([Nm 36](#)).

How highly the Israelites valued their family's inherited possessions may be gathered from [Leviticus 25:25–28](#). If an individual sold his land for financial reasons, provision must be made for a relative to redeem it; if he had no near relative, he could still purchase it back at a later time, and even if he could not afford to do so, the land automatically reverted to him in the Year of Jubilee, when all debts were canceled (note also [Lv 27:14–25](#)).

### In the New Testament

Apart from the reference to levirate marriage in [Matthew 22:23–33](#) ([Mk 12:18–27](#); [Lk 20:27–40](#)), the NT has little to say about principles of property transferral during Roman times.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the younger son in the family requested his share of the inheritance ([Lk 15:12](#)). One should also note that the elder son, who with false piety looked down on his brother's behavior, had not protested when his brother asked for the inheritance; on the contrary, the elder brother too, without complaining, received his share—presumably a double portion.

In another significant passage ([Gal 4:1–2](#)) Paul, seeking to illustrate a theological point, refers to secular practices. An heir, he tells us, is subject to guardians and managers during his childhood, up to the time he actually inherits. The point Paul wants to establish is clear enough, but the illustration does not coincide with what we know of Roman law and unfortunately scholars have been unable to identify the precise social custom in view. It may be that Paul was making reference, in general rather than strict legal terms, to some practice with which he and the Galatians were familiar.

### Theological Aspect

#### Canaan as Israel's Inheritance

The conviction that God gave Palestine to the Israelites for their inheritance serves as a bridge between the historical and the theological data. The historical element lies in the obvious fact that the Promised Land, a physical entity, was certainly occupied by the Hebrews and distributed among their tribes. Theologically, however, the Scriptures speak of this occupation as a divine gift; in effect, even the method of distribution was based on the concept that the land belongs to God ([Lv 25:23](#); see [Ex 15:17](#); [Jos 22:27](#); [Ez 38:16](#); [Jl 1:6](#)).

The theme goes back to [Genesis 12:1–3](#). God, in choosing Abraham, instructed him to move to a new country and promised to make him a great and blessed nation ([Heb 11:8](#)). The significance of the land in this Abrahamic promise is made more explicit later, when we are told that God promised to give Canaan to Abraham's descendants after four centuries of Egyptian bondage ([Gn 15:12–21](#); see [Acts 7:5](#)).

Since Canaan was occupied by wicked inhabitants, the land was to be taken by force; to inherit the land therefore really means *to take possession* of it. Israel must trust God, whose land it is, to give them the victory ([Jos 1:1–9](#); [21:43–45](#); [Jgs 7:2](#); [Ps 44:1–3](#); [Acts 13:19](#)). Once they conquered the land, it was apportioned among the tribes according to their size (following the instructions in [Nm 26:52–54](#)). God further commanded the people to divide the land by lot ([vv 55–56](#)). Thus, from the initial promise to Abraham, to the actual apportionment of the land and even with reference to the future ([Is 60:21](#); [Ez 45:1–8](#); [47:13–48:29](#)), the people were made fully aware that their inheritance lay in the hands of a sovereign Lord.



## The Believer's Inheritance

In the OT we find the concept of inheritance transferred from the purely physical to the spiritual. The tribe of Levi, which constituted the priestly clan, received no inheritance, because “the Lord is their inheritance” ([Dt 18:1-2](#); see [Nm 18:8-24](#)). The Levites, in other words, received no land apportionment, but in their service to God they could begin to enjoy the fuller blessings to which the land inheritance pointed.

That this truth could not be restricted to Levites is hinted at in [Exodus 19:6](#), where the whole nation is called “a kingdom of priests” (see [1 Pt 2:9](#)). [Psalm 16](#) makes it clear that no one understood more clearly than David what those words entailed. Even if he were deprived of Israel's physical inheritance, he had received by lot a more beautiful heritage, the Lord himself, in whose presence he found full joy and everlasting pleasures ([Ps 16:5-6, 11](#); see also [Pss 73:25-26](#); [142:5](#); [Is 58:14](#); [Lam 3:24](#)).

In later Judaism, during and after the intertestamental period, the figure was extended considerably. For example, the rabbis began to speak of the law as the inheritance of the faithful. Further, they might give the idea a negative turn, as when the wicked are said to inherit hell (cf. [Jb 27:13](#)). Neither of these figures is found in the NT.

We also read in Jewish literature statements about inheriting the age to come, the kingdom, eternal life; these ideas occur frequently in the NT ([Mt 19:29](#); [25:34](#); [Lk 10:25](#); [18:18](#); [1 Cor 6:9-10](#); [15:50](#); [Gal 5:21](#); [Eph 5:5](#); [Ti 3:7](#); [Jas 2:5](#)). Such an inheritance, however, belongs only to those who are sanctified by God's word ([Acts 20:32](#); [26:18](#); [Col 1:12](#); note also [In 17:17](#); [Col 3:23-24](#)). These future blessings do not exclude the physical ([Mt 5:5](#); note [Ps 37:11, 29](#); [Is 60:21](#); [Rom 4:13](#); [2 Pt 3:13](#)), but they certainly exclude human frailty, for God's inheritance is imperishable ([1 Cor 15:50](#)). In short, our heritage is nothing less than full salvation ([Heb 1:14](#); [11:7](#)), which God carefully guards for us in heaven ([1 Pt 1:4](#)).

Doubtless, the most significant feature in the NT is its emphasis that, as a result of the work of Christ, his people begin even *now* to receive the promised inheritance. The Gospel of John frequently stresses the present reality of eternal life, as does the Letter to the Hebrews (cf. [6:12-17](#) with [9:15](#) and [11:13, 39-40](#)).

Paul treats this whole matter thoroughly in [Galatians 3:7-4:7](#). In response to the Judaizers, who claim that the Abrahamic inheritance is

restricted to those who become Jews through circumcision, Paul argues vigorously that Abraham's true children are those who believe, whether Jew or Gentile ([3:7](#); see [Acts 26:16-18](#); [Eph 3:6](#)). They become heirs of God's promise, for they receive the Spirit ([Gal 3:14](#)). The principle of inheritance is promise, not the Law (v [18](#)). Those who believe are brought into union with Christ (vv [27-29](#)); but then they are not merely Abraham's children but God's (v [26](#)), for Christ is the Son of God and God has determined to send the Spirit of his Son to believers so that they too may call God *Father* ([Gal 4:4-7](#); see also [Rom 8:15-16](#)).

Indeed, Christ himself as the Son is the true heir ([Mt 21:38](#); [Mk 12:7](#); [Lk 20:14](#)); he has inherited a name above every name ([Phil 2:9](#); [Heb 1:4](#)) and has been appointed heir of all things ([Heb 1:2](#); see [Ps 2:7-8](#); [Mt 28:18](#)). But by his grace, all who become his through faith are counted joint heirs with him ([Rom 8:17](#)).

## God's Inheritance

With a bold shift in the metaphor, the Scriptures speak of believers as God's inheritance. In the beautiful “Song of Moses” the author speaks of God as the Israelites' Father ([Dt 32:6](#)), who has taken special interest in their inheritance (v [8](#)). Then we are told why God cares: “For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance” ([Dt 32:9, niv](#)). This theme becomes very prominent throughout the OT (e.g., [Dt 9:26-29](#); [1 Kgs 8:51-53](#); [Pss 28:9](#); [33:12](#); [74:2](#); [Is 19:25](#); [Jer 10:16](#); [Zec 2:12](#)). Elsewhere, Israel is spoken of as God's special possession (e.g., [Ex 19:5](#); [Dt 7:6](#)).

In [Ephesians 1:14](#) “the redemption of the possession” refers to the final salvation of believers, who are God's treasure. Further, “we have obtained an inheritance” ([Eph 1:11](#)) may well be translated, “we have been made an inheritance,” that is, been “chosen as God's portion,” a view supported by verse [18](#). No more fundamental idea than this can be found in Scripture, and its essence is expressed by the words of the One who sits on the throne: “He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son” ([Rv 21:7](#), rsv; see [Lv 26:11-12](#); [2 Sm 7:14](#)).

*See also* Adoption; Birthright; Firstborn; Heir.

## Iniquity

Iniquity is a term used in the Bible to describe serious wrongdoing or sin.

*See Sin.*

## Ink, Inkhorn

An ink is a liquid used for writing, usually black or dark colored. An inkhorn is a small container made from an animal horn that was used to hold ink in ancient times.

*See Writing.*

## Inn

An inn is a place where travelers can stay overnight while on a journey. Inns have changed over time, from simple shelters to places more like today's hotels.

### *Inns in the Old Testament*

The word "inn" occurs three times in older Bible translations (like the King James Version) in the Old Testament. Two of the occurrences are when Joseph's brothers rest overnight during their trips between Egypt and Canaan ([Genesis 42:27; 43:21](#)). The third occurrence is when Moses returns to Egypt from Midian to lead the children of Israel ([Exodus 4:24](#)).

The Berean Standard Version translates each of these instances as "lodging place." In the time of Abraham and Moses, the Near East did not have inns as we know them today. Our idea of an inn is a public place where travelers can pay to stay.

In settled areas, a traveler could usually expect local people to offer them a place to stay. Across the Near East, offering a place to stay was seen as an important duty (see [Genesis 19:1-3; Judges 19:15-21](#)). In empty areas, travelers would make their own shelter ([Genesis 28:11](#)). They would also bring their own food ([Joshua 9:11-13](#)).

We do not know exactly when real inns started in Palestine. Some think they came from other countries, as the Jewish words for "inn" come from Greek and Latin. Old texts such as the Targum and Josephus (*Antiquities* 5.1.12) call Rahab an innkeeper ([Joshua 2:1](#)). But, there may have not been inns in Joshua's time. However, there are

parallels in the Near East of women keeping an establishment providing both rooms and sexual activity for travelers.

### *Inns in the New Testament*

We know Greek inns existed as early as the 5th century BC. They became common in the areas influenced by Greek culture. These inns were usually uncomfortable and unsafe.

This kind of "inn" with an "innkeeper" is where the Good Samaritan took the man who was robbed ([Luke 10:34-35](#)). This inn was probably much like a khan (a small inn inside of towns) or caravansary (a larger inn on the edge of a town, especially along trade routes). These would have been common along the trade routes in Syria for a long time.

These inns were square buildings with an open area in the middle where water and shelter were available, but travelers usually brought their own food and sometimes their own bedding. The Good Samaritan clearly expected the host to take care of the hurt man. It is difficult to tell if this was normal or just because it was an emergency.

The inn in Jesus's story about the Good Samaritan has long been identified with the Khan Hathrur. It is located halfway between Jerusalem and Jericho. Though the present structure is probably only one of many built in the same place.

Two other well-known parts of the New Testament talk about different kinds of places to stay. First, Christians from Rome met Paul, who was a prisoner, at Three Taverns, a stopping place 53 kilometers (33 miles) from Rome where the two roads met ([Acts 28:15](#)). Second, there is the "inn" that had no room for Joseph and Mary ([Luke 2:7](#)). This word is also translated as "guestchamber" (King James Version) and "guest room" ([Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11](#), Berean Standard Bible).

The Jews in Jerusalem were proud that they had enough guest rooms for all the visitors who came for Passover. This is also true for the crowd at Pentecost ([Acts 2:6-11](#)). It seems Joseph and Mary expected to find a place like this in Bethlehem for the census, but all the rooms were taken.

*See also Travel.*

## Inner Man

The inner, invisible being of a human. This Pauline phrase resembles the "hidden man" (kjb) of [1 Peter](#)

[3:4](#) (cf. [Rom 2:29](#)), where outward appearance is contrasted with inward reality. It assumes the current Jewish conception of man as a unitary being having both observable and invisible aspects, a physical body including a “psychological” heart. Paul says his members submit to sin’s rule even while his “inmost self” (rsv) delights in divine law ([Rom 7:22](#)). In [Romans 8:13](#), he speaks of setting the mind on things of the flesh versus things of the Spirit, describing this same conflict between the inner and outer man.

This inner core of personality is already the locus where the Spirit’s strength is instilled and where Christ dwells in the Christian. So another contrast is between the mortal and already decaying outward man, weakened by age and by sharing the dying of Christ, and the daily renewed inner man, as the life of the risen Jesus is manifested in mortal flesh ([2 Cor 4:10–16](#)). Taken with [Romans 8:11](#), this may possibly echo a speculation of intertestamental Judaism that a spiritual counterpart to the present body is already being prepared by the quickening of divine life in the devout inner man.

*See also* Man.

## Innocents, Slaughter of the

Herod the Great’s massacre of all the boys under two years old in Bethlehem and the surrounding area ([Matthew 2:16–18](#)). Herod slaughtered “the holy innocents” in an effort to destroy the child about whom the Magi had told him.

Although Matthew does not say why Herod did this, other historians tell us Herod was very jealous about his power as king. He feared his own family as rivals of his power to such an extent that he put his wife and several of his sons to death. In Herod’s kingdom, many people hoped for and talked about a messiah coming. Some people even said they were the messiah. A messiah is a promised savior or leader. In Jewish belief, the messiah would be sent by God to help the Jewish people. Herod himself made that association with the Magi’s quest for one born “King of the Jews” ([Matthew 2:2](#)).

Adding to his instability, Herod suffered from a painful form of arteriosclerosis (the hardening of the arteries). This made the king subject to fits of delirium and rage.

Matthew probably had several reasons for including the story in his gospel.

1. Its use follows Matthew’s pattern of citing Old Testament prophecies. In this case, Matthew cites [Jeremiah 31:15](#).
2. The incident accounts for the sojourn of Jesus’s family to Egypt and their subsequent settling in Nazareth ([Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23](#)).

## Inscriptions

Term used to refer to writing in the ancient world that was done on a material of a permanent nature, such as stone or clay, rather than on ordinary and impermanent substances, such as papyri or parchment.

Preview

- Introduction
- Inscriptions on Monuments
- Historical Records
- Official Announcements
- Dedications
- Correspondence
- Mosaic Floor Decorations

### Introduction

There are occasional references to inscriptions in the Bible; for example, the Ten Commandments were inscribed on stone ([Ex 31:18](#)) and given to Moses, and later written by Joshua on stone and set up at Mt Ebal near Shechem ([Jos 8:32](#)). In the excavations at Shechem, G. E. Wright found a large stone prepared to receive an inscription that he dated to the time of Joshua on stratigraphic grounds. It may still be seen at the site. A message from the hand of God to the Babylonian king Belshazzar was inscribed on the walls of his palace ([Dn 5:5, 24](#)). Paul observed an altar with the inscription “To an unknown god” in the marketplace of Athens ([Acts 17:23](#)). The book of Revelation speaks of the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel being inscribed on the gates of the heavenly city ([Rv 21:12](#)).

Inscriptions in the ancient world can be found in almost any language and from any period of history: Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, Nabatean, Moabite, and so

on. It was once popular to argue that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing had not been invented that early. Inscriptions found at the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim dating to the 15th century BC have disproven this allegation. In addition, it might be noted that clay tablets found at Ras Shamra by Claude Schaeffer and dated to about 1400 BC demonstrate a considerable period of literary activity, as do the tablets at Ebla from approximately 1,000 years earlier.

Inscriptions may be found in almost any position or place, but the most common locations are in the floors of synagogues, church buildings, and mosques; the pavements of forums; the walls of public buildings; dedicatory stones and statues; stelae and monumental plaques; tombs and sarcophagi; and Roman milestones. An exhaustive list is impossible, but a few representative samples will illustrate the various kinds of extant inscriptional material.

### *Inscriptions on Monuments*

The Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah commemorated his victory over the Sea Peoples in the 13th century BC by inscribing a black granite stele with a record of his victory. It contains the earliest known reference to Israel outside the land of Palestine: "Israel lies desolate."

The Israelite king Omri ([1 Kgs 16:16-30](#)) is referred to in a text carved in the Moabite language on a stone dating near the end of the reign of the Moabite king Mesha, about 830 BC. It was found at Diban (OT Dibon) in 1868 and contains a record of the successful rebellion of the king against Israelite oppression.

Another monumental inscription was found in Persia carved into the steep slope of Mt Behistun. It is a trilingual (Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian) record of the exploits of Darius I, providing the key to unlocking the mystery of the cuneiform script in which several of these ancient languages were written.

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III left a record of his first six campaigns of conquest inscribed on a monolith found in 1861 at Kurkh on the Tigris. The stone is carved front and back in cuneiform that is written over a bas-relief of the king. This same king left a black stone obelisk, six and a half feet (2 meters) high, depicting his triumphs over several other kings, among whom is Jehu, king of Israel, depicted in the second panel from the top,

prostrating himself before the Assyrian monarch. This is the earliest picture available of an Israelite and the only known representation of an Israelite king by a contemporary. The inscription above the picture reads, "The tribute of Jehu, son [descendant] of Omri . . ." It dates to the mid-ninth century BC.

### *Historical Records*

Frequently in the region of Mesopotamia, ancient kings recorded important events or proclamations in stone or clay. A notable example is the clay prism containing the final edition of Sennacherib's Annals dated to 691 BC. It is hexagonal, 15 inches (38.1 centimeters) high and 6 inches (15.2 centimeters) wide, and written on all sides in cuneiform script. The inscription speaks of "Hezekiah the Jew (king of Judah), who did not submit to my yoke. . . . Like a caged bird, I shut him up in Jerusalem, his royal city" (cf. [2 Kgs 18](#); [Is 36-39](#)).

Even though no annals comparable to those produced by the Assyrian kings have survived among the Babylonians, we do have some chronicles written on clay tablets covering the years from 626 BC to the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539. One of these, the Babylonian Chronicle, provides an exact date of March 16, 597 BC, for the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (cf. [2 Kgs 24:10-17](#)).

Babylon itself fell to Cyrus the Mede, king of Persia, in 539. The event is not only referred to in the Bible ([Ezr 1:1-3](#)) but is also described on a clay barrel-shaped cylinder nine inches (22.9 centimeters) in length, written in cuneiform script, during the reign of Cyrus. It refers to his policy that allowed captive nations to rebuild their cities and temples. This provides an explanation of his encouragement and financial help to the Jews in returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of Solomon that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed ([Ezr 1:2-4](#)).

Egyptian pharaohs were fond of publishing records of their exploits in hieroglyphic script on the walls of temples and tombs. These were usually incised into the stone and then painted. One of the most interesting is Shishak's description of his invasion of the land of Israel incised on the southern wall of a court of the temple of Amon at Karnak. The inclusion of Megiddo, as well as other cities in Israel, among the more than 75 cities whose names can still be read adds historical interest to the biblical account of Shishak's invasion and conquest of Jerusalem and "Judah's fortified cities" ([1 Kgs 14:25-26](#); [2 Chr 12:2-10](#)). Archaeological finds



confirm a destruction and burning of the city at this time.

### *Official Announcements*

When an ancient monarch or public official wanted to publish an announcement with some degree of permanency, it would be carved in stone or set in mosaic. An inscription on a marble slab dating to the reign of Claudius (AD 41–54) was found in 1878, originating in the city of Nazareth. It contains a warning against grave robbing or any other desecration of cemeteries. The penalty for such violation was declared to be death. The inscription may reflect some of the troubles Claudius had in Rome over the person of Christ (Suetonius, *Claudius* 25) which led to the expulsion of Jews from the capital city ([Acts 18](#)). At issue must have been the resurrection of Christ as proclaimed in Rome.

Announcements were placed even in temples. Josephus referred to a small wall surrounding the Jewish temple in Jerusalem that contained slabs of stone at regular intervals giving warning in Greek and Latin to Gentiles entering the temple (*War* 5.193–34; 6.125–26; *Antiquities* 15.417). Two fragmentary examples have been found. One discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1871 reads: “No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows.” The Romans allowed the Jews to put anyone to death, even a Roman, who went beyond this barrier (*War* 6.126).

An important inscription commissioned by the emperor Claudius, was found at the beginning of the 20th century in Delphi, Greece. It was written in Greek and mentions Gallio as proconsul with a date that can be established as AD 51–52 for his term of office. This Gallio is the proconsul before whom Paul was brought by the Jews of Corinth ([Acts 18:12–17](#)). It is therefore extremely important for establishing the date of Paul’s 18-month stay in Corinth, and an important pivotal date for Pauline chronology in general. The inscription is an imperial announcement to the citizens of Delphi regarding the need for increasing the population of the city with eminent people.

The name Pontius Pilate has appeared in a Latin inscription carved into a stone found in the Roman theater at Caesarea Maritima on the coast of Israel. It refers to him, in partially mutilated words, as prefect and contains the name Tiberium, which

designates a structure built in honor of the emperor Tiberius.

### *Dedications*

Inscriptions were commonly placed on walls or floors of buildings or attached to some other structure dedicating the completed edifice. An inscription was cut into the wall of a long tunnel built by the Jewish king Hezekiah in Jerusalem when the tunnel was finished ([2 Kgs 20:20](#)). It is in Hebrew and is now in the Istanbul museum. One of the oldest inscriptions we have in that language, it describes the construction of the Siloam tunnel.

In the city of Corinth in Greece there is a dedicatory inscription cut into the pavement of a plaza on the north side of the large theater. The abbreviated Latin inscription reads: *Erastus pro aedilitate sua pecunia stravit* (“Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid the pavement at his own expense”). The bronze has long since been removed from the letters deeply cut into the gray Acrocorinthian limestone. This is probably the same “Erastus, the city treasurer” mentioned by Paul in [Romans 16:23](#). A similar inscription from the Corinthian agora of Paul’s day reads: “Gnaeus Babbius Philinus, aedile and pontifex, had this monument erected at his own expense, and he approved it in his official capacity as duovir.”

A monumental dedicatory inscription in Greek was found in Jerusalem during excavations in 1913–14, which once stood on the wall of a first-century AD synagogue on Mt Ophel. It refers to a Theodotus, the son of a ruler of the synagogue named Vettenos, who built the synagogue. Since the name Vettenos is Roman, it may be that Theodotus was a Jewish slave who had been freed and given the Roman name of his master. If so, this inscription may have hung on the “synagogue of the Freedmen” in Jerusalem ([Acts 6:9](#)).

The British Museum contains a portion of a broken arch that stood over an entrance into the Greek city of Thessalonica from the first century AD until 1867, when it was torn down to provide stone for the repair of the vast city wall. The inscription begins: “In the time of the politarchs . . .” This is a rare word referring to Roman officials and is used in the book of Acts ([Acts 17:6](#)) in reference to city authorities of Thessalonica. This word is found nowhere else in Greek literature.

## Correspondence

In the second millennium before Christ, it was common practice to write correspondence on small clay tablets. More than half a million have been found in Mari, Nuzi, Nineveh, Ebla, and elsewhere. Interesting examples of such correspondence may be found in a great number of clay tablets found at Tell el-Amarna in Upper Egypt. They were written in the Babylonian language using the cuneiform script during the time when Akhenaton was captivated with his reformation of Egyptian art and religion at his new capital Tell el-Amarna (Akhetaten), and Palestine and Syria were left to the mercy of marauders called Habiru in the documents. Many of these are written from cities in Canaan under attack and ask for help from the pharaoh, whose vassals they are at this time (late 14th century BC). Some think that these Habiru were the ancient Hebrews who invaded the land under the direction of Joshua.

Sometimes correspondence was written in ink on broken pieces of ceramic pottery (potsherds) called ostraca. In 1935, 18 of these were found in the excavations at Lachish in southern Israel. They are written in Hebrew and provide examples of the kind of script used by the Judeans in the time of Jeremiah. The language is essentially identical with the Hebrew of the OT. The letters were sent by Hosh'a'yahu, an officer in charge of a nearby town, to Ya'osh, the military governor of Lachish, during the invasion of Judea by the Babylonians, which ended in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Eleven such potsherds were found in Masada, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, in excavations conducted by Yigael Yadin from 1963 to 1965. Masada was destroyed by the Roman army under the command of Flavius Silva in AD 73. Nine hundred and sixty men, women, and children committed suicide rather than surrender to the Romans. Ten men were chosen to cut the throats of those who remained. They drew lots for the heartbreaking task, according to Josephus (*War* 7.395), and Professor Yadin thinks the ostraca he found were the ones used in the drawing. One of them contained the name of Ben Yair, who was probably Eleazer ben Yair, the commander of the fortress.

## Mosaic Floor Decorations

In the Roman and Byzantine periods it was popular to decorate the floors of basilicas, baths, synagogues, churches, and other public buildings

with elaborate tessellation containing inscriptions and artwork. Excavation in 1972 disclosed a building in Caesarea Maritima with mosaic inscriptions in six floors throughout the structure. Two of them are the Greek text of [Romans 13:3](#) set in a circular border. Another is a blessing on the one who enters and exits the room: "May the Lord bless your entry and your exit." Two of them invoke the aid of Christ for people associated with the function and construction of the building. These were a part of a building that was destroyed in the seventh century AD.

The floors of the synagogues at Tiberias-hamath, Beth Shan, Beth Alpha, Eshtemoa, Susiya, Hamath-gader, En-gedi, and others in Israel have inscriptions in Greek and Aramaic that usually refer to benefactors of the synagogue. A synagogue floor has been found in Naro, Tunisia, which contains a Latin inscription. In the Tiberias synagogue, Hebrew was used only for defining the astrological symbols that appear in the zodiac. Aramaic was used primarily for Halakah (religious rule or law), and Greek was principally used in honoring donors.

One of the best-known mosaic floor inscriptions in churches was in Madaba, Jordan, where the oldest known map of Israel and Jordan was set into the floor in the sixth century AD. The place-names of cities, geographical features, and passages of Scripture are given in Greek. Church floors typically contain dated or undated dedications, blessings, and Scripture quotations that appear in Aramaic, Coptic, Syriac, Latin, and Greek. Symbolism often accompanies the inscriptions, but in AD 427 an edict was issued forbidding the use of crosses and other religious symbols on pavements so that they might not be stepped on. It is not clear how widespread this prohibition was.

*See also* Archaeology and the Bible; Pottery.

## Insect

Small invertebrates generally characterized by a segmented body (head, thorax, abdomen) and three pairs of legs. *See* Animals (Ant; Bee; Cricket; Flea; Fly; Gnat; Grasshopper; Locust; Moth).

## Inspiration

*See* Bible, Inspiration of the.



## Installation Offering

See Offerings and Sacrifices.

## Instruct, Instructor

The word "instruct" means to teach or give information to someone. An instructor is a person who teaches or gives instructions, similar to a teacher.

See Teacher.

## Intercede, Intercession

The act of praying or making requests to God on behalf of others.

See Prayer.

## Intercession of Christ

The theological term for Jesus Christ's work of asking God the Father to save, help, and support people on earth.

The Hebrew word for "intercession" comes from a root meaning "to strike," which suggests the idea of making a strong request. This word is used in a prophecy about the "servant of the Lord" in Isaiah: "He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors" ([Isaiah 53:12](#)). In Greek, the word for intercession originally meant to "meet," "approach," or "appeal." During the period between the Old and New Testaments, this word was used to describe personally asking an official for a favor (as seen in [2 Maccabees 4:8](#)). In the New Testament, the noun form is translated both as "intercession" ([1 Timothy 2:1](#)) and as "prayer" ([1 Timothy 4:5](#)).

Theologians see Christ's intercession as the second part of his priestly work. His suffering and death on the cross were the first part. This fixed the problem of human wrongdoing (sin) and made things right between God and people again ([1 Timothy 2:5-6](#)). In the Old Testament, priests prayed for the people. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the holy of holies with the sin offering's blood. He then made the place holy with incense and sprinkled blood on the "mercy seat" ([Leviticus](#)

[16:11-19](#)). After Jesus died for sins, He went to the Father and entered heaven, where he now represents his people ([Hebrews 7:25](#)).

## Christ's Intercession on Earth

Before beginning his life of intercession in heaven, Jesus Christ prayed and interceded for people on earth. This matched his teaching that his followers should always pray and not become discouraged ("lose heart," [Luke 18:1](#)). The Bible often shows Jesus praying. For example, he prayed at the grave of his friend Lazarus ([John 11:41-42](#)). He spent all night in prayer on a mountain before choosing the twelve apostles ([Luke 6:12-13](#)). After warning his disciple Peter that Satan wanted to test him, Jesus said to Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" ([Luke 22:32](#)). Jesus's first words on the cross were a prayer for those who persecuted him ([Luke 23:34](#)).

The "high priestly prayer" in [John 17](#) is the most complete example of an intercessory prayer by Jesus in the Bible. This prayer is based on his close relationship with his Father ([John 17:5, 8](#)). Jesus prays for three things:

1. For himself, asking that he might glorify the Father and finish the work he was sent to do ([John 17:1-5](#))
2. For his disciples, who were chosen to spread the gospel after he was gone ([John 17:8-9](#))
3. For all believers ([John 17:20](#))

The goals of his intercession include:

1. The unity of God's people ([John 17:11, 21](#))
2. Their joy despite hardships ([John 17:13](#))
3. Their protection from evil ([John 17:15](#))
4. Their sanctification by God's Word ([John 17:17](#))
5. Their eternal fellowship with Christ ([John 17:24](#))

## Christ's Intercession in Heaven

Christ's intercession for his people, which began on earth, continues in heaven. The Book of Hebrews describes Christ as a priest and focuses on his

ongoing ministry of intercession. His heavenly intercession follows his earthly sacrifice, which was completed “once for all” ([Hebrews 10:10–18](#)). Jesus himself said, “Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven” ([Matthew 10:32](#)). This ongoing intercession is recognized in New Testament phrases like “through Jesus Christ” ([Romans 1:8](#); [16:27](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#)), “through him” ([Colossians 3:17](#); [Hebrews 13:15](#)), and “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” ([Ephesians 5:20](#)).

The New Testament explicitly affirms the doctrine of Christ’s heavenly intercession in four key passages. The apostle Paul says that Christ is “at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us” ([Romans 8:34](#)). The writer of Hebrews states that Christ “is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them” ([Hebrews 7:25](#)). Further, Christ has entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” ([Hebrews 9:24](#)). The apostle John also describes this ministry: “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” ([1 John 2:1](#)). The Greek word for “advocate” refers to a legal counselor who represents a client’s cause before a judge. John thus presents the risen Lord as appearing before God on behalf of his people, offering his own obedience and suffering as the reason for their forgiveness.

#### *How Does Intercession Work?*

Christ’s intercession in heaven has two aspects. It is both complete and ongoing. His redemptive work is finished. But, he continues to care for God’s people. His intercession includes:

1. His presence with the Father as the basis for each believer’s justification ([Hebrews 9:24](#))
2. His stopping Satan’s accusations against each believer ([Romans 8:33](#); [Revelation 12:10](#))
3. His claiming each believer’s right to come into God’s presence ([Hebrews 4:14–16](#))
4. His mediating the prayers of each believer

In response, God the Father gives believers many spiritual blessings.

John Owen, a Puritan who lived from 1616 to 1683, said, “The intercession of Christ... is his continual appearance for us in the presence of God, representing the power of his sacrifice, along with his tender care, love, and desire for the well-being, support, deliverance, and salvation of the church.”

The Bible describes the people for whom Christ intercedes in both broad and narrow terms. Christ is said to pray for all people everywhere ([Isaiah 53:12](#); compare [Matthew 26:28](#)). More specifically, He prays for his redeemed community, the church ([John 14:16](#); [17:9, 20](#); [Hebrews 4:15–16](#)). Yet Christ’s prayers are also focused on the specific needs of individual believers ([Luke 22:31–32](#); [1 John 2:1](#)).

## Interest

A fee charged for borrowing money.

*See* Debt; Banker, Banking; Money.

## Intermediate State

The state of the human person after death and before the final resurrection. In other words, what happens to a person when they die before the resurrection? Such teaching is more developed in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. It is a mistake to think that reference to it is completely missing in the Old Testament (for example, [Job 19:25](#)).

#### *What Does the Bible Say About the Intermediate State?*

According to Christ, the intermediate state is deducible from such texts as [Exodus 3:6](#) and [Matthew 22:32](#). Even in the New Testament, an account of the intermediate state is not given clearly. It is hinted from teaching about the physical death and resurrection of all people, but mainly of believers. This is taught by Christ himself in [Matthew 22:30–32](#). The apostles, particularly Paul, teach this as in [1 Corinthians 15](#).

In addition, the Bible teaches that a human being is a unity of soul and body and not simply a soul that happens to be embodied ([Gn 2:7](#)). This provides some information about what happens to a person after death. From such details, two conclusions can be made about the intermediate state.

1. The physical death is not the total end of the life of the individual. The person lives on after this. This is not merely in the memories of those who survive but as a distinct personality. In the case of believers, they are aware of the loving presence of God ([Philippians 1:23](#)).
2. Such an existence is not how humans were intended to be. It is incomplete or unusual since having a body is essential for a person to be in God's image. The individual, surviving death, waits for the resurrection of the body. In the case of a Christian, he or she will experience complete redemption, a state of complete freedom from sin in the presence of Christ ([1 Corinthians 15:50-58](#)).

The is less clear about the intermediate state for those who are not Christians. This includes the difficult passage about Christ preaching to the "spirits in prison" in [1 Peter 3:19-20](#).

### *What Is the Intermediate State Like?*

Scripture is limited in the way it shows what life in the intermediate state is like. In [Philippians 1:23](#), Paul says of himself that after his death he will be "with Christ, which is far better indeed," but he gives no details. Is it not wise to look for these details in such biblical incidents as that of Saul and the "medium at Endor" ([1 Samuel 28:7](#)). A medium is a person who communicates with human beings in the spiritual world. This text has many different interpretations.

Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus in [Luke 16:19-31](#) is also difficult because of its symbolic character. The purpose of this parable is to teach about the importance of the present life for a person's eternal fate. It must be treated with caution. Perhaps the most that can be said is that the dead in Christ are "immediately with God." They rest in his loving presence until the resurrection. The unsaved are in a comfortless condition awaiting their resurrection to judgment ([John 5:29](#)).

### *The Intermediate State in Christian Thought*

Throughout history, Christians have looked at three main ideas to better understand what the

Bible teaches about the time between a person's death and the final judgment:

1. Greek philosophers, especially Plato, have influenced how some Christians think about faith. This influence has appeared many times throughout Christian history. Platonic thought separates the physical body, which is evil, from the soul, which is good. The Bible includes Paul's teaching about the difference between flesh [physical body] and spirit. Some people misunderstood what Paul meant about this. They focused too much on the soul and not enough on the body. This misunderstanding led to two problems:
  2. People paid less attention to the Bible's teaching that God will raise dead people back to life.
  3. Some people completely ignored that this raising of the dead will happen at the end of time.

People who follow Plato's ideas believe:

- Physical things are less important than spiritual things
- The soul is more important than the body
- The physical raising of dead bodies is not very important

The belief that the soul lives on without a body after death is sometimes used instead of the idea of a temporary state before the resurrection. However, there is no clear support for this belief in the Bible. In modern theology, there is a tendency to downplay the historical aspects of faith, similar to how people used to downplay the physical body. This often leads to either making life after death seem only spiritual or even denying it altogether. However, the Bible makes it clear that the intermediate state is a period between two forms of having a body: our current physical bodies and the "spiritual body" ([1 Corinthians 15:44](#)). The

second phase occurs at Christ's second coming ([15:23](#)).

1. During the Reformation, a controversy arose between John Calvin and some of the Anabaptists over "soul sleep." Calvin strongly believed that the intermediate state is one of conscious awareness of God's presence. This is something his opponents denied. For Calvin, such a denial was the same as holding that the soul is destroyed at death. It was the same as denying that Christ exercises rule over the dead before they are resurrected. Calvin's view is supported by Paul's statement that nothing separates the believer from the love of God. "Nothing" means not even death can separate us from the love of God ([Romans 8:35-39](#)). The biblical teaching that upon death the believer "sleeps" ([1 Thessalonians 4:14](#)) is interpreted to mean that the dead no longer communicate with the living on earth and no longer engage in labor, but are in a state of rest. To "fall asleep in Jesus" means to enjoy the presence of Jesus in a state without a body. The closest comparison is like a person dreaming who may be aware but does not depend on the function of any of the senses of the body.
2. Can people change spiritually after they die, or is their spiritual state permanent at death? This question includes three main parts:
  - Can people turn away from their sins (repent) after death?
  - Can people grow closer to God after death?
  - Can people be cleansed from their sins after death?

It is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that death is followed by purgatory for all who are imperfect. In purgatory the soul is freed from the

remnants of sin. The period of purgation may be lessened by the gifts, prayers, and masses of those who survive the deceased.

Most Protestants reject this idea as disagreeing with the biblical teaching. Three arguments are offered:

1. The work of Christ is complete and finished ([Hebrews 9:28](#)).
2. It is impossible for one human being to earn or otherwise gain grace for another ([Luke 17:10](#)).
3. The Bible teaches that the eternal state of the soul is determined by its condition at death ([Hebrews 9:27](#)).

*See also* Dead, Place of the; Hades; Heaven; Hell; Paradise; Sheol.

## Interpreter

A person who helps communicate between speakers of different languages. Or, one who explains dreams.

Joseph pretended to need an interpreter to speak to his brothers ([Genesis 42:23](#)). Also, dreams needed to be interpreted ([Genesis 40:8](#); [41:15-16](#); [Daniel 2](#); [4:6-9](#), [18-24](#); [5:7-8](#), [12-17](#); [7:16](#)). The interpreter was sometimes one who acted as a mediator ([Job 33:23](#)).

Ezra and Nehemiah acted as interpreters or translators of the law of Moses when it was read to the Jews who had returned from exile ([Nehemiah 8:8-9](#)). They must not have known Hebrew.

In New Testament times, the interpreter:

- Explained the words of those who spoke in tongues ([1 Corinthians 14:28](#))
- Translated foreign languages ([Acts 2:6](#))
- Explained the Scriptures ([Luke 24:27](#))

## Intertestamental Period

The time between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. This period includes important events in Jewish history that are recorded in the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees.

See Maccabees, 1 and 2.

## Iob

Alternate name for Jashub, Issachar's son, in [Genesis 46:13](#). See Jashub #1.

## Iphdeiah

Shashak's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:25](#)).

## Iphtah

City of the Shephelah assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance, listed between Ashan and Ashnah ([Jos 15:43](#)).

## Iphtah-El

Valley on Asher and Zebulun's border ([Jos 19:14, 27](#)), possibly the modern Sahl el-Battof.

## Ir

Ir was a man from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the father of Shuppim and Huppim ([1 Chronicles 7:12](#)). Ir may be identical with Iri in verse [7](#). In [Numbers 24:19](#), the same Hebrew word is not used as a name. Instead, it is translated as "the city" in the King James Version and the New International Version.

## Ir-Nahash

Son of Tehinnah, Eshton's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:12](#)). Some translations note the alternate rendering, "city of Nahash" (mg niv, kjv).

## Ir-Shemesh

City allotted to Dan's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:41](#)), probably identical with Beth-shemesh.

## Ira

1. A priest of King David or chief official in his service at the time of the revolt of Sheba ([2 Samuel 20:26](#)).
2. A warrior among the mighty men of King David, known as "the thirty" ([2 Samuel 23:26](#)). He was the son of Ikkesh of Tekoa ([1 Chronicles 11:28; 27:9](#)). He became a commander of the sixth division of the militia of David.
3. A warrior among the mighty men of King David, known as "the thirty." He is an Ithrite ([2 Samuel 23:38; 1 Chronicles 11:40](#)).

## Irad

A son of Enoch, from the family line of Cain ([Genesis 4:18](#)).

## Iram

The leader of a tribe (chief) in Edom ([Genesis 36:43; 1 Chronicles 1:54](#)).

## Iri

Bela's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 7:7](#)).

## Irijah

A guard from the tribe of Benjamin who arrested the prophet Jeremiah when he was leaving Jerusalem to inspect property he had the right to buy ([Jeremiah 32:6-7](#)). Irijah accused Jeremiah of trying to join the Babylonian army. Because of this false charge, the officials had Jeremiah beaten and put in prison ([37:13-14](#)).



## Iron

A strong metal used to make tools and weapons in ancient times.

*See* Minerals and Metals.

## Iron (Place)

KJV form of Yiron, a city in Naphtali's territory ([Jos 19:38](#)). *See* Yiron.

## Ironsmith

An artisan who normally worked in iron ([Is 44:12](#)); a blacksmith. The first worker in iron recorded in the Bible is Tubal-cain ([Gn 4:22](#)). In Israel iron became widely known and used about the 11th century BC ([Dt 3:11](#); [Jos 6:19, 24](#); [17:16](#); [Jgs 1:19; 4:3, 13](#)). *See* Minerals and Metals.

## Irpeel

City of inheritance allotted to Benjamin's tribe ([Jos 18:27](#)), perhaps situated in the hill country several miles northwest of Jerusalem, near Gibeon.

## Irrigation

The practice of bringing water to farmland through human-made systems like channels and ditches.

*See* Agriculture.

## Iru

Caleb's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:15](#)).

## Isaac

The son of Abraham and Sarah and the father of Jacob and Esau. Isaac was one of the patriarchs of Israel, the early fathers or founding leaders of the Israelite people in the Bible.

### *Isaac's Birth and Early Life*

The name Isaac has an interesting language origin. It is the English version of the Hebrew *Yitshaq*, in

Greek "Isaak." As an imperfect form, it means "he laughs." As a perfect form, it means "he laughed." Scholars have discussed the meaning of who is doing the laughing in the name.

If God is the "he" who laughs, the name could show divine amusement. Abraham and Sarah both laughed at the prospect of having a child ([Genesis 17:17](#); [18:12](#)). God's promise was fulfilled when they suddenly became parents.

Isaac's family background is also interesting. Sarah was not only the wife of Abraham but also his half-sister ([Genesis 20:12](#)). This fact alone may have interfered with conception in their earlier years. Because of this relationship, Isaac belonged to both sides of Terah's family. According to common practice at the time, the son of the legal wife took precedence over the male offspring of concubines. This meant Isaac had priority of inheritance over Ishmael. The gifts that Abraham later gave to the sons of his concubines ([25:6](#)) were without prejudice to Isaac's inheritance.

Following God's instructions ([Genesis 17:10-14](#)), Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day as a member of the covenant community. The next ceremony came when he was probably around three years old. In eastern countries people celebrate a child's transition from milk to solid food with a feast. This event is still sometimes observed. During the celebration, the mother chews a mouthful of solid food and pushes it into the baby's mouth with her tongue. The infant is often so shocked by this treatment that it promptly expels the food, and the mother repeats the process. For an observer the procedure can be hilarious, and Ishmael may have been laughing at this when Sarah got angry ([21:8-10](#)).

During the years of Isaac's youth, Abraham was living in Philistine territory ([Genesis 21:34](#)). The test of the father's faith and obedience came in this period. Abraham has watched this son of God's promise grow up into a healthy young man. Then God asks him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

Isaac was familiar with sacrificial rituals and helped with the preparations. Isaac was also familiar with the traditions that meant the head of the family had power of life or death over everyone in the family. If he spoke any protest as he lay bound on the sacrificial altar, it is not mentioned in the story.

When Abraham's faith did not waver, God intervened at the crucial moment and provided another offering, a ram. Because of Abraham's



obedience, God promised him great blessing. Isaac also participated in this blessing ([Genesis 22:25:11](#)). It was this act of faith and obedience that Paul honored centuries later by calling Abraham the forefather of the Christian church ([Romans 4](#)).

### *Isaac's Marriage and Family*

After Sarah's death ([Genesis 23](#)), Abraham wanted to secure a bride for Isaac. It was the custom for parents to arrange marriages for their children. He didn't want Isaac to marry a local non-Jewish woman. Instead, Abraham sent his household steward to Nahor in Mesopotamia to seek a bride for his son from among his relatives.

[Genesis 24](#) describes how the servant met Rebekah. The story emphasizes faith, perseverance, and divine blessing. Nahor officially engaged Rebekah to Isaac even before he had met the rest of her family. Rebekah's father, Bethuel, and brother, Laban, agreed to this arrangement. Rebekah left her home with the family's blessing to take up her new responsibilities in Palestine as Isaac's wife.

When Abraham died at an old age, Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah ([Genesis 25:8-9](#)). Isaac was now the patriarch of the family and responsible for leading and making important decisions for the whole family group. He pleaded with God that Rebekah might bear children. She bore twin sons, Esau ("the hairy one") and Jacob ("supplanter," which means one who takes another's place).

Esau became a hunter, and Isaac favored him. Jacob was more of a settler and farmer and was favored by his mother. Jacob was also crafty. He took advantage of Esau's extreme hunger one day, bargaining with his older brother to exchange his birthright for some lentil stew. Owning the birthright meant Jacob would get a double inheritance ([Deuteronomy 21:17](#)).

### *Isaac's Later Years and Legacy*

When famine came to the land, God told Isaac not to visit Egypt ([Genesis 26:2](#)). Isaac stayed in Palestine, where God told him he would enjoy good living. When the men of the area asked about Rebekah, Isaac became fearful and said she was his sister. When the lie was revealed, Abimelech the king rebuked Isaac. The king warned everyone in the area not to interfere with Isaac. Isaac prospered so much that Abimelech finally asked him to move. Isaac took his family to Beersheba, where there

was plenty of water for his flocks, and his fortune increased.

Although Esau was Isaac's favorite son, his father did not approve of Esau's two marriages to Hittite women. When Isaac felt that the end of his life was approaching, he wanted to bless his firstborn in the traditional manner ([Genesis 27](#)). Rebekah overheard his instructions to Esau. She encouraged Jacob to deceive the blind old man by disguising himself as Esau and taking his brother's blessing.

The deception succeeded, and Isaac gave Jacob the blessing of the firstborn. When Esau appeared to receive his blessing, he was too late. Esau was very bitter against Jacob because of what had happened.

Rebekah sent Jacob away to her brother Laban in Mesopotamia, to escape Esau's anger and also to find a wife. Esau did receive a blessing from Isaac, but a lesser one. Two decades later a wealthy Jacob returned with his family. He made peace with Esau before Isaac died, and the brothers buried Isaac in Hebron ([Genesis 35:27-29](#)).

Isaac is not as well-known in the Old Testament narratives as Abraham or Jacob. New Testament passages like [Acts 7:8](#), [Romans 9:7](#), [Galatians 4:21-31](#), and [Hebrews 11:9-20](#) recognize his importance for covenantal faith (faith based on trusting in God's promises and following His instructions). Isaac represents the new covenant that God made with Abraham as the child of God's promise.

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

## **Isaiah (Person)**

Eighth-century BC prophet during the reigns of the Judean kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; author of the biblical book of Isaiah. Isaiah was the son of Amoz ([Is 1:1](#)) and may have been a relative of King Amaziah. Growing up in Jerusalem, Isaiah received the best education the capital could supply. He was also deeply knowledgeable about people, and he became the political and religious counselor of the nation. He had easy access to the monarchs and seems to have been the historiographer at the Judean court for several reigns ([2 Chr 26:22; 32:32](#)).

Isaiah's wife is referred to as a prophetess ([Is 8:3](#)) and they had at least two sons, Shear-jashub ([7:3](#)) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz ([8:3](#)). Isaiah's customary attire was a prophet's clothing, that is, sandals and a garment of goat's hair or sackcloth.

At one point during his ministry, the Lord commanded Isaiah to go naked and barefoot for a period of three years, (wearing only a loincloth) ([20:2-6](#)). This must have been humiliating in a society that measured status by meticulous dress codes.

Isaiah worked to reform social and political wrongs. Even the highest members of society did not escape his censure. He berated soothsayers and denounced wealthy, influential people who ignored the responsibilities of their position. He exhorted the masses to be obedient rather than indifferent to God's covenant. He rebuked kings for their willfulness and lack of concern.

Isaiah's writings express a deep awareness of God's majesty and holiness. The prophet denounced not only Canaanite idolatry but also the religious observances of his own people that were external ceremonies only and lacking sincerity ([1:10-17](#); [29:13](#)). He preached impending judgment on the idolatrous Judeans, declaring that only a righteous remnant would survive ([6:13](#)).

Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah, the "peaceful prince," and the ruler of God's kingdom ([11:1-11](#); cf. [9:6-7](#)). He also depicted this Messiah as a suffering, obedient servant ([53:3-12](#)). Isaiah was preeminent among the prophets for the variety and grandeur of his imagery. His imagination produced forceful, brilliant figures of speech.

Isaiah prophesied during the last three decades of the northern kingdom of Israel but because he lived in Jerusalem, in Judah, he made little direct reference to Israel. However, when that kingdom fell, Judah lay open to conquest by Assyria. Isaiah advised King Ahaz to avoid foreign entanglements and depend on God to protect his people. Ignoring that advice, Ahaz made an alliance with Assyria.

It was Hezekiah, Ahaz's pious son, who sought to remove Judah from this dangerous situation. When the Assyrians under Sennacherib approached Jerusalem, Isaiah inspired Hezekiah and the Judeans to rely on the Lord for the city's defense, and "the angel of the Lord" destroyed Sennacherib's army ([37:36-38](#)), securing a short period of peace for Hezekiah and the Judeans.

Hebrew prophecy reached its pinnacle with Isaiah, who was greatly esteemed in both OT and NT times. One indication of that esteem is the collection of apocryphal literature associated with his name.

See also Isaiah, Book of; Israel, History of; Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess.

## Isaiah, Book of

### Preview

- Author
- Date
- Background
- Literary Unity
- Theological Teaching
- Content

### Author

The prophet Isaiah, whose name means "the Lord saves," lived and ministered in Jerusalem. Because of his repeated contact with the kings of Judah, some scholars believed that Isaiah was related to the royal family, but this is not certain. According to chapters [7](#) and [8](#), Isaiah was married and had at least two sons, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, whose symbolic names illustrated God's dealings with the nation as a whole. The "disciples" mentioned in [8:16](#) probably assisted Isaiah in his ministry and may have helped him record the book that bears his name.

When Isaiah saw the Lord in the famous temple vision described in chapter [6](#), he was willing to go wherever God sent him, even though he would face strong opposition ([6:9-10](#)). King Ahaz proved to be particularly resistant to Isaiah's advice ([7:4-17](#)), and the people in general ridiculed his preaching ([5:10-12](#); [28:9-10](#)). During the reign of the godly Hezekiah, however, Isaiah's ministry was much appreciated, and the king consulted him eagerly during times of crisis ([37:1-7, 21-35](#)).

Isaiah is usually regarded as the greatest of the writing prophets. Some of the chapters in his book display an unparalleled literary beauty and make use of poetic devices and a rich variety of symbols. Chapters [40-66](#) contain many powerful passages that underscore the grandeur of the book. It is ironic, then, that many scholars attribute these chapters to a "second" or "third" Isaiah, unknown authors who wrote much later than Isaiah in connection with the Babylonian exile. Yet elsewhere in the OT, the names of all who wrote the prophetic books are preserved, and it would be

most unusual for the Jews not to know who wrote such magnificent prophecy as chapters [40–66](#).

### *Date*

Since many of the events recorded in chapters [1–39](#) took place during the ministry of Isaiah, most of these chapters were probably written by about 700 BC or shortly thereafter. The destruction of the Assyrian army in 701 BC represents the climax of the first half of the book, fulfilling the prophecy of [10:16, 24–34](#) and [30:31–33](#). In [37:38](#) Isaiah refers to the death of King Sennacherib, which did not occur until 681 BC. This means that some of the earlier chapters, along with [40–66](#), were probably written later, during Isaiah's retirement years. A gap of several decades could help account for the change in subject matter that is found in the last half of the book. In these chapters Isaiah projects into the future as he addresses the Jews who would be in exile in Babylon about 550 BC.

### *Background*

Isaiah's public ministry occurred primarily from 740–700 BC, a period marked by the rapid expansion of the nation of Assyria. Under King Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC), the Assyrians moved to the west and south, and by 738 BC the Assyrian monarch was demanding tribute from Damascus and Israel. About 734 BC Rezin of Damascus (Syria) and Pekah of Israel organized a coalition to rebel against Assyria, and they tried to enlist the support of King Ahaz of Judah. But Ahaz refused to join, and when the kings of Damascus and Israel invaded Judah (see [7:1](#)), Ahaz appealed directly to Tiglath-pileser for help (cf. [2 Kgs 16:7–9](#)). With little hesitation the Assyrians returned to capture Damascus and to turn the northern kingdom of Israel into an Assyrian province.

The puppet king Hoshea ruled over Israel from 732–723 BC but was imprisoned when he joined a revolt against Shalmaneser V, the new Assyrian king. Shalmaneser besieged the capital city of Samaria, which finally fell in 722 BC, spelling the end of the northern kingdom. Sargon succeeded Shalmaneser in 722 and had to quell a number of revolts. In 711 BC Sargon captured the Philistine city of Ashdod in a campaign that became the occasion of Isaiah's prophecy of chapter [20](#).

Even more important was the widespread rebellion that broke out with the accession of Sennacherib in 705 BC. King Hezekiah of Judah withheld his normal tribute payment, and by 701 BC Sennacherib had invaded Palestine to punish

the rebels. The details of this campaign are given in [Isaiah 36–37](#) and tell how city after city was captured by the Assyrians before the invaders stood at the gates of Jerusalem and demanded total surrender. With almost no hope of survival, Hezekiah nevertheless was encouraged by Isaiah to trust God, and in one night the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, virtually wiping out Sennacherib's army ([Is 37:36–37](#)).

In an effort to befriend the enemies of Assyria, Hezekiah showed his treasures to envoys of the king of Babylon ([39:1–4](#)). Isaiah warned that someday the Babylonian armies would conquer Jerusalem and carry off those very treasures, along with the residents of the city (vv [5–7](#)). Not only did Isaiah predict the Babylonian captivity of 586–539 BC (cf. [6:11–12](#)), but he also foretold that Israel would be released from Babylon ([48:20](#)). The Chaldean kingdom led by Nebuchadnezzar would be God's instrument of judgment upon Judah, but they too would suffer defeat. One of Isaiah's most remarkable prophecies was the naming of Cyrus, king of Persia, the ruler who would conquer the Babylonians in 539 BC and release Israel from exile (cf. [44:28](#)). Along with the Medes (cf. [13:17](#)), Cyrus won several important victories before sending his troops against Babylon. Isaiah hailed him as one anointed by the Lord to bring deliverance for Israel ([45:1–5](#)).

### *Literary Unity*

Largely because of the references to the later kingdoms of Babylon and Persia, the unity of Isaiah has been called into question. Chapters [40–66](#) move abruptly into the exilic period of 550 BC, almost 150 years after Isaiah lived. Moreover, the Servant of the Lord plays a prominent role in these chapters and the messianic king fades into the background. Brilliant poetic passages are found in chapters [40](#), [53](#), [55](#), and [60](#), demonstrating remarkable depth and power.

Although these factors are sometimes cited as a sign of disunity, there are actually strong indications for unity in the book. For example, the historical interlude (chs [36–39](#)) forms a hinge or bridge that links chapters [1–35](#) and [40–66](#). Chapters [36–37](#) complete the Assyrian section, and chapters [38–39](#) introduce the Babylonian material. Most of the linking chapters are written in prose, while the others (in some translations) are largely poetry. From the standpoint of verbal or stylistic unity, one can point to Isaiah's favorite title for God, "the Holy One of Israel." This title appears 12 times

in chapters [1-39](#), and [14](#) times in chapters [40-66](#), but only seven times in the rest of the OT. A study of the famous Servant Songs of [52:13-53:12](#) reveals several ties with earlier passages, especially in chapters [1-6](#). The servant who is smitten and wounded ([53:4-5](#)) receives the same punishment as the beaten and injured nation of [1:5-6](#) (also cf. [52:13](#) with [2:12](#) and [6:1](#)).

### *Theological Teaching*

Isaiah is to the OT as the book of Romans is to the NT—a book filled with rich theological truth. Like Romans, Isaiah unveils the sinfulness of God’s rebellious people and his gracious provision of salvation. Because God is the Holy One of Israel ([1:4](#); [6:3](#)), he cannot ignore sin but must punish those who are guilty. Both Israel ([5:30](#); [42:25](#)) and the other nations ([2:11](#), [17](#), [20](#)) experience a time of judgment known as the Day of the Lord. In anger God raises his hand against his people (cf. [5:25](#)), but ultimately his wrath is poured out upon Babylon and the nations (cf. [13:3-5](#); [34:2](#)).

With the fall of Assyria and Babylon, the Day of the Lord becomes a day of joyous victory ([10:27](#); [61:2](#)). According to [Isaiah 63:4](#), it is the year of the Lord’s redemption. Earlier, Israel had been redeemed from slavery in Egypt; now the return from the Babylonian captivity brings equal joy ([52:9](#); [61:1](#)). The ultimate redemption is to be accomplished through the death of Christ, and [Isaiah 53](#) describes our Lord’s suffering and death in graphic terms. His ministry as the Suffering Servant is also introduced in [49:4](#) and [50:6-7](#); meanwhile, [49:6](#) states that the servant will be “a light for the Gentiles.” Looking ahead to the Second Coming, Isaiah predicts a messianic age of peace and righteousness. Nations will “beat their swords into plowshares” ([2:4](#)) and the “Prince of Peace” will rule forever ([9:6-7](#)).

Throughout the book God is pictured as the all-powerful Creator ([48:13](#))—the sovereign One seated on a throne, high and exalted; the King, the Lord Almighty ([6:1](#), [5](#)). He controls the armies of the earth ([13:4](#)) and removes rulers as he wills ([40:23-24](#)). Before him, nations “are but a drop in the bucket” ([40:15](#), nlt), and compared with him all idols are worthless and without power ([41:29](#); [44:6](#)). This is the God who shows his fury to his foes and his love to his servants ([66:14](#)).

### *Content*

#### **Messages of Judgment and Hope ([1-12](#))**

In the opening chapter Isaiah characterizes Israel (including Judah) as “a sinful nation” that has rebelled against God. Although the people regularly bring offerings to him, their worship is hypocritical, an attempt to mask their oppression of the poor and helpless. The Lord encourages the nation to repent of their sin or face the fires of judgment. After this introduction, Isaiah turns to describe the peace of the messianic age in [2:1-4](#). The day will come when all nations will obey God’s word and live at peace. “The mountain of the Lord”—Jerusalem—will be raised up “and all the nations shall flow to it” ([2:2-3](#), rsv). In the meantime, however, both Israel and the nations have exalted themselves against the Lord, and he will judge them in an awesome display of power. For Israel, God’s judgment will bring great upheaval, including the loss of its leaders. Defiant and ruthless, the rulers will face either death or deportation. Chapter [3](#) ends by denouncing the pride and vanity of the women of Zion; they, too, will suffer disgrace. After Jerusalem is cleansed of its sin, the remnant will enjoy the rule of “the branch of the Lord,” who will protect and shield his people ([4:2-6](#)).

In [5:1-7](#) Isaiah presents a short song about Israel as God’s vineyard. The Lord did everything possible to ensure a yield of good grapes, but the vineyard produced nothing but bad fruit and had to be destroyed. Isaiah then pronounces six woes against Israel, and announces that the Assyrian army will invade the land. Against the backdrop of Israel’s sin, Isaiah (ch [6](#)) gives an account of the vision through which he was called as a prophet. Overwhelmed by the holiness of God and by his own sinfulness, Isaiah thought he was ruined, but when he was assured that his sins were forgiven, he responded positively to God’s call in spite of the stubbornness of the nation to which he was sent.

One of the most stubborn individuals in all the nation was King Ahaz of Judah, and chapter [7](#) describes Isaiah’s encounter with this godless ruler. When Ahaz was threatened by Damascus and the northern kingdom, he refused to believe Isaiah’s promise that God would protect him. This was the occasion on which Isaiah gave Ahaz the sign of Immanuel ([7:14](#)). The “virgin” refers ultimately to Mary and “Immanuel” to Christ ([Mt 1:23](#)), but in the near fulfillment the child could be Isaiah’s own son Maher-shalal-hash-baz ([Is 8:3](#)).



(See four interpretations of this passage in Virgin Birth of Jesus.) This name (meaning “swift to plunder and quick to spoil,” v 1, nlt mg) would be a sign that soon Judah’s enemies would fall; “Immanuel” signified that God would be with Judah (v 10, nlt mg). However, if Ahaz appealed for help to the king of Assyria, Isaiah warned him, Assyria’s powerful armies would one day invade Judah also (cf. 7:17–25; 8:6–8). The destruction brought by Assyria would plunge Judah into a time of famine and distress (8:21–22).

Nevertheless, the gloom and darkness associated with the Assyrian invasion would not last indefinitely, and 9:1–5 speaks of a time of peace and joy. Verses 6–7 introduce a child who would become a righteous King and would rule forever. This “Prince of Peace” is the Messiah, the “Mighty God” whose kingdom is described in 2:2–4.

For the immediate future, however, both Israel and Judah will suffer the agony of war as punishment for their sins. God is angry with his people because they are proud and arrogant, and their leaders disregard the pleas of the poor and needy. Civil war and foreign invasion will crush the hapless nation (9:8–10:4). But once Israel has been judged, God will turn his hand against Assyria, the instrument he has used to judge other nations. Because of her string of victories, Assyria is filled with pride and is eager for more triumph. Yet even at the moment when Jerusalem is about to succumb, God will cut down the Assyrian army like a cedar in Lebanon and spare his people (10:26–34).

After Assyria’s defeat, Isaiah describes the restoration of Israel and the powerful rule of the Messiah (ch 11). Both Jews and Gentiles will be attracted to Jerusalem to enjoy an era of peace and justice. Like David, the Messiah will have the Spirit of God resting upon him as he judges the wicked and protects the needy. To conclude these opening messages, Isaiah offers two short songs of praise that celebrate God’s past deliverance and his promise of future blessing (ch 12).

### Oracles against the Nations (13–23)

Although Babylon is not the major power of the day, Isaiah begins his announcements of judgment with two chapters about the destruction of Assyria’s neighbor to the south. Babylon will eventually conquer Jerusalem (between 605 and 586 BC), but the Medes (13:17) along with the Elamites will capture Babylon (539 BC). In spite of the glory to be achieved by future kings of Babylon, God will bring their pomp down to the grave (14:9–

10). The chapter ends with short prophecies against Assyria and the Philistines.

One of Israel’s oldest enemies was the nation of Moab, situated east of the Dead Sea. Even though it was a small country, Isaiah devotes two chapters to these descendants of Lot. Chapter 15 describes the extensive mourning that will overwhelm their cities. After a brief interlude urging the Moabites to submit to Israel and to her God (16:1–5), Isaiah notes that pride will lead to Moab’s downfall. Sounds of weeping fill the land as the vines and fields wither and are trampled.

In chapter 17 the fourth oracle is directed against Damascus and Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel), probably reflecting their alliance against Judah about 734 BC. Both nations will face ruin, and Ephraim is condemned for abandoning the Lord, her “Savior” and “Rock” (17:10).

In chapters 18 and 19 Isaiah turns to the south and addresses Ethiopia and Egypt, countries that had strong links from 715–633 BC, when an Ethiopian named Shabako became pharaoh in Egypt. But Egypt is plagued with disunity and suffers greatly at the hands of Assyrian kings. In spite of the supposed wisdom of her leaders, Egypt faces economic and political ruin (19:5–15). Yet the time is coming when the Egyptians will be restored and will worship the God of Israel. Along with Assyria and Israel, Egypt will become a blessing (19:24). Some interpreters think this is a prophecy of the salvation of Gentiles during the church age, but others relate this day to the peace of the millennial age (cf. 2:2–4; 11:6–9). For the immediate future, however, Isaiah announces that Assyria will take many Egyptians and Ethiopians into captivity (ch 20).

A second oracle about Babylon (cf. 13:1–14:23) is contained in chapter 21, and Isaiah is staggered as he considers the impact of Babylon’s fall (21:3–4). When Babylon collapses, the world will know that her gods were powerless (21:9; cf. Rv 14:8; 18:2).

Although it seems out of place among these oracles against the nations, chapter 22 condemns the city of Jerusalem. Like the nations, Jerusalem is full of revelry (22:2) but will soon experience the terrors of a siege. Since the people no longer rely on the Lord (v 11), he will hand them over to the enemy. Jerusalem’s unfaithfulness is exemplified by Shebna, a high official guilty of pride and materialism whose position will be taken by the godly Eliakim (vv 15–23).



The last oracle (ch [23](#)) is directed against the city of Tyre, which resisted capture until Alexander the Great conquered the island fortress in 332 BC. When Tyre fell, the economy of the entire Mediterranean world was shaken, for her ships had carried the goods of the nations far and wide.

### Final Judgment and Blessing ([24-27](#))

This section functions as a grand finale to chapters [13-23](#) in that it anticipates God's judgment upon the nations and the inauguration of the kingdom of God. A defiled earth must bear its punishment ([24:5-6](#)) and even the forces of Satan face judgment (vv [21-22](#)).

In chapter [25](#) Isaiah rejoices over God's great triumph and looks ahead to a day when death will be swallowed up and tears will be wiped from all faces ([25:8](#)). Israel's longtime enemies, symbolized by Moab, will be laid low (vv [10-12](#)), but Jerusalem will be a stronghold for the righteous ([26:1-3](#)). In [26:7-19](#) the nation prays that these promises will become a reality. Verses [20-21](#) indicate that the Lord will indeed respond, pouring out his wrath upon a sin-cursed earth and upon Satan himself ([27:1](#)). When that takes place, Israel will be a fruitful vineyard, a blessing to the whole world ([27:2-6](#); contrast [5:1-7](#)). First, however, Israel will have to endure war and exile, and then the remnant will return to Jerusalem.

### A Series of Woes ([28-33](#))

Returning to his own historical period, Isaiah pronounces a series of woes upon both the northern and southern kingdoms, as well as one upon Assyria (ch [33](#)). Chapter [28](#) begins with a description of the fading power of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. Verses [7-10](#) portray the leaders of Judah in the same light; they have disregarded Isaiah's message and are out of touch with God. Judgment is on the way, and their false preparation (vv [15,18](#)) will be of no avail. God will fight against Israel (vv [21-22](#)), and even Jerusalem will be put under siege until God in his mercy intervenes ([29:1-8](#)). Because of their hypocritical worship, the people deserve to be punished, but in the future Israel will again acknowledge the Lord and be made physically and spiritually whole ([29:17-24](#)).

Chapters [30](#) and [31](#) denounce Judah's proposed alliance with Egypt in the effort to thwart Assyria. God wants his people to trust him, not their unreliable neighbors to the south. The Lord promises to protect Jerusalem ([30:18](#); [31:5](#)) and

defeat the invading Assyrian army ([30:31-33](#); [31:8-9](#)). None can stand before his mighty sword.

Continuing on this positive note, Isaiah goes on to emphasize the righteous rule of the messianic king in chapters [32](#) and [33](#). Zion will enjoy peace and security at last ([32:2,17-18](#); [33:6](#)), a great change from Isaiah's own time. In eighth-century BC Judah the women might feel secure ([32:9](#)), but the Assyrian troops will devastate the crops and precipitate widespread mourning. However, the lamenting will soon end, as the prophet pronounces woe upon Assyria in [33:1](#). After Isaiah prays for the destruction of Assyria ([33:2-9](#)), God promises to take action (vv [10-12](#)). Gone will be the enemy soldiers and officials, for the Lord will save his people and bring them justice and security.

### More Judgment and Blessing ([34-35](#))

This section forms a climax to chapters [28-33](#). Once more, cataclysmic judgment precedes a time of blessing and restoration. In chapter [34](#) Isaiah depicts a judgment of cosmic dimensions as he moves to a consideration of the last days. Heaven and earth endure the wrath of God that is poured out upon the nations, and verse [4](#) provides the basis for John's description of the great tribulation in [Revelation 6:13-14](#). Edom (like Moab; see [Is 25:10-12](#)) represents a world judged by the sword of the Lord in his day of vengeance.

Chapter [35](#), on the other hand, speaks of joy and restoration in a passage that pulsates with life. A blooming desert corresponds to the physical and spiritual age when God will come to redeem his people. Both the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity and the second coming of Christ fit this glorious scene.

### Historical Interlude ([36-39](#))

These chapters form the hinge that connects the two halves of the book. Chapters [36](#) and [37](#) contain the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies about Assyria's collapse, and chapters [38](#) and [39](#) introduce the Babylonian captivity that forms the backdrop for chapters [40-66](#). In 701 BC King Sennacherib of Assyria demands the unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. He sends his field commander to address the people and try to gain their submission. With persuasive words, the commander tries to convince the city that surrender is the best policy. Amazingly the people do not panic, and King Hezekiah asks Isaiah to pray for the beleaguered city. The prophet does so and announces that the proud Assyrians will not

triumph. Instead, they suffer a terrible disaster as the angel of the Lord strikes down 185,000 men.

Chapters [38](#) and [39](#) relate another crisis in Hezekiah's life when he becomes desperately ill. Miraculously, God heals him, and Hezekiah praises the Lord for his gracious intervention. When the king of Babylon sends envoys to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, Hezekiah foolishly shows these messengers his royal treasures. Isaiah solemnly announces that someday the armies of Babylon will capture Jerusalem, plunder the land, and take away these treasures.

### **The Return from Babylon ([40-48](#))**

The Babylonian captivity eventually comes, but Isaiah promises that it will end. God, the incomparably powerful Creator, is far greater than any king, nation, or god, and he will bring his people back to Jerusalem. To accomplish this return from exile, God raises up Cyrus, the king of Persia ([41:2, 25](#)). The Lord does not forget his people, and he encourages them to take heart and to rejoice.

In chapter [42](#) we are introduced to a person even more significant than Cyrus the Persian. Verses [1-7](#) (the first of four Servant Songs) describe the servant of the Lord, who will bring justice to the nations and will be "a light for the Gentiles" ([42:6](#)). This is the Messiah, and the redemption he will accomplish on Calvary (cf. ch [53](#)) is greater than the release from Babylon. In light of the good news associated with the servant, Isaiah praises the Lord for punishing the wicked and rescuing his wayward people. Chapter [43](#) declares that nothing will stand in the way of Israel's return, and the Lord will remember their sins no more. In fact, he will pour out his Spirit on their descendants ([44:3](#)).

A God so great is far more powerful than any idol. In [44:6-20](#) Isaiah makes use of satire to show the worthlessness of man-made images. God alone has the power to create and to restore, and he will bring Cyrus on the scene to effect the release of the exiles and to begin the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Chapters [46](#) and [47](#) contrast the God of Israel and the idols of Babylon. When God raises up Cyrus, Babylon's idols will be unable to save their nation, and the queen of kingdoms ([47:5](#)) will collapse along with her sorcerers and astrologers. The final chapter in this section (ch [48](#)) restates God's purpose of gaining release of the Israelites from Babylon through his chosen ally, Cyrus of Persia.

### **Salvation through the Servant of the Lord ([49-57](#))**

Chapters [49-53](#) contain the final three Servant Songs (cf. also [42:1-7](#)), culminating in the death of the servant for the sins of the world ([52:13-53:12](#)). In the second Servant Song ([49:1-7](#)), Isaiah describes the call and ministry of the servant, noting that he will face strong opposition as he accomplishes salvation for Israel and the nations. The rest of chapter [49](#) deals primarily with the way God will bring Israel back from exile. Soon the land will be filled with a mighty throng (vv [19-21](#)), and the Gentiles will acknowledge Israel and her God (vv [22-23](#)).

Although Israel has fully deserved the exile because of her sins ([50:1-3](#)), the suffering endured by the servant (vv [4-11](#); the third Servant Song) is wholly undeserved. The beating and mocking of verse [6](#) are prophetic of Christ's experience (cf. [Mt 27:26, 30](#); [Mk 15:19](#)). In verses [10-11](#) of [Isaiah 50](#) the whole nation is challenged to trust in the Lord, as the servant did. There is, in fact, a believing remnant who obey the Lord ([51:1-8](#)), and the Lord promises that he will restore them to their homeland. Israel has drunk the cup of God's wrath (vv [17, 22](#)), but the good news of release from exile causes even the ruins of Jerusalem to burst into songs of joy ([52:7-10](#)).

Yet the best news of all is salvation from sin; the final Servant Song ([52:13-53:12](#)) tells how Christ wins freedom for those held in bondage to sin. In this brief passage we learn how Christ suffers rejection ([53:3](#)) and even disfigurement ([52:14](#)). Led like a lamb to the slaughter ([53:7](#)), he carries our sins in his body as he dies in ignominy. The people think he is suffering for his own sins (v [4](#)), but he is "pierced" and "crushed for our iniquities" (v [5](#)). The first and last paragraphs of this section ([52:13-15](#); [53:10-12](#)) state that through his suffering the servant is highly exalted. What seems like a terrible defeat is actually victory over death and Satan and brings salvation for many.

As a direct result of the servant's death, great joy comes to all people. In chapter [54](#) this joy is reflected in Jerusalem's new status as the Lord's wife. Her descendants will be numerous and eager to learn from the Lord. For the first time the plural "servants of the Lord" appears ([54:17](#)), apparently including all believers, whether Jew or Gentile (cf. [65:8-9, 13-15](#)). Joy and prosperity also characterize chapter [55](#), an invitation to a great spiritual banquet. All people are urged to turn to the Lord who keeps his promises to Israel. In [56:1-](#)

[8](#), foreigners are invited to come to God's "holy mountain" in Jerusalem, for the temple will be a house of prayer for all the nations ([56:7](#); cf. [Mt 21:13](#)).

Believing Gentiles are contrasted sharply with unbelieving Jews, and in [56:9-57:13](#) Isaiah returns again to the theme of judgment. Israel suffers because her leaders are wicked and because the people are guilty of idolatry. Spiritual healing is available, but unless individuals repent, they cannot be part of the remnant who will return from exile and enjoy peace in the Promised Land.

### Ultimate Blessing and Final Judgment ([58-66](#))

The last nine chapters of Isaiah emphasize redemption and glory, but the reality of judgment is also very much in evidence. In fact, chapters [58](#) and [59](#) bemoan the sins of Israel. The people are hypocritical in their worship; they are selfish and fail to keep the Sabbath. Lying, oppression, and murder separate the people from God. When Isaiah openly confesses these sins ([59:12-13](#)), the Lord suddenly takes action on behalf of his people. Like a mighty warrior, he rescues the believing remnant from Babylon and brings them back to Jerusalem.

In chapter [60](#) the glory and wealth of Jerusalem reach new heights. Both the city and the sanctuary are adorned with splendor, matching the prosperity of Solomon's reign. Just as the nations treated Solomon with honor, so earth's leaders will assist and strengthen the returning exiles. While it is true that the Persian government did help the Jews repeatedly, the conditions described here will have their ultimate fulfillment during the Millennium and in connection with the new Jerusalem (cf. [Rv 21:23](#); [22:5](#)). The ancient ruins will be rebuilt ([Is 61:4](#)), and the Lord will fulfill the covenant made with Abraham and David ([Is 61:8](#); cf. [Gn 12:1-3](#); [Is 55:3](#)). Jerusalem will be the city of the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord ([Is 62:12](#)), and the Lord will take delight in her (v [4](#)).

In order to accomplish salvation for his people, God will have to judge the ungodly first. The great trampling of the winepress ([63:2-3](#)) graphically portrays the judgment process and is linked with the Day of the Lord (cf. [13:3](#); [34:2](#)). Since God has promised to intervene on behalf of his people, Isaiah prays for the realization of that promise ([63:7-64:12](#)). He recalls God's faithfulness in the past and pleads that he will again have mercy upon his suffering people.

The answer to Isaiah's prayer is found in chapter [65](#). God does promise to give the Holy Land back to his servants, to those who worship him and obey him. But for that segment of the nation that continues in its obstinacy, God promises anguish and destruction. The ultimate joy of God's servants is contained in a description of new heavens and a new earth ([65:17-25](#)). Peace, long life, and prosperity will be among the blessings enjoyed in an era that seems to combine features of the Millennium and the eternal state (cf. ch [60](#)).

In a fitting summary, chapter [66](#) ties together the themes of salvation and judgment. God will comfort Jerusalem and abundantly bless her, but sinners are the objects of his wrath. Those who honor him will endure forever, but those who rebel will suffer everlasting rejection.

*See also* Isaiah (Person); Israel, History of; Messiah; Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess; Servant of the Lord; Virgin Birth of Jesus.

## Iscah

Haran's daughter and Milcah's sister ([Genesis 11:29](#)).

## Iscariot

Iscariot refers to Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He is known for betraying Jesus.

*See* Judas #1.

## Ishbah

Mered's son by Bithiah, the daughter of the pharaoh ([1 Chr 4:17](#)).

## Ishbak

One of the sons of Abraham by Keturah ([Genesis 25:2](#); [1 Chronicles 1:32](#)).

## Ishbi-benob

A giant who almost killed David. During one of his many battles with the Philistines, David grew faint

and Ishbi-benob almost killed him. Abishai killed the giant and saved David ([2 Samuel 21:16](#)).

## Ishbosheth

Another name for Eshbaal, son of King Saul. He became king after his father died ([2 Samuel 2-4](#)). Ishbosheth ruled for a short time before his death.

*See* Eshbaal.

## Ishhod

Hammoleketh's son from Manasseh's tribe ([1 Chr 7:18](#)).

## Ishi

1. Appaim's son, the father of Sheshan and a descendant of Judah through Jerahmeel's line ([1 Chr 2:31](#)).
2. Man from Judah's tribe whose descendants were Zoheth and Ben-zoheth ([1 Chr 4:20](#)).
3. Simeonite whose four sons led 500 men to Mt Seir, where they destroyed the remnant Amalekites and settled their own people ([1 Chr 4:42](#)).
4. One of the leaders of the half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan ([1 Chr 5:24](#)).
5. Name of God, meaning "my husband," by which Israel will one day address him ([Hos 2:16](#)).

*See also* God, Names of.

## Ishiah

KJV spelling of Isshiah, Izrahiah's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:3](#). *See* Isshiah #1.

## Ishijah

Harim's son, who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his pagan wife ([Ezr 10:31](#)).

## Ishma

Etam's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:3](#)).

## **Ishmael**



1. Abraham's first son, born of Hagar. Hagar was the Egyptian servant of Sarah (Abraham's wife). Sarah chose Hagar to have a child with Abraham. God promised to make a great nation of Abraham, who did not have any children ([Genesis 12:2](#)). God promised him that his son would be his heir ([15:4](#)). But when Sarah was past 75 years old and had still not had any children, she followed a custom of that time and gave her servant Hagar to Abraham as a concubine. This was meant to give Sarah a child through Hagar ([16:1-2](#)). After Hagar became pregnant, she began to treat Sarah with disrespect. Sarah then treated Hagar harshly, causing her to run away. An angel found Hagar and told her to return. The angel also promised her a son, telling her to name him Ishmael, which means "God hears" ([16:9-11](#)). The boy was born near Hebron when Abraham was 86 years old ([13:18](#); [16:16](#)). Abraham and Sarah first thought Ishmael was the son God had promised them ([17:17](#); [18:12](#)). When God later announced that Sarah would have her own son named Isaac, Abraham even asked God to accept Ishmael instead ([17:18](#)). When Ishmael was 13, he was circumcised as a witness of God's covenant with Abraham ([17:9-14](#), [22-27](#)). The Lord promised to make Ishmael the father of 12 princes, from which would come a great nation. But the covenant (God's special agreement with Abraham) was to be established with Isaac ([17:20-21](#)). Problems began when Isaac was weaned at about three years of age. When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking her son Isaac, she decided that the son of a slave woman should not be heir with her son Isaac. She demanded that Ishmael and Hagar be sent away. Though this upset Abraham, God told

him to do what Sarah asked. Abraham gave them some food and water and sent them away. It was then clear to Abraham that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the son of God's promise.

Hagar survived in the wilderness with the help of an angel. Ishmael became a hunter of wild animals and settled in the wilderness of Paran. He married an Egyptian woman ([21:20-21](#)). There is not much more written about him, except that years later he helped bury Abraham ([25:9-10](#)). He also gave his daughter Mahalath in marriage ([28:9](#)). Ishmael died at the age of 137 ([25:17](#)). The names of his 12 sons and their settlements are recorded in [Genesis 25:13-16](#). In later history, a caravan of Ishmaelite traders (also called Midianites, compare [Judges 8:22-24](#)) bought Joseph from his brothers and sold him in Egypt ([Genesis 37:25-28; 39:1](#)).

Although Isaac received God's special promises instead of Ishmael, this did not mean God rejected Ishmael.

Abraham and Sarah first thought too highly of Ishmael's place in God's plan, but later they wrongly tried to exclude him completely.

In the New Testament, Paul uses the story of Ishmael and Hagar to teach the Galatians that the law should not be seen as a burden ([Galatians 4:22](#)). He says that those who trust the law of Moses, instead of trusting in God's promises, do not inherit the kingdom of God. Ishmael, the son of the slave woman (here a symbol of the law), did not receive inheritance with the son of the free woman (verse [30](#)).

2. A member of the royal family of King Zedekiah, through his father Nethaniah and grandfather Elishama ([2 Kings 25:25](#)). This story takes place during the time when Babylon controlled Judah. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had put a man named Gedaliah in charge as governor in the city of Mizpah. Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, convinced Ishmael to kill Gedaliah. Before this happened, a man named Johanan warned Gedaliah about the plot to kill him. Johanan even asked permission to kill Ishmael first to protect Gedaliah, but Gedaliah refused to believe the warning ([Jeremiah 40:14-16](#)). Ishmael came to Mizpah with ten men. While they were eating a meal with Gedaliah, they killed him and the Babylonian soldiers who were with him. The next day, a group of 80 religious pilgrims was traveling from the north to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. Ishmael invited them into Mizpah and then killed 70 of them. He let ten of them live because they offered to give him their hidden food supplies. Ishmael hid all the dead bodies in a large cistern (underground water storage). After this, Ishmael took everyone else in Mizpah as prisoners, including the prophet Jeremiah and some women from the royal family. He started taking them toward the land of the Ammonites. However, Johanan gathered some soldiers and caught up with Ishmael at a place called Gibeon. Johanan rescued all the prisoners, but Ishmael and his men escaped to Ammonite territory ([Jeremiah 41](#)).
3. The son of Azel, a Benjamite of the family of Saul ([1 Chronicles 8:38; 9:44](#)).
4. The father of Zebadiah, the governor of the house of Judah under Jehoshaphat ([2 Chronicles 19:11](#)).

5. The son of Jehohanan. He was one of the commanders who allied with Jehoiada the priest to make Joash king (while he was still a child) and end the reign of Athaliah ([2 Chronicles 23:1](#)).
6. The son of Pashhur, and one of the priests who divorced his foreign wives during Ezra's reforms ([Ezra 10:22](#)).

## Ishmaelite

Any descendant of Ishmael. Ishmael was the son of the patriarch Abraham by Hagar.

See Ishmael #1.

## Ishmaiah

1. Warrior from Benjamin's tribe who joined David at Ziklag in his struggle against King Saul. Ishmaiah was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:4](#)).
2. Obadiah's son, a chief officer in Zebulun's tribe in David's time ([1 Chr 27:19](#)).

## Ishmeelite

The King James Version spelling for "Ishmaelite" ([Genesis 37:25-28](#); [39:1](#)).

See Ishmaelite.

## Ishmerai

Elpaal's son and a chief in Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:18](#)).

## Ishod

KJV spelling of Ishhod, Hammoleketh's son ([1 Chr 7:18](#)). See Ishhod.

## Ishpah

Beriah's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:16](#)).

## Ishpan

Shashak's son and a leader in Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:22](#)).

## Ishtar

A fertility goddess (a female deity believed to help plants grow and animals reproduce) worshiped in ancient Babylon. The Babylonians wrote stories about her, including the famous Gilgamesh Epic (an ancient poem that tells the adventures of a legendary king named Gilgamesh).

See Gilgamesh Epic.

## Ishtob

The King James Version translation for "men of Tob" in [2 Samuel 10:6-8](#).

See Tob.

## Ishuah

The King James Version spelling of "Ishvah," who was a son of the patriarch Asher ([Genesis 46:17](#)).

See Ishvah.

## Ishuai

KJV spelling of Ishvi, Asher's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:30](#). See Ishvi #1.

## Ishui

KJV spelling of Ishvi, Saul's son, in [1 Samuel 14:49](#). See Ishvi #2.

## Ishvah

A son of the patriarch Asher ([Genesis 46:17](#); [1 Chronicles 7:30](#)).

## Ishvi

1. The third son of Asher ([Genesis 46:17](#); [1 Chronicles 7:30](#)). He was the founder of the Ishvite clan ([Numbers 26:44](#)).
2. A variant form of the name "Ishbosheth." He was one of the sons of King Saul ([1 Samuel 14:49](#)).

## Ishvite

Any descendant of Ishvi, son of Asher ([Numbers 26:44](#)).

See Ishvi #1.

## Isis

An important goddess in ancient Egyptian religion and the wife of Osiris (the god of the dead and the afterlife).

See Egypt, Egyptian (Religion).

## Ismaiah

KJV spelling of Ishmaiah, a warrior from Benjamin's tribe who joined David at Ziklag in [1 Chronicles 12:4](#). See Ishmaiah #1.

## Ismakiah

Levite overseer of things dedicated at the temple during Hezekiah's reform ([2 Chr 31:13](#)).

## Ispah

KJV spelling of Ishpah, Beriah's son, [1 Chronicles 8:16](#). See Ishpah.

## Israel (Person)

Name meaning "one who struggles with God" or "God struggles" ([Gn 32:28](#), nlt mg). It was given to

Isaac's son Jacob and to his descendants ([35:9-12](#); cf. [Dt 6:1-4](#)). See Jacob #1; Israel, History of.

## Israel (Place)

See Palestine; Canaan, Canaanite.

## Israelite

A descendant of the 12 sons of Israel.

"Israel" is the name God gave to Jacob ([Genesis 32:28](#)). The Israelites were different from two other family groups that came from Abraham. One group was the Ishmaelites, who came from Abraham's servant Hagar and her son Ishmael. The other group was the Edomites, who came from Jacob's brother Esau. The Israelites lived in Egypt from the time of Joseph until the exodus. Then God led them into Canaan to fulfill his promise to Abraham ([17:8](#)).

God led the Israelites out of Egypt through the wilderness. Then he led them into the land of Canaan as he had promised them. Judges, kings, and conquerors from other countries ruled them. In 722 BC, Assyria conquered the northern kingdom. Then Israel became part of that empire.

After this time, "Israel" refers to members of the southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin. An "Israelite" was one who belonged to the remnant of the covenant nation of Israel. This was true both in a religious and political sense.

See also Israel, History of; Jew; Judaism.

## Issachar (Person)

1. Jacob's ninth son, the fifth by his wife Leah ([Gn 30:17-18](#)); his name perhaps means "reward." Jacob, in his final message to his 12 sons says, "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds" ([49:14](#), nasb); the picture suggested is a loaded donkey who refuses to move his burden, a lazy man who is unwilling to do his share of the work. Little is known about Issachar except what he did along with the other sons of Israel. He had four sons ([46:13](#)), who headed clans in the tribe ([1 Chr 7:1-5](#)). His family went with Jacob to Egypt, where they died (although Issachar's remains were subsequently moved to Shechem with the other 12 patriarchs—[Acts 7:16](#)).

The descendants of Issachar numbered 54,400 at the first census ([Nm 1:29](#)), increased to 64,300 at the second ([26:25](#)), and to 87,000 during David's reign ([1 Chr 7:5](#)). Issachar was the main tribe involved in the fighting led by Deborah, herself a member of the tribe ([Jgs 5:15](#)). During the time of David, there were men of the tribe of Issachar who had understanding of what Israel ought to do in warfare ([1 Chr 12:32](#)). These men supported David as king to replace Saul.

Issachar was assigned the fourth lot of land after the ark was taken to Shiloh ([Jos 19:17](#)). This included the cities of Jezreel, Shunem, and En-gannim, and it lay between the mountains of Gilboa and Tabor. Their allotment was bordered on the south and west by the tribe of Manasseh, on the north by Zebulun and Naphtali, and on the east by the river Jordan. This territory was largely a fertile plain and was often threatened by the Canaanites nearby as well as by foreign invaders.

2. Obed-edom's son, who was a Levite gatekeeper during David's reign ([1 Chr 26:5](#)).

## Issachar, Tribe of

The Israelite tribe descended from Jacob's son, Issachar. Their land is defined in [Joshua 19:17-23](#), though not in great detail.

### *The Territory of the Tribe of Issachar*

Its eastern border ends at the Jordan. The area can be located through the towns listed in their land, namely:

- Jezreel
- Chesulloth
- Shunem
- Anaharath
- Kishion
- Remeth
- En-gannim

We are more certain about the locations of some of these cities than others.

- Jezreel and En-gannim are in the southeast corner of the valley of Jezreel.
- Chesulloth is just west of Mount Tabor.
- Shunem is at the foot of the hill of Moreh.

The northern border can be identified through the southern boundaries of Zebulun and Naphtali ([Joshua 19:10-12, 33-34](#)). The three tribes of Issachar, Naphtali, and Zebulun, all met at Mount Tabor.

On the southern border, some major towns were not conquered in Joshua's time ([Judges 1:27](#)), and were taken from Issachar and given to Manasseh ([Joshua 17:11](#)):

- Beth-shan
- Ibleam
- Tanaach

Conflicts among the local tribes occurred in this area (as recorded on a stele of Seti I at Beth-shan). The area is called "Mount Yarunta," after Yarmuth ([Joshua 21:29](#)). Issachar was located on the rich plateau stretching east of Mount Tabor and the hill of Moreh and north of the Beth-shan Valley.

*See also* Issachar (Person) #1.

## Isshiah

1. Izrahiah's son from Issachar's tribe ([1 Chr 7:3](#)).
2. Warrior from Benjamin's tribe who joined David in his struggle against King Saul. Isshiah was one of David's ambidextrous archers and slingers ([1 Chr 12:6](#)).
3. Uzziel's son from Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 23:20; 24:25](#)).
4. Rehabiah's son from Levi's tribe and a descendant of Moses ([1 Chr 24:21](#)).

## Isshijah

Alternate rendering of Ishijah, Harim's son in [Ezra 10:31](#). *See* Ishijah.



## Issue of Blood

The King James Version translation of "suffered from bleeding" or "hemorrhage" in [Matthew 9:20](#) and [Mark 5:25](#). See Hemorrhage.

## Isuah

KJV spelling of Ishvah, Asher's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:30](#). See Ishvah.

## Isui

KJV rendering of Ishvi, Asher's son, in [Genesis 46:17](#). See Ishvi #1.

## Italian Regiment, Italian Band, Italian Cohort

The Italian Regiment was a Roman military unit. Some Bible versions call it the "Italian Cohort" or "Italian Band." This was the unit that Cornelius the centurion belonged to. The Italian Regiment appears once in the Bible ([Acts 10:1](#)). The New American Standard Bible reads, "cohort." The King James Versions has, "band."

The Roman army had extra military units called *auxiliary regiments*. These groups were usually made up of men from different parts of the empire. Jewish men were usually not required to serve in these units. Some regiments had special names, like "Italian" or "Augustan" (which means they served the emperor) ([Acts 27:1](#)). It seems that most of the Italian Regiment was made up of Roman citizens who had been born in Rome. Each regiment had six smaller units called *centuries*. Each century had about 100 men and was led by a centurion. Cornelius was the centurion of one of these centuries. Ten regiments together made up a legion, which had about 6,000 men.

Inscriptions show that an Italian Regiment was in Syria between AD 69 and 157. It may have been there earlier, but we do not have military records from that time.

## Italy

Boot-shaped peninsula located between the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic seas. Uplands and two

major mountain ranges—the Alps, which form a northern boundary, and the Apennines, which form the backbone of the peninsula—occupy 77 percent of the land. The plains, which are limited to the Po River valley, cover the remaining 23 percent.

The earliest history of the region is found in the artifacts of the Abbevillian and Neanderthal cultures discovered in many areas, including the site at Rome. With the advent of agriculture (6000 BC), the population increased rapidly. By 3000 BC, large groups of farmers had located in southern Italy along the Mediterranean coast and in northern Italy along the Po Valley. During the third millennium BC, a major culture developed in the central part of the peninsula, influenced by Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations and characterized by agriculture, animal husbandry, and bronzeworking.

During the second millennium BC, an invasion of Indo-European tribes reshaped the culture of the peninsula. Each area came to be known by the name of the tribe that inhabited it. Among the most important of these tribes were the Latins, who settled in the valley of the Tiber River—an area that came to be known as Latium. According to the historian Antiochus of Syracuse (fifth century BC), it was also during this time (1300 BC) that King Italos ruled the southwest part of the peninsula. This region came to take his name, which, over the next millennium, was extended northward until, in the time of Augustus (27 BC–AD 14), the entire peninsula was called "Italy."

Toward the end of the eighth century BC, the Etruscans, immigrants from Asia Minor, invaded the peninsula and organized the less-civilized Italic tribes into Etruscan-dominated city-states. The result was political chaos. Wars with Greek colonies, wars to throw off Etruscan domination, and wars between city-states dominated the next five centuries. The city-state that benefited the most from this unrest was Rome. By 220 BC, Rome had conquered the entire peninsula and had united all Italy south of the Po Valley under one rule. After a great revolt (90–88 BC), Italians throughout the peninsula obtained the rights of Roman citizenship, and in 49 BC Julius Caesar extended these rights to the inhabitants of the Po Valley. Thus, by NT times, Italy had essentially come to have its present form.

"Italy" appears three times in the NT. Paul has the opportunity to meet Priscilla and Aquila, recently come from Italy because Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome ([Acts 18:2](#)). Italy is mentioned as Paul's destination following his appeal to Caesar

([27:1,6](#)). The writer of Hebrews sends greetings to his readers from “those who come from Italy” ([Heb 13:24](#)).

See also Caesars, The; Rome, City of.

## Ithai

Alternate spelling of Ittai, a Benjamite warrior, in [1 Chronicles 11:31](#). See Ittai #2.

## Ithamar

Aaron's fourth and youngest son. Ithamar served as a priest to the tribes of Israel when the people lived in the desert wilderness between Egypt and the promised land of Canaan ([Exodus 6:23](#); [Numbers 3:2-4](#); [26:60](#); [1 Chronicles 6:3](#); [24:2](#)). After the death of two of his brothers, he was given the special duty of being in charge of moving of the tabernacle ([Numbers 4:28,33](#); [7:8](#)). During David's reign, the descendants of Ithamar and Eleazar were organized as priests in the temple ([1 Chronicles 24:3-6](#)). Later, some of his descendants returned with Ezra from Babylon ([Ezra 8:2](#)).

## Ithiel

1. Ancestor of Sallu, a Benjamite who lived in Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile ([Neh 11:7](#)).
2. One of the two persons to whom Agur spoke his proverbs ([Prv 30:1](#), nlt mg).

## Ithlah

City given to Dan's tribe for an inheritance, after the initial conquest of Palestine by Joshua ([Jos 19:42](#)).

## Ithmah

Warrior of Moabite origin and one of David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:46](#)).

## Ithnan

Town in southern Judah ([Jos 15:23](#)).

## Ithra

The father of Amasa by Abigail, who was the sister of Zeruiah ([2 Samuel 17:25](#)). He is called Jether in [1 Kings 2:5,32](#) and [1 Chronicles 2:17](#).

## Ithran

1. Dishon's son, who was a Horite chief ([Gn 36:26](#); [1 Chr 1:41](#)).
2. One of Zophah's sons ([1 Chr 7:37](#)). He is probably the same as Jether mentioned in [1 Chronicles 7:38](#).

## Ithream

The sixth son of King David. His wife Eglah gave birth to him at Hebron ([2 Samuel 3:5](#); [1 Chronicles 3:3](#)).

## Ithrite

A family or clan that lived at Kiriath-jearim ([1 Chronicles 2:53](#)). Two of King David's mighty warriors, Ira and Gareb, were Ithrites ([2 Samuel 23:38](#); [1 Chronicles 11:40](#); in the New Living Translation, they are described as being "from Jattir"). The name Ithrite may come from the place name Jattir or from a person named Jether.

## Ittah-Kazin

KJV form of the town Eth-kazin in [Joshua 19:13](#). See Eth-kazin.

## Ittai

1. A Philistine man from the city of Gath. He and 600 other men from Gath stayed loyal to King David when David had to flee from his son Absalom. Absalom was trying to take over the kingdom ([2 Samuel 15:18-22](#)). Ittai commanded a third of the army of David in the battle against the forces of Absalom ([18:2,5](#)).

2. A warrior from the tribe of Benjamin who was one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:29](#); spelled "Ithai" in [1 Chronicles 11:31](#)).

## Ituraea, Iturea, Itureans

Iturea was a small region near Trachonitis. Both areas were ruled by Philip, who was the brother of King Herod the Great. This happened during the time when Tiberius was the Roman emperor ([Luke 3:1](#)).

Iturea is assumed to be northeast of the Sea of Galilee, in the area of Mount Hermon. But, its location and borders are much disputed. The name almost certainly comes from Jetur, a son of Ishmael ([Genesis 25:15](#)). His descendants were among those conquered by the Israelites east of the Jordan ([1 Chronicles 5:19-20](#)).

For many years after this, we do not find any mention of the Itureans in historical records. Then, around 105 BC, the Jewish historian Josephus writes about their defeat by the Jewish ruler Aristobulus. After this defeat, many Itureans had to make a difficult choice: they could either follow Jewish religious customs and stay in their homes, or they would have to leave their homeland.

Classical writers often mention the Itureans. They sometimes call them Syrians or Arabians. They were skilled bowmen. They had the predatory tendencies of groups that could not or would not settle in one area for long. In view of this, it is not surprising that we know more about Itureans than we do about Iturea.

Strabo says they lived in a mountainous country. Dio Cassius later tells us they had a king. Their history is hard to understand due to divisions in the Roman Empire that affected them. By the end of the first century AD, many Itureans were under the provincial rule of Syria.

It is easier, then, to discuss the people than the place. Some scholars hold that Luke could not have used the noun "Iturea." This form was unknown until three centuries later. They say the adjectival form better fits the case. This prompts another question: Was this Iturean territory within Philip's tetrarchy? Could Luke have made a slip and anticipated a later regional regrouping? Josephus lists the parts of Philip's tetrarchy. He does not include Iturea.

Three facts are clear:

1. There is a certain flexibility and overlap in the descriptions of territorial borders.
2. There is not enough data for exact conclusions about Iturea.
3. The evidence is clear from other parts of Scripture that Luke is a careful and reliable writer.

## Ivah

KJV spelling of Ivvah. *See Ivvah.*

## Ivory

Opaque dentine substance, often mentioned along with precious metals and gems in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern writings. As such, ivory was used for combs, small boxes, jars, and other cosmetic articles; for figurines and amulets; for games; and for the adornment of articles of furniture, buildings, and perhaps even ships ([Ez 27:6](#)). It is frequently mentioned in Egyptian and Assyrian annals of conquest as part of the spoils of war. Some excellent examples of work with ivory can be found in the famed collection of Tutankhamen.

In the Bible ivory is spoken of as the adornment of Solomon's throne ([1 Kgs 10:18](#); [2 Chr 9:17](#)) and of beds in the time of Amos ([Am 6:4](#)). Both references are probably to ivory inlay. The ivory palaces of [1 Kings 22:39](#), [Psalm 45:8](#), and [Amos 3:15](#), however, may refer to forms of decoration other than inlay. Whether [Ezekiel 27:6](#) actually implies that ships were decorated with ivory is debatable, since that passage forms part of the whole picture of Tyre as an extravagant ship. The articles of ivory that earth's merchants can no longer sell to Babylon ([Rv 18:12](#)) include smaller objects of the kind found at various archaeological sites (Megiddo, Samaria, Nimrud).

Originally ivory was available in northern Syria, where Assyrian monarchs hunted elephants. By Solomon's time, however, it was imported ([1 Kgs 10:22](#); [2 Chr 9:21](#)), probably from the east (India) or south (Africa), while the ships of Tarshish may represent the seagoing capability of the ships

rather than the source of the ivory. Tyre received its ivory in trade from the “coastlands” ([Ez 27:15](#)).

## Ivvah

City that had already fallen along with others to the Assyrians ([2 Kgs 18:34](#); [19:13](#); [Is 37:13](#)). Sennacherib’s representative mocked Hezekiah’s belief that God would save Jerusalem. Ivvah was probably in Syria.

*See also* Avva.

## Iye-abarim, Iyim

An Israelite camping place on the southeast border of Moab during their wilderness wanderings ([Numbers 33:44](#)). In verse [45](#) the town is called Iyim, which is a shortened form of Iye-abarim.

## Izhar, Izeharites

The King James Version spelling of Izhar. Izar was the son of Kohath. The Izeharites were his descendants ([Numbers 3:19, 27](#)).

*See* Izhar #1.

## Izhar

1. One of Kohath’s sons from the tribe of Levi ([Exodus 6:18, 21](#); [Numbers 3:19](#); [16:1](#); [1 Chronicles 6:2, 18, 38](#); [23:12, 18](#)). He was the father of the Izharite family ([Numbers 3:27](#); [1 Chronicles 24:22](#); [26:23, 29](#)). He is also called Amminadab in [1 Chronicles 6:22](#). One of Izhar’s sons was Korah, who led the rebellion against Moses and Aaron ([Numbers 16:1–11](#)).
2. Helah’s son from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 4:7](#)).

## Izharite

Any descendant of Izhar from the tribe of Levi ([Numbers 3:27](#); [1 Chronicles 24:22](#); [26:23, 29](#)).

*See* Izhar #1.

## Izliah

Elpaal’s son from Benjamin’s tribe ([1 Chr 8:18](#)).

## Izrahiah

Uzzi’s son and a leading member of Issachar’s tribe ([1 Chr 7:3](#)).

## Izrahite

Designation given to Shamhuth, one of David’s 12 monthly captains, meaning a man of a family or town called Izra ([1 Chr 27:8](#)). The word “Izrahite” is perhaps a corruption of “Zerahite,” a descendant of Zerah of Judah ([1 Chr 27:11](#)).

## Izri

Temple musician and head of the 4th of the 24 divisions of priests for service as musicians in the sanctuary ([1 Chr 25:11](#), nlt mg). He is called Zeri in [1 Chronicles 25:3](#).

## Izziah

Parosh’s son, who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce the foreign woman he married during the postexilic period ([Ezr 10:25](#)).