

Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary

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Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

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Haahashtari

Naarah's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:6](#)).

Habaiah

Alternate spelling of Hobaiah in [Nehemiah 7:63](#).
See Hobaiah.

Habakkuk (Person)

Author of the eighth book of the Minor Prophets. The meaning of Habakkuk's name is uncertain. It was probably derived from a Hebrew word meaning "to embrace."

Nothing is known about Habakkuk apart from what can be inferred from his book. Several legends purporting to give accounts of his life are generally regarded as untrustworthy. The apocryphal book Bel and the Dragon describes a miraculous transporting of Habakkuk to Daniel while Daniel was in the den of lions. A Jewish legend makes Habakkuk the son of the Shunammite woman mentioned in [2 Kings 4:8-37](#). That legend apparently is based on the tradition that she would "embrace" a son. Chronological difficulties make both accounts unlikely.

Habakkuk lived in the period during the rise of the Chaldeans ([Hb 1:6](#)), that is, during the reigns of the Judean kings Josiah and Jehoiakim. The dates 612–589 BC delineate the probable period of his prophetic activity.

The book of Habakkuk reveals a man of great sensitivity. His deep concern about injustice and his prayer ([Hb 3](#)) show that Habakkuk was characterized by profound religious conviction and social awareness.

See also Habakkuk, Book of; Prophet, Prophetess.

Habazziniah

Jaazaniah's grandfather. Jaazaniah was a leader of the Recabites, warriors tested by Jeremiah with regard to their forefather's command not to drink wine ([Jer 35:3](#)). They remained loyal to the command, and Jeremiah used their loyalty in an appeal to Judah to be faithful to God.

Habergeon

KJV translation for coat of mail, part of a soldier's defensive armor ([2 Chr 26:14](#); [Neh 4:16](#); [Jb 41:26](#), nlt "javelin"). See Armor and Weapons.

Habor

Modern Habur (Chaboras) River. The Habor River runs from the mountains in north-central Assyria, in Gozan, into the Euphrates River at a junction about 250 miles (402 kilometers) south and west of Nineveh. Numerous tributaries feed the Habor farther to the north. The OT names the river as the site to which King Shalmaneser carried the captive Israelites ([2 Kgs 17:6](#); [18:11](#); [1 Chr 5:26](#)).

Hacaliah

Nehemiah's father ([Neh 1:1](#); [10:1](#)).

Hachilah

An unidentified site in Horesh, near the city of Hebron. David fled here when Saul tried to kill him ([1 Samuel 23:19](#); [26:1,3](#)).

Hachmoni, Hachmonite

See Hacmoni; Hacmonite.

Hacmoni

Name of Jehiel's family. Jehiel was David's servant ([1 Chr 27:32](#)), apparently a companion or tutor of David's sons.

Hacmonite

A title for Jashobeam. [2 Samuel 23:8](#) calls him "Josheb-basshebeth." He was one of the personal guards of King David ([1 Chronicles 11:11](#)). He is also called Tahchemonite in [2 Samuel 23:8](#), but this probably a textual error.

Hadad

1. Eighth of the 12 sons of Ishmael, and thus a grandson of Abraham ([Gn 25:15; 1 Chr 1:30](#)). The kjv reads “Hadar” in [Genesis 25:15](#) and “Hadad” in [1 Chronicles 1:30](#), whereas rsv and nlt read “Hadad” in both passages.
2. Edomite ruler, son of Bedad, who reigned before the Hebrew captivity in Egypt and who won an important victory over the Midianites in the plain of Moab ([Gn 36:35-36; 1 Chr 1:46-47](#)).
3. Another king of Edom, one of the few whose wife, Mehetabel, was mentioned by name. His capital city was Pau ([Gn 36:39; 1 Chr 1:50-51](#)).
4. Prince of the royal house of Edom who fled to Egypt after David and Joab conquered Edom and occupied the land. He grew up in Egypt and gained favor with the pharaoh, who gave him his sister-in-law as a wife. Later, when David was dead, he desired to return to Edom and lead a revolt against Solomon ([1 Kgs 11:14-25](#)). Some scholars have identified him with #3 above.

Hadad-Rimmon

Combination of two storm deities, Hadad (mentioned in the Ugaritic texts) and Rimmon (Babylonian storm god). Hadad-rimmon was formerly thought to be a place. The Ras Shamra material equated Hadad with the vegetation god Baal, who was worshiped in an effort to ensure agricultural productivity. Canaanite fertility rituals included periodic mourning for the deceased Baal by the goddess Anat, his consort. It is to that rite that [Zechariah 12:11](#) alludes. The messianic reference in the previous verse likens the grief in Jerusalem to the lamentation for Hadad-rimmon at the rites near Megiddo.

See also Canaanite Deities and Religion.

Hadadezer

Hadadezer was king of Zobah in Syria during the time David ruled Israel.

He ruled an area that stretched from the land of Ammon in the south to the Euphrates River in the east. Hadadezer tried to take back control of this region, but David fought him and won ([2 Samuel 8:3-12; 1 Chronicles 18:3-10](#)).

When the Syrians came to help Hadadezer, David defeated them too. He also took control of Damascus, a major city in Syria.

Later, David sent men to show kindness to Hanun, the new king of Ammon, after Hanun’s father Nahash died ([2 Samuel 10](#)). But Hanun treated David’s men badly. He humiliated them (verse 4).

After that, Ammon prepared for war and asked Syria to help them ([2 Samuel 10:6](#)). David sent Joab, his army commander, to fight the combined armies of Ammon and Syria. Joab defeated them (verses 15-19; see also [1 Chronicles 19:16, 19](#)).

After this defeat, Hadadezer sent more troops from the area beyond the Euphrates River. The armies met at a place called Helam. David fought them there and won again. After this, Hadadezer asked for peace and agreed to pay tribute to Israel.

See also Israel, History of; Syria, Syrians.

Hadar

1. KJV spelling of Hadad, Ishmael’s son, in [Genesis 25:15](#). See Hadad #1.
2. Alternate spelling of Hadad, king of Edom, in [Genesis 36:39](#). See Hadad #3.

Hadarezer

KJV alternate spelling of Hadadezer, king of Zobah. *See* Hadadezer.

Hadashah

Town in the lowlands of Judah, near Gath, in the vicinity of Zenan and Migdal-gad ([Jos 15:37](#)).

Hadassah

The original name of Esther ([Esther 2:7](#)).

See Esther (Person).

Hadattah

Name of a city (kjv) incorrectly derived from the name of the town Hazor-hadattah in [Joshua 15:25](#). See Hazor-hadattah.

Hades

In Greek mythology, Hades was the god of the underworld, a brother of Zeus. Hades was also named Pluto. He abducted Persephone which caused winter. His realm was also named Hades (and was also called Tartarus). Hades was the dark land where the dead lived.

Odysseus entered that realm and fed the ghosts with blood to get directions back home (Homer's *Odyssey* 4.834). Originally the Greeks thought of hades as simply the grave. It represented a shadowy, ghostlike existence for all who died, good and evil alike. Gradually Greeks and Romans came to see hades as a place of reward and punishment. Hades became an organized and guarded realm where the good were rewarded in the Elysian Fields. The evil were likewise punished (so described by the Roman poet Virgil, 70–19 BC).

"Hades" became important to the Jews as the word used to translate the Hebrew name "Sheol" into Greek. This was a very suitable translation for the Hebrew word used by translators of the Greek New Testament, the Septuagint. Both words can signify the physical grave or death ([Genesis 37:35](#); [Proverbs 5:5; 7:27](#)). Both words referred to a dark underworld where existence was at best shadowy ([Job 10:21–22; 38:17](#); [Isaiah 14:9](#)).

Sheol is described as under the ocean and as having bars and gates ([Job 26:5–6; 17:16](#); [Jonah 2:2–3](#)). All people go there whether they are good or evil ([Psalm 89:48](#)). In the earlier literature there is no hope of release from Sheol/hades.

C. S. Lewis describes this concept well in *The Silver Chair*: "Many sink down, and few return to the sunlit lands." Of course, all these descriptions are in poetic literature. It is hard to say how literally the Hebrews or the Greeks took their descriptions of hades/Sheol. They may have simply used the older picture-language of Greek poetry to describe a concept for which prose words were inadequate.

Jews and Greeks both came in contact with Persian literary influences. After the Jewish people returned from exile, writers were composing their

books (For example, Malachi, Daniel, and some psalms) in context with Persian influence.

The Greeks came into contact with Persian literature somewhat later (they fought the Persians from 520 to 479 BC and conquered them from 334 to 330 BC).

Whether due to Persian influence or not, during this period, the idea of reward and punishment after death developed. Sheol/Hades changed from a shadow land to a differentiated place of reward and punishment for both Greeks (and Romans) and Jews.

Josephus records that the Pharisees believed in reward and punishment at death (*Antiquities* 18.1.3). A similar idea appears in 1 Enoch 22. In these cases in Jewish literature, hades indicates one place of the dead, which has two or more sections.

In other Jewish literature, hades is the place of torment for the wicked. The righteous enter paradise (Psalms of Solomon 14; [Wisdom of Solomon 2:1; 3:1](#)). Thus, by the beginning of the New Testament period, Hades has three meanings:

1. death
2. the place of all the dead, and
3. the place of the wicked dead only.

Context determines which meaning an author intends in a given passage.

All these meanings appear in the New Testament. In [Matthew 11:23](#) and [Luke 10:15](#), Jesus speaks of Capernaum's descending to hades (New Living Translation with Margin Notes). Most likely he means that the city will "die" or be destroyed. "Hades" means "death" in this context, as "heaven" means "exaltation."

[Revelation 6:8](#) also exemplifies this: Death comes on a horse, and hades (a symbol of death) comes close behind. The personification of hades probably comes from the Old Testament, where hades/Sheol is viewed as a monster that devours people ([Proverbs 1:12; 27:20; 30:16](#); [Isaiah 5:14; 28:15, 18](#); [Habakkuk 2:5](#)).

[Matthew 16:18](#) is a more difficult use of hades. The church will be built upon a rock and the gates of hades will not prevail against it. Here the place of the dead (complete with gates and bars) is a symbol for death. Christians may in fact be killed, but death (the gates of hades) will no more hold

them than it held Christ. He who burst out of hades will bring his people out as well.

This is also the meaning of [Acts 2:27](#) (quoting [Psalm 16:10](#)). Christ did not stay dead and his life did not remain in hades. Unlike David, he rose from the dead. In either of these cases hades could be simply a symbol for death. Or it could mean that Christ and the Christian actually went to a place of the dead called hades. Probably the former is intended. Whatever the case, since Christ did rise, he has conquered death and hades. He appears in [Revelation 1:18](#) as the one holding the keys (the control) to both.

Two New Testament passages refer to hades as the place where the dead exist: [Revelation 20:13-14](#) and [Luke 16:23](#). In [Revelation 20](#) hades is emptied (either of all the dead or the wicked dead, depending on one's eschatology), making the resurrection complete. When the wicked are judged and cast into the lake of fire (Gehenna), hades is also thrown in. [Luke 16:23](#), however, clearly refers to hades as the place of the wicked dead. There the rich man is tormented in a flame, while the poor man, Lazarus, goes to paradise (Abraham's bosom).

Hades, then, means three things in the New Testament, as it did in Jewish literature:

1. Death and its power is the most frequent meaning, especially in metaphorical uses.
2. It also means the place of the dead in general, when a writer wants to lump all the dead together.
3. It means, finally, the place where the wicked dead are tormented before the final judgment. This is its narrowest meaning, occurring only once in the New Testament ([Luke 16:23](#)). The Bible does not dwell on this torment. Dante's picture in *The Inferno* draws on later speculation and Greco-Roman conceptions of hades more than on the Bible.

See also Dead, Place of the; Gehenna; Hell; Sheol.

Hadid

City in Benjamin ([Neh 11:31-35](#)) mentioned with Lod and Ono ([Ezr 2:33; Neh 7:37](#)) as the home of

over 720 Benjamites returning from the Babylonian captivity ([Neh 11:34](#)). In [1 Maccabees 12:38](#) and [13:13](#) the place is identified with Adida, which was fortified by Simon Maccabeus and later by Vespasian. A more likely suggestion identifies it with the modern site of el-Haditheth, about three to four miles (4.8 to 6.4 kilometers) northeast of Lydda.

Hadlai

Amasa's father from Ephraim's tribe ([2 Chr 28:12](#)). Amasa opposed the taking of prisoners from Judah's tribe after a battle.

Hadoram

1. Joktan's fifth son; Hadoram and his brothers were the sixth generation from Noah ([Gn 10:27; 1 Chr 1:21](#)).
2. Alternate spelling of Joram in [1 Chronicles 18:10](#) (kjv). See Joram #1.
3. Alternate spelling of Adoniram in [2 Chronicles 10:18](#) (kjv). See Adoniram.

Hadrach

Settlement in northwest Lebanon mentioned only in association with Tyre, Sidon, Hamath, and Damascus ([Zec 9:1](#), see nlt mg). The last two cities were listed in Assyrian records with Hatarivia, with which Hadrach is now identified.

Haeleph

City given to Benjamin's tribe for an inheritance after the initial conquest of Canaan ([Jos 18:28](#)).

Hagab

Ancestor of a family of temple servants returning with Zerubbabel to Palestine following the exile ([Ezr 2:46](#)).

Hagaba, Hagabah

Forefather of a family of temple servants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile ([Neh 7:48](#); spelled "Hagabah" in [Ezr 2:45](#)).

Hagar

A female servant from Egypt who worked for Sarai (later called Sarah), the wife of Abram (later called Abraham). Abram took Hagar as his concubine (a second wife with lower status) because Sarai insisted he do so. Hagar became the mother of Ishmael, Abram's first son ([Genesis 16:1-16; 21:9-21](#)).

Hagar's Story

When God commanded Abram to leave Mesopotamia, God promised to make Abram the father of a great nation and to give his children a new land ([Genesis 12:2, 7](#)). After ten years in Canaan, Sarai and Abram were still childless. Sarai suggested to Abram that he take Hagar as his concubine and have children by her. It was the custom in northeast Mesopotamia that if a wife could not bear a child, she could give her husband a slave for that purpose. Any son the concubine gave birth to was considered the child of the wife (compare [30:1-6](#)).

When Hagar became pregnant, she began to treat Sarai with disrespect. Sarai became very harsh with Hagar, causing her to run away into the desert. An angel of God appeared to her at a well in the desert and told Hagar to return to Abram's house. The angel promised that she would have a son, Ishmael (meaning "God hears"). This son would be strong-willed and often in conflict with others. Hagar then named the place Beer-lahairoi, which means "the well of one who sees and lives."

Ishmael was born when Abram was 86 years old. Fourteen years later, God gave Abraham and Sarah the promised son, Isaac. At the time of Isaac's weaning (at approximately three years of age), a feast was held. At the weaning feast, Ishmael mocked Isaac ([Genesis 21:9](#)). This made Sarah angry. So, she asked Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham did not want to do this at first, but God spoke to him and told him to do what Sarah asked (verse [12](#)).

Hagar and Ishmael then left and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. When they had no more

water, God rescued Hagar and Ishmael from death. God promised Hagar that Ishmael would be the father of a great nation ([Genesis 21:17-19](#)). Ishmael lived in the wilderness of Paran. He became a hunter. He married an Egyptian. And he became the father of the Ishmaelites.

Paul's Teaching About Hagar

In the New Testament, Paul uses Hagar's story to explain an important spiritual truth ([Galatians 4:22-31](#)). Hagar represents the old covenant (agreement) that God made with Moses at Mount Sinai. As Ishmael was born through human planning, the Judaizing Christians are like Hagar's children born in slavery. They taught that all believers were bound to the law of Moses and had to do everything it said. Sarah, the freewoman, represents the new covenant of Jesus Christ. As Isaac was Abraham's son by faith in God's promise, Christians who are free of the law are spiritual children of Sarah. The contrast is between salvation by works, which is bondage to the law, and salvation by grace and faith, which is freedom.

See also Abraham; Sarah #1.

Hagarene, Hagarite, Hagerite

KJV alternate forms of Hagrite, the name of a member of an Arabian tribe descended from Hagar living east of Palestine; spelled Hagerite in [1 Chronicles 27:31](#). See Hagrite.

Haggadah

A method of Jewish interpretation that focuses on storytelling and moral teaching. It is often defined in contrast to Halakah, which provides specific rules and religious laws for Jews to follow. While Halakah offers concrete guidance on religious practices, Haggadah aims to educate and inspire piety and devotion, addressing all aspects of religion and ethics.

The term Halakah literally means "walking," guiding Jews on how to live according to God's ways. In contrast, Haggadah means "narrative" or "storytelling," and includes various artistic forms intended to teach moral and ethical principles. Haggadah seeks to touch the heart and inspire devotion, helping people connect with God and understand His ways.

Haggadah is considered more “popular” due to its engaging and relatable nature. Its goal is to make spiritual concepts accessible and to uplift individuals “so that one should recognize him who created the world, and so cling to his ways” (Sifrei-Deuteronomy 49). As one Jewish scholar has said, its purpose is “to bring Heaven down to earth and to elevate man to Heaven.”

In addition to moral teachings, Haggadah encompasses a range of topics, including metaphysics, historical and legendary tales of Israel, visions of the future, and even scientific subjects like astronomy and medicine.

See also Halakah; Talmud.

Haggai (Person)

Prophet whose book is the 10th in a series of 12 brief prophetic books concluding the OT. Haggai's name probably came from a word for “festival.” We have no information concerning his family or social background. He is referred to merely as Haggai the prophet ([Hg 1:1](#); [Ezr 5:1](#); [6:14](#)). His place in the postexilic community seems to have been a conspicuous one, and according to Jewish tradition, he was known as a prophet in Babylon during the exile. The major concern of his prophetic ministry was to encourage the people to rebuild the temple, which had been destroyed during the earlier years of the exile.

See also Haggai, Book of; Prophet, Prophetess.

Haggai, Book of

The tenth book in a collection of twelve short books at the end of the Old Testament. These books contain messages from prophets.

Preview

- Who Wrote the Book of Haggai? When Was It Written?
- Why Was the Book of Haggai Written?
- What Does the Book of Haggai Teach Us?
- What Is the Message of the Book of Haggai?

Who Wrote the Book of Haggai? When Was It Written?

Haggai was one of the Jewish settlers in Jerusalem in 520 BC when his prophetic words were written down ([Ezra 5:1-2](#); [6:14](#)). The Lord gave Haggai four messages for specific people. The first message was for Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest ([Haggai 1:1](#)). The second message was for Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remaining people ([Haggai 2:2](#)). The third message was for the priests ([Haggai 2:11](#)). The final message was only for Zerubbabel ([Haggai 2:21](#)).

Why Was the Book of Haggai Written?

The key phrase in Haggai's prophecies is “Consider carefully your ways” or “Consider” ([Haggai 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18](#)). God sent messages to help the Jewish leaders and people understand they had neglected their duties to God. There were two groups who needed to change: true believers who had stopped following God's commands, and people who only followed God for rewards

True believers needed a reminder of God's mercy. They could fix the situation, even if they thought their ancestors' sins were unforgivable. People who pretended to be faithful among the Judeans only wanted the blessings God promised. They replaced one form of idolatry with another. When God did not bless them, they felt disappointed.

The main message was that today does not predict what God will do tomorrow. You cannot judge God's fulfillment of promises by appearances. Haggai's message had two parts: correction and encouragement. The settlers needed to be scolded for their lack of concern and comforted during their troubles.

What Does the Book of Haggai Teach Us?

Haggai is a practical book about serving God. When God's people delay doing his work or stop caring

about it, this causes harm. This has happened many times throughout history. God values when people act promptly and take his work seriously ([Romans 13:11-14](#)).

God's presence inspires courage and helps people not feel discouraged ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Ephesians 3:8-21](#); [Hebrews 13:5-6](#)).

All believers must separate from negative influences and sin ([2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1](#)). Without living this way, a believer cannot be ready for God's service ([2 Timothy 2:19-22](#)). A disobedient child of God can expect to lose blessings and be disciplined by God ([Hebrews 12:3-13](#); [James 4:1-3](#)).

The message about God's judgment of sin and the creation of the messianic kingdom brings hope to New Testament believers and the Jews in Haggai's time ([Romans 15:4-13](#); [2 Peter 3:10-18](#)).

The key phrase in Haggai, "consider your ways," is similar to messages in [1 Corinthians 11:28](#) and [2 Corinthians 13:5](#). His writings also discuss the impact of sin and God's blessings, as seen in [Jude 1:1-25](#).

In the book of Haggai, God is called the "Lord of hosts" or "Lord Almighty" 14 times. This title is common in the prophetic books written after the exile to Babylon, including Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. This title is used over 80 times. It shows that God is all-powerful and rules over all spiritual beings in heaven and all creatures on earth.

Haggai shows that Scripture is inspired by God and has divine authority. The prophet repeatedly states that God spoke to him and is the source of these messages, mentioning this at least 25 times in 28 verses.

What Is the Message of the Book of Haggai?

First Message

Haggai received his first message for the Judeans on the first day of the month ([Haggai 1:1](#)). On this day, Jews were to bring special offerings to the sanctuary ([Numbers 28:11-15](#)). God chose this important time to reveal the people's sin related to the unfinished sanctuary.

The Lord first addressed the leaders of the Judeans ([Haggai 1:1](#)). Zerubbabel was the governor, and Joshua was the high priest. Together, they were responsible for the actions of God's people.

The word of the Lord exposed the people's procrastination ([Haggai 1:2](#)). They had not finished God's temple because they decided, "The time has not yet come." The people used their energy and money selfishly for their own homes ([Haggai 1:4](#)).

"Now" ([Haggai 1:5](#)) the Jews to pay attention to what God wanted them to do, because they had stopped caring about his work. They needed to reflect on their spiritual and material state: "Consider carefully your ways." This key phrase in Haggai's prophecies literally means "Set your heart on your ways" or "Lay your ways to your heart." When they looked at their actions, they would see their delays in rebuilding had brought them many problems, not just wasted time (16 years).

[Haggai 1:6](#) shows the poverty the Jews faced due to God's punishment for their sin. God withdrew his blessings according to his covenant (see [Deuteronomy 28:15-29:1](#)).

After urging them again to "consider" their ways ([Haggai 1:7](#)), the Lord revealed the solution to the Jews' cursed state: "build the house" ([Haggai 1:8](#)). Their failure to complete the temple caused their poverty ([Haggai 1:9-11](#)).

The leaders and the people responded positively. Restarting the temple construction showed their belief in God's word ([Haggai 1:12](#)). Their quick obedience also showed they accepted Haggai's role as "the messenger of the LORD" delivering "the message of the LORD" ([Haggai 1:13](#)).

Second Message

About one month later, the Lord called Haggai again ([Haggai 2:1](#)). The second message continued to encourage, just like the first one ended. The builders might have started feeling the pressure of their work. Old doubts and discouragements might have troubled their faith again. Enemies had returned to cause problems ([Ezra 5:3-6:12](#)). Haggai's second message was like Ezra's claim that "the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews" ([Ezra 5:5](#)). The Lord not only sees his servants' needs but also sends help and encouragement.

The second message came on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles ([Leviticus 23:33-43](#)). This reminder of God's presence with their ancestors in the wilderness might have made their current situation more discouraging. So, the Lord spoke to everyone, not just the leaders ([Haggai 2:2](#)).

Was there anyone from before the exile who had seen God's glory in Solomon's temple ([1 Kings 8:1-](#)

[11: Ezekiel 9:1-11:23](#))? Was the current temple insignificant in comparison ([Haggai 2:3](#))? The Babylonian Talmud (an important text of Jewish law and tradition) mentioned five things missing in the new temple that were in Solomon's temple:

1. The ark of the covenant
2. The sacred fire
3. The shekinah glory
4. The Holy Spirit
5. The Urim and Thummim

The word "now" highlights God's solution. The command "be strong" is repeated three times ([Haggai 2:4](#)). Each time, it addresses a recipient of God's message ([Haggai 2:2](#)). The final command was "work." The reason for their strength and action was God's presence. The Holy Spirit might seem absent from the temple, but he would stay with the people: "This is the promise I made to you" ([Haggai 2:5](#)).

To further motivate the workers, God revealed the future glory of His house ([Hosea 2:6-9](#)). This glory would appear after a period of judgment ([Haggai 2:6-7a](#)) when the treasures of all nations arrive ([Haggai 2:7b](#)). The exact meaning of this verse has different interpretations. The views focus on two translations:

1. "The desire of all nations shall come" (King James Version)
2. "The nations... will come with all their treasures" (Berean Standard Bible)

The arguments for the messianic interpretation based on the first translation can be summarized as follows:

1. Most Christian and Jewish interpreters see this phrase as referring to the Messiah (God's chosen one).
2. The abstract noun "desire" can mean the one who is desirable.
3. Although the Hebrew verb is plural, it can agree with the second noun "nations" in a genitive relationship (showing possession or close association).

4. The timing fits because God has just judged the nations, and Christ's coming is near.
5. An alternative translation addresses the grammatical issues but keeps the messianic meaning: "They [the nations] have come to the desire of all the nations."

Despite strong arguments for the first view, the second translation and view seem better. The reasons are:

1. Most early Christian and Jewish interpreters rely on the Latin Vulgate translation, which was written around AD 400, while the second translation matches the Greek Septuagint from around 300 BC.
2. The singular "desire" can be a collective noun for "features" or "wealth."
3. Hebrew grammar allows the noun "nations" to agree with the verb, but this is rare in poetic books. It is unlikely Haggai would use such phrasing without explaining it clearly in the context.
4. The immediate context clarifies by stating that the silver and gold belong to the Lord ([2:8](#)).
5. The kingdom context of these verses aligns well with similar passages like [Isaiah 60:5, 11](#), and [Revelation 21:24](#).

The message of encouragement concludes that the future temple's glory will surpass that of Solomon's temple. The divine presence will return, and the building will be very beautiful. God will also bring peace to his kingdom during this time of the future glorious temple.

Third Message

About two months later, Haggai received a third message from God ([Haggai 2:10](#)). This message focused on encouragement and was directed only to the priests ([Haggai 2:11](#)). Haggai asked questions about the law of Moses to teach the priests about how sin can contaminate. Something clean or holy cannot make something else holy ([Haggai 2:12](#)). However, something unholiness can

make something clean impure ([Haggai 2:13](#); see also [Leviticus 22:4–6; Numbers 19:11](#)).

This principle was clear for the Judeans: God did not accept their offerings during their disobedience because Judah was unclean ([Haggai 2:14](#)).

By reminding them of past disobedience and punishment, God urged the Jews to always think about ([Haggai 2:15, 18](#)) the consequences of disobedience. This reflection should prevent future spiritual indifference. The message concluded with a reminder of God's blessing on those who obey ([Haggai 2:19](#)).

Fourth Message

On the same day, Haggai received another message from God ([Haggai 2:20](#)). This message was for Zerubbabel ([Haggai 2:21](#)), who was to be encouraged by the lasting nature of his inherited Davidic position (see [Haggai 1:1; 2 Samuel 7:4–17; 1 Chronicles 3:1, 5, 10, 17–20](#)). The gentile nations would face judgment, and the kingdoms of the world would be overthrown ([Haggai 2:6–7, 21–22](#)). This would prepare for God's rule (see [Revelation 11:15–18](#)).

The promise to Zerubbabel in [Haggai 2:23](#) showed that God's promises to David were still valid after the 70-year Babylonian captivity and the 16-year pause among the Judeans who returned to Jerusalem. God appointed Zerubbabel, "My signet ring." A signet was a personal seal, like a ring or cylinder, used to show the authenticity of a signature. Kings used them to identify their decrees ([Esther 3:10; 8:8–10](#)) and to confirm the authority of their deputies ([Genesis 41:42](#)). By appointing Zerubbabel "as a signet ring," God meant that Zerubbabel would be God's seal of authority on the continuation of the Davidic line, from which the Messiah would come and reign (see [Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27](#)).

See also Haggai (Person); Israel, History of; Postexilic Period; Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess.

Haggedolim

Father of Zabdiel, overseer of 128 "mighty men of valor" (rsv) who lived in Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day ([Neh 11:14](#)).

Haggeri

KJV rendering of Hagri, Mibhar's father, in [1 Chronicles 11:38](#). See Hagri.

Haggi

Gad's son and founder of the family of Haggites ([Gn 46:16; Nm 26:15](#)).

Haggiah

Merarite Levite, Shimea's son and the father of Asaiah ([1 Chr 6:30](#)).

Haggite

Any descendant of Haggi ([Numbers 26:15](#)).

See Haggi.

Haggith

One of the wives of King David. She was the mother of Adonijah ([2 Samuel 3:4; 1 Kings 1:5, 11; 2:13; 1 Chronicles 3:2](#)). Haggith gave birth to Adonijah in the city of Hebron. This happened while David had his capital city there. In the list of David's wives and sons in 2 Samuel, Haggith and her son Adonijah are mentioned fourth.

Hagri

The father of Mibhar, according to [1 Chronicles 11:38](#). However, in the similar list found in [2 Samuel 23:36](#), the text says "Bani, the Gadite" instead of "Mibhar, son of Hagri." Because of textual difficulties in the 1 Chronicles passage, scholars think the reading in 2 Samuel is probably more accurate.

Hagrite

Arabian tribe descended from Hagar, Abraham's concubine. Being nomads, the Hagrites roamed the desert east of Gilead. Relations between Israel and the Hagrites were usually hostile. During Saul's reign, Reuben's tribe fought them and were

defeated ([1 Chr 5:10](#)). Later, however, with the help of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Reuben was able to take their land and hold it until the exile ([1 Chr 5:19–20](#)). In the light of that hostility, it is easy to understand Asaph's prayer against them in [Psalm 83:6](#). David, on the other hand, made a Hagrite, Jaziz, the steward of all his flocks ([1 Chr 27:31](#)).

Hahiroth

Another name for "Pi-hahiroth," a place that the Israelites visited on their journey from Egypt to the promised land ([Numbers 33:8](#)).

See Pi-hahiroth.

Hai

KJV form for the Canaanite city Ai in [Genesis 12:8](#) and [13:3](#). *See* Ai.

Hairstyles and Beards

In Palestine and the Near East, women typically had long hair. In the New Testament era, cutting one's hair could be seen as a sign of being a pagan priestess, leading to disgrace (see [1 Corinthians 11:15](#)). The apostle Peter advised Christian women not to focus excessively on elaborate hairstyles ([1 Peter 3:3](#)). When a woman married, she often altered her hairstyle to reflect a more mature look, with some using curling tongs and hair oils.

Dark hair is commonly mentioned in the Bible, though gray hair was respected as a sign of maturity. Some people used black and red hair dyes, and tradition holds that Herod the Great dyed his graying hair with henna.

In Jewish culture, beard and hair trimming followed specific rules. Israelites were instructed not to cut the hair on their temples or trim the edges of their beards ([Leviticus 19:27](#)). This practice helped distinguish Israelites from the idol-worshipping Canaanites and others ([Deuteronomy 12:29–30](#)). Beards set Hebrews apart from Egyptians, who were usually clean-shaven but sometimes wore false beards for ceremonies. Shaving or cutting the beard of captives was seen as a severe humiliation, while a shaved head was a symbol of purification after completing a vow ([Leviticus 14:8–9; Acts 18:18](#)). Shaving a beard was

the usual sign of mourning ([Isaiah 15:2](#)). It could also symbolize the approach of doom ([Isaiah 7:20; Jeremiah 41:5; 48:37](#)).

Hakilah

Another spelling of Hachilah, an unidentified site in Horesh.

See Hachilah.

Hakkatan

Member of Azgad's family, the father of Johanan, and one of the exiles who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra ([Ezr 8:12](#)).

Hakkoz

Name borne by a priestly family during the monarchy ([1 Chr 24:10](#)). In Ezra's time, the family pedigree could not be documented properly; consequently, the privilege of priestly service was withdrawn ([Ezr 2:61; Neh 3:4, 21; 7:63](#); kjv "Koz").

Hakupha

Forefather of a family of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:51; Neh 7:53](#)).

Halah

Place in Assyria where the inhabitants of Samaria were taken after its fall in 722 BC ([2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11](#); cf. [1 Chr 5:26](#)).

Halak, Mount

Mountain listed as marking the southern boundary of Joshua's conquests ([Jos 11:17; 12:7](#)). It is located in the western Arabah and is probably identical with Jebel Halaq on the northwest side of the Wadi Marra.

Halakah

The term for Jewish law. Halakah literally means "walking." It provides the authoritative Jewish way of life as written in the Mishnah. It shows Jewish people how they should live their lives and what they must do (see [Exodus 18:20](#)).

Halakah is based on two main sources. First, it comes from the biblical laws found in the written Law (the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible) and the oral law. According to Jewish tradition, the oral law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai but not written down. It was passed down through many generations and later recorded in the Talmud (a collection of Jewish writings that explain the law).

For example, the Pentateuch says not to work on the Sabbath. But it does not explain what "work" means. The written Law does not help with this question. However, in the Talmud we find Halakah, which interprets the written Law. The Talmud explains what "work" means on the Sabbath.

Second, Halakah includes all the teachings and decisions from important Jewish scholars throughout history. All these sources together (the written and oral law plus the history of Jewish legal scholarship) create what we call Halakah. These sources help make religious and legal decisions in orthodox Jewish communities.

Halakah is meant to cover every part of life. It gives guidance about eating habits, sexual life, business ethics, social activities, entertainment, and much more. Because it covers so many aspects of daily life, people often call it "the Jewish way." It serves as the Jewish legal and practical guide to living.

See also Haggadah; Talmud.

Half-Shekel Tax

The tax on all adult Jews throughout the world. It began during the time between Testaments to support the temple. It was continued by Vespasian for the Roman replacement; the temple tax of [Matthew 17:24-25](#).

Halhul

City assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance after the initial conquest of Canaan. It was located

between Beth-zur and Beth-anoth, four miles (6.4 kilometers) north of Hebron ([Jos 15:58](#)).

Hali

Town mentioned among those that formed the border of Asher's tribe ([Jos 19:25](#)). Hali may have been located west of Mt Carmel, but this is uncertain.

Halicarnassus

An important commercial city of Caria in Asia Minor, beautifully situated on a bay about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from the island of Cos. Its excellent natural harbor and the fertile soil in the surrounding area, which produced abundant crops of fruits and nuts, made it a prominent trading center. The tomb of one of the most famous kings of Caria (Mausolus, 377-353 BC) at Halicarnassus was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. It was also the birthplace of Herodotus and Dionysius. The city was burned by Alexander the Great when he was not able to take the acropolis. From [1 Maccabees 15:23](#) it appears that it had a substantial Jewish population because a letter written by the Roman Senate asked that no harm should be done to them ([1 Macc 15:19](#)). Josephus notes that the city granted the Jews the right to "celebrate their Sabbaths, and perform their holy offices, according to the Jewish laws; and may make their proseuchae (places of prayer) at the sea-side, according to the customs of their forefathers" (*Antiquities* 14.10.23). The modern town of Bodrum covers a part of the site of the ancient city.

Hallel

A Hebrew word describing a song of praise to God. Later, in the Talmud (Jewish religious law) and the writings of the rabbis (or teachers), it referred to groups of psalms of praise to God. [Psalms 113-118](#) were called the Egyptian Hallel, and early Jewish tradition believed Moses wrote them.

During the temple period, this Hallel was read 18 days of the year, but on one night, the Passover. It was read in parts during the Passover:

- [Psalms 113–114](#) were read before the meal, before drinking the second cup.
- [Psalms 115–118](#) were read after the last cup was filled.

This is probably the song that Jesus and his disciples sang at the Last Supper ([Matthew 26:30](#); [Mark 14:26](#)). This Hallel was also used for the feasts of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Tabernacles, and Dedication.

The Great Hallel was [Psalm 136](#) and sometimes [Psalms 120–136](#). [Psalms 146–148](#) were also a single Hallel. These were used during daily morning service of the synagogue.

See also Hallelujah; Talmud.

Hallelujah

An important Christian phrase frequently used in the early church's worship and liturgy.

"Hallelujah" is a Hebrew word meaning "Praise the Lord." The Hebrew word was transliterated (spelled out) using Greek letters and then English letters. It is used as a call to praise. Jewish people from before Christ were already using the term in the synagogue. "Hallelujah," according to tradition, was written as one word, except in [Psalm 135:3](#). In the Old Testament, it is only found in the Psalms, where it occurs 23 times, and for the first time in [Psalm 104:35](#). [Psalms 111](#) to [113](#) begin with "Hallelujah"; [Psalms 115](#) to [117](#) end with "Hallelujah"; and [Psalms 146](#) to [150](#) begin and end with it.

In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) version of [Psalms 113–118](#), all the psalms are titled "Alleluia." The church adopted the form "Hallelujah" from the Vulgate (the Latin translation of the Bible). "Amen" and "Hallelujah," two Hebrew words that have been adopted into liturgical use, have passed from the Old Testament to the New Testament and finally to the church. But in some translations, the term is translated "Praise ye the Lord" (in the King James Version and Easy-to-Read Version) or "Praise the Lord" (in the Revised Standard Version and the New Living Translation).

In Jewish worship, [Psalms 113–118](#), called the Hallel or Hymn of Praise, is sung at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. During Passover, [Psalms 113](#) and [114](#) are sung at home

before the meal, and [Psalms 115–118](#) are sung after it. [Matthew 26:30](#) and [Mark 14:26](#) call [Psalms 115–118](#) the "hymn" when it is sung by Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper.

"Hallelujah" only appears in the New Testament in [Revelation 19:1–6](#). It is sung by the saints in heaven. Early on, it was adopted into the church's liturgy. It became the most common expression of joy, so it was sung at Easter, as Augustine mentions. The church chose [Psalms 113](#), [114](#), and [118](#) from the Hebrew Hallel to be sung on Easter day, connecting Easter with Passover.

See also Hallel.

Halohesh, Halohesh

Shallum's father ([Neh 3:12](#)) and one who set his seal on Ezra's covenant ([10:24](#)).

Ham (Person)

Second son of Noah ([Gn 5:32](#); [6:10](#); [7:13](#); [9:18](#), [22](#); [10:1](#), [6](#), [20](#)). Ham had four sons whose names were Cush, Mizraim (Hebrew for Egypt), Put, and Canaan ([Gn 10:6](#); [1 Chr 1:8](#)). Ham, then, is seen as the ancestor of the Egyptians (though a mixed race apparently occurs later), as well as of peoples in Africa, Arabia, and Canaan.

After the Flood, Noah began cultivating vineyards, and on one occasion exposed himself while drunk ([Gn 9:20–24](#)). Ham saw his father lying naked and related the incident to Shem and Japheth, who covered Noah up discreetly. When Noah awoke and learned what "his youngest son" (seen by some as Ham) had done, he cursed Ham's son Canaan, saying his brothers (Cush, Mizraim, and Put) and Shem and Japheth would rule over him. But if Ham is the one referred to in [9:24](#) as offending Noah, why should the curse fall on his son Canaan? The most likely answer is that Ham is not being referred to in verse [24](#). The expression is "his youngest son" (the "younger" of the kJV is hardly possible in Hebrew), whereas Ham is repeatedly seen as the second of the brothers, not the youngest ([5:32](#); [6:10](#); [7:13](#); [9:18](#); [10:1](#)), the explicit order of the sons indicating age. Instead, "his youngest son" refers to Canaan, and to some base deed not being recorded, on whom the curse falls. "Son" used for "grandson" is common Semitic material, and it seems to have been used here in this way since Canaan is the "youngest" of the (grand)sons. The

curse, then, as the text clearly says, is on Canaan rather than Ham. Canaan (and his posterity) is to be subjugated by Japheth and Shem with the Canaanites, finally disappearing by NT times.

See also Nations; Noah #1.

Ham (Place)

Place where Chedorlaomer and his cohorts defeated the Zuzim ([Gn 14:5](#)). The name is probably preserved by Tell Ham, near the modern village on the Wadi er-Rejeilah. Bronze and Iron Age settlements have been unearthed there.

Haman

The son of Hammedatha the Agagite, a high official under King Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes) in Persia during Esther's time.

Haman became angry with Mordecai, Esther's uncle. Mordecai would not bow down to him (as a sign of respect) as all others did. This made Haman extremely angry. So, Haman planned to kill all the Jews in Persia ([Esther 3:8](#)). While he was plotting to have Mordecai killed (by hanging), the king was reading about how Mordecai had previously saved the king's life. Queen Esther, who was Jewish and Mordecai's niece, cleverly exposed Haman's plot to destroy her people.

After Haman's plot to kill all Jews was revealed, he was killed on the gallows made for Mordecai. Haman's ten sons were killed shortly after, and their bodies were publicly displayed.

In the Hebrew Bible, the names of Haman's ten sons are written in a special way. They are written vertically (up and down) instead of horizontally (across the page). Some scholars believe this unusual writing style might represent how the sons were hung on the gallows, showing their positions side by side or stacked on top of each other after their execution.

During the Jewish holiday of Purim, people would sometimes make fun of Haman by hanging a model or statue of him, or writing his name on the bottom of their shoes to show total disrespect.

See also Esther, Book of.

Hamath

1. A city and district located about 201 kilometers (125 miles) north of Damascus, in what is now Syria. It was located on the Orontes River. At first, the people of Hamath came from the family of Canaan ([Genesis 10:18](#)). Later, people from the Semitic peoples (a group that includes Israelites, Arameans, and others) lived there. The Bible sometimes calls the area "the entrance of Hamath" ([Numbers 34:7–8](#); [Joshua 13:5](#)). This area marked the northern border of the land promised to Israel. Israel controlled this land during the early kingdom of Israel and again during the reign of Jeroboam II, from 793 to 753 BC. The exact location of the place called "Lebo-hamath" (which means "entrance of Hamath") is not certain. Some scholars think it was a town called Lebweh on the Orontes River, between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains. Others think it was located somewhere else in Syria. Hamath was first settled during the Neolithic period (the late Stone Age). Around 1750 BC, the city was destroyed (possibly by a group called the Hyksos). Later, the city was rebuilt. The Egyptian king Thutmose III (who ruled from 1502–1448 BC) took control of it. While Egypt ruled this part of Syria, Hamath became a successful city. Before 900 BC, Hamath became the capital of a small Hittite kingdom. People have found Hittite writings (called inscriptions) that tell about this time.

Hamath in the Bible David fought Hadadezer, King of Zobah, and defeated him. Then Toi, King of Hamath, sent his son to congratulate David ([2 Samuel 8:9–10](#)). Solomon built store-cities in the region of Hamath ([2 Chronicles 8:4](#)). This may mean that Hamath became a kingdom that paid tribute (a regular gift of goods or money) to Israel.

During the time of King Ahab of Israel, the king of Hamath was named Irhulini. He joined with kings from Damascus, Israel, and 12 other cities to fight against Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria (who ruled from 860 to 825 BC). They stopped him for a time. But around 846 BC, Shalmaneser defeated them, and Hamath came under Assyrian rule.

In 730 BC, Eni-Ilus, the king of Hamath, paid tribute to another Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III. About 10 years later, in 720 BC, the Assyrian king Sargon II forced 4,300 Assyrians to live in Hamath. He also moved many people from Hamath and other places to Samaria ([2 Kings 17:24](#)). Some people from Israel may also have been sent to live in Hamath ([Isaiah 11:11](#)). Other Old Testament verses that mention Assyria's control of Hamath include [2 Kings 18:34, 19:13](#), [Isaiah 10:9, 36:19, 37:13](#), and [Amos 6:2](#).

Later, Hamath seems to have come under the control of Damascus ([Jeremiah 49:23](#)). Some of the prophets predicted that Israel would one day extend its boundaries once again to Hamath ([Ezekiel 47:16-17; 48:1](#); [Zechariah 9:2](#)).

*During the time of the Maccabees, Jonathan Maccabeus and his army met the army of King Demetrius at Hamath ([1 Maccabees 12:25](#)). According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Antiochus Epiphanes changed the city's name to Epiphania (*Antiquities* 1.4.2). This was the name used by the Greeks and Romans.*

See also Hamath, Entrance of.

1. Hamath-zobah is mentioned in [2 Chronicles 8:3](#) as a town that Solomon conquered. Some people think it was the same city as Hamath. Others think it was a different town in the area of Zobah.

See also Hamath-zobah.

Hamath-Zobah

City captured by King Solomon of Israel ([2 Chr 8:3-4](#)). Its identity is uncertain. It occurs only once in the Bible and is not mentioned in any of the cuneiform inscriptions from that period. Some scholars have suggested that there were two Hamaths and that "Zobah" was added to distinguish it from the better-known city (cf. [Ez 47:17](#)). The city is mentioned with Hamath and

Tadmor and was perhaps located in northeastern Syria.

Hamath, Entrance of

Place of uncertain identification, marking the northern border of the Canaanite territory promised to Israel by God ([Nm 34:8](#)), but only attained by the time of the monarchy ([1 Kgs 8:65](#); [1 Chr 13:5](#); [2 Chr 7:8](#)).

After the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided and the northern boundary shrank. It was not until the reign of Jeroboam II, son of Joash (793-753 BC), king of the northern kingdom (called Israel), that the northern boundaries extended again to the entrance of Hamath ([2 Kgs 14:23-25](#)).

Both Amos and Ezekiel refer to the entrance of Hamath in their prophecies concerning Israel ([Am 6:14](#); [Ez 47:15-20](#); [48:1](#)). Some authorities regard the place as the ancient town Lebo-hamath, identified with modern Lebweh. See Hamath #1; Lebo-hamath.

Hamathite

Resident of Hamath ([Gn 10:18](#); [1 Chr 1:16](#)). See Hamath #1.

Hammath (Person)

Ancestor of the house of Rechab ([1 Chr 2:55](#)), about whom nothing else is known.

Hammath (Place)

Fortified outpost identified with the modern Hamman Tabariyeh ([Jos 19:35](#)). This place is located among hot springs on the western shore of Galilee and is probably identifiable with Hammon ([1 Chr 6:76](#)), Hammoth-dor ([Jos 21:32](#)), and perhaps the Emmaus of Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.2.3).

Hammedatha

Hammedatha was the father of Haman. Haman was a chief adviser to King Ahasuerus of Persia (also

called Xerxes). In the book of Esther, Haman hated the Jewish people and planned to destroy them ([Esther 3:1, 10; 8:5; 9:10, 24](#)).

Hammelech

Hebrew word meaning “the king,” taken to be a personal name by the kjv, but more correctly translated as “the king” by other versions ([Jer 36:26; 38:6](#)).

Hammolecheth, Hammoleketh

Machir's daughter and Gilead's sister ([1 Chr 7:18](#)).

Hammon

1. One of the cities of Asher mentioned in [Joshua 19:28](#). It was somewhere south of Tyre on the western border of Asher.
2. Alternate name for Hammath in [1 Chronicles 6:76](#). See Hammath (Place).

Hammoth-Dor

Alternate name for the Levitical town Hammath in [Joshua 21:32](#).

Hammuel

Member of Mishma's family from Simeon's tribe ([1 Chr 4:26](#)).

Hammurabi, Law Code of

A law code created by Hammurabi, the last great king of the first Babylonian dynasty who ruled from around 1790 to 1750 BC. It was created to protect citizens' rights and outline their duties.

The Discovery of the Code of Hammurabi

The laws were carved on stone pillars, often placed in marketplaces or near temples for everyone to see. The most complete example found so far is from the later part of his reign. French archaeologists discovered the pillar at Susa in

1901. It was made of black diorite stone and was 2.4 meters (eight feet) tall. It had a carving of Hammurabi receiving symbols of kingship and law from the god Shamash (the Mesopotamian god of justice). Below this carving was a poetic introduction, followed by 282 laws, and a closing statement praising Hammurabi's virtues, his care for his people, and his obedience to the great god Marduk and the god of justice, Shamash. The gods are invoked to curse anyone who defies the pillar.

The Elamites took it to Susa as a battle trophy in 1160 BC. It is now in the Louvre in Paris. The code is a set of laws based on Sumerian and early Semitic laws. The code of Hammurabi has many similarities with the laws of the Assyrians, Hittites, and Hebrews.

Basic Laws and Punishments

The first part of Hammurabi's code listed punishments for serious crimes, such as:

- Taking someone by force (kidnapping)
- Stealing things that belong to others
- Buying or keeping things that were stolen
- Entering a building by force and without permission
- Stealing during emergencies like fires or riots (looting)
- Telling lies after promising to tell the truth in court
- Falsely blaming someone for a crime
- Helping someone hide from the law

Death was a possible punishment for these crimes, especially if robbery involved stealing from a temple or the state, or if a witness lied in a case with a death penalty.

All valid transactions happened in front of witnesses, and their testimony had to be trustworthy in disputes. They delivered quick justice to a man guilty of entering a building by force and without permission:

“If a man broke into a house, they shall put him to death at that breach and wall him in” (section 21).

For a looter during a fire:

"If a fire broke out in a man's house, and someone trying to extinguish it stole the owner's goods, that man shall be thrown into that fire" (section 25).

Laws About Property and Business

The next section describes how the law protected both the people who owned land and those who worked on it. It explains what each person had to do and what rights they had. The officer had to manage his soldiers, just as soldiers had to serve the state. The law also protected a soldier's property while he served in the army. A tenant had to use rented property wisely and beneficially. If a tenant's rented land flooded before harvest, the law excused him from paying rent that year. He also needed to be careful with his neighbors' crops and avoid flooding their fields with excessive irrigation (sections 30–56).

The detailed discussion of contracts and commercial laws shows the wide range of these transactions. If someone borrowed money from a merchant and could not repay, they had to pay with goods, like dates from their own crop. The allowed interest rate was about 20 percent. The law protected borrowers from lenders who used a small weight of grain or money and demanded repayment with interest at a larger weight. Anyone caught doing this lost whatever they had lent. Female wine sellers were warned against selling with short weight (section 108). High interest rates applied to buying wine on credit, so few people likely used this early form of credit.

To ensure a fair division when ending a partnership, the transaction took place in the presence of "God," likely in the temple. A trader borrowing money with interest was expected to make a profit. If he succeeded, he repaid both the original amount and the interest. If he failed, he was considered a poor trader and had to repay the merchant double the borrowed amount. However, if the money was loaned as a favor and the trader suffered a loss, only the principal was repayable without interest. A trader robbed by bandits did not have to make payment. Sealed receipts were used to ensure fair trading practices. In disputes over a loan, if the merchant proved his case, the trader had to return three times the borrowed amount. If the trader proved his case, the merchant paid the trader six times the original amount involved (sections 98–107).

A creditor could not take a debtor's money or grain without permission. If he did, he had to return it and lose the loan. Sometimes, a person could be

held as a pledge. If the person died naturally during this time, no claim could be made. However, if the person died from mistreatment, compensation was required based on rank. If the pledge was a slave, the compensation was one-third of a mina of silver, and the loan was forgiven. If the pledge was a man's son, the creditor's son was put to death as compensation. When a wife, son, or daughter was bound for service to pay a debt, the maximum servitude was three years (sections 113–117).

A man had to keep safe anything left with him. If robbers stole it because the building was not secure, he had to repay the owner. If someone falsely claimed their property was lost, they had to pay the city council twice the claimed amount.

Laws About Sex, Marriage, and Family

There were many laws about sex and marriage (sections 127–162). Like most agreements, marriage needed a contract to be valid. Adultery often led to the death penalty, but a man could ask to spare his wife's life. The victim of rape was not punished. According to Mosaic law, if the act happened in the city, the woman was also guilty because she was expected to scream for help. If it happened outside the city walls, she was not blamed because her screams could not be heard. Hammurabi's code showed concern for women who were abandoned or whose husbands were captured. These women could live with another man if they could not support themselves.

When a woman divorced, she received her dowry back. If there was no dowry, she got one mina of silver. If her husband was a peasant, she received one-third of a mina of silver. If a woman ignored her household duties to start a business, her husband could divorce her without payment. He could also remarry without divorcing her, making her live as a servant in the house.

A slave who had her master's child could not be sold. If a man married a sick woman and then chose to marry another, the sick wife could stay in the house. Her husband had to support her for life. A woman who killed her husband for her lover was impaled on stakes (section 153). Incest led to death or banishment. Breach of promise cases usually required paying back double the dowry's value. When a wife died, her dowry became part of her children's inheritance. If she died childless and her father returned her marriage price, her husband could not claim her dowry, which had to go back to her father (sections 162–163). The rights of a younger unmarried son were protected, as were

those of a master's children with a slave. A son could not be disinherited by his father unless he committed a serious offense. A widow was protected from her children's excessive financial demands. If a free woman married a slave, their children were free. If the slave died, his widow kept her dowry and half the goods acquired during the marriage. The slave owner got the rest. Women temple workers were also protected by law.

Under Hebrew law, a father had to teach his son how to earn a living. Hammurabi's code required that an adopted son receive the same training. If the adopted son was not raised like a natural child in the family, he could return to his original home.

If a man later had his own family and sent the foster child away, the child could take one-third of the man's goods. However, the child could not take any land or house, as these belonged to the man's biological children. If a child died while in a nurse's care and she took another job without telling the new employers about the death, they cut off her breast.

Laws About Injury and Medical Care

The most famous part of Hammurabi's law code deals with assault: "If a man destroys the eye of an aristocrat [noble or wealthy person], they will destroy his eye." Similarly, if he breaks a man's bone or knocks out a tooth, he will face the same punishment (sections 196–197). However, if the injured person is a commoner (without rank or title), the offender must pay a fine of one mina of silver for destroying an eye or breaking a bone. If the injured person is a slave, the offender must pay half the slave's value. Punishments for simple assault depend on the rank of the two people involved. If a man swears the blow was not intentional, he might only have to pay the doctor's bill. Other penalties apply if the blow is fatal or causes a woman to miscarry (sections 209–214).

The fees for surgeons were clearly outlined. Saving a life or performing eye surgery cost ten shekels of silver for an aristocrat, five for a commoner, and two for a slave. If an aristocratic patient died or lost an eye during surgery, the surgeon risked having his hand cut off (section 218). If a slave died during surgery, the surgeon had to replace the slave. For setting a broken bone or healing a sprained tendon, the physician charged five, three, or two shekels, based on the patient's status (sections 221–223).

Laws About Work and Trade

The last section of laws covers protecting people from poor work by house and boat builders. It includes rules for renting animals or hiring people, theft of farming tools, rates for hiring and paying wages, and rules for buying and selling slaves (sections 228–282).

If a man rented out his master's oxen instead of using them on his own fields, he had to pay the usual grain rent for the field. If he could not pay, the oxen would drag him through the field.

Comparison with the Law of Moses

Due to cultural similarities, it is not surprising that Hammurabi's code and Mosaic law have some commonalities. Both sets of laws imposed the death penalty for:

- Adultery (Hammurabi section 129; [Leviticus 20:10](#); [Deuteronomy 22:22](#))
- Kidnapping and selling a person (Hammurabi section 114; [Exodus 21:16](#))

The *lex talionis*, or the law of retaliation, in [Exodus 21:23–25](#) and [Deuteronomy 19:21](#) is also present in Hammurabi's laws, such as sections 197, 210, and 230. However, the differences are important too. Hammurabi's laws allowed women equal rights to divorce (section 142), but Mosaic law did not include these rights (see [Deuteronomy 24:1–4](#)). Hammurabi's code was mainly practical and, although issued under Shamash, the god of justice, it paid little attention to ethical and spiritual principles.

See also Civil Law and Justice; Criminal Law and Punishment; Law, Biblical Concept of.

Hamon-Gog

Valley in the Transjordan where the dead of the armies of Gog (Gog's "hordes") will be buried ([Ez 39:11, 15](#)).

Hamonah

Name of site meaning "horde" in the Transjordan where the marauding armies of Gog will be destroyed by the Israelites ([Ez 39:16](#)).

See also Gog #2.

Hamor

A Hivite or Horite prince who ruled the area around Shechem ([Genesis 34:2](#)). When Jacob returned from Paddan-aram with his family, he bought land from Hamor. During this time, Hamor's son Shechem forced Dinah, Jacob's daughter, to have sexual intercourse with him even though she did not want to.

At his son's request, Hamor asked Jacob to marry Shechem and Dinah. He offered a dowry. Simeon and Levi, pretending to be friends, tricked the males living in that city into getting circumcised. Then, they attacked and killed them before they healed, seeking revenge for their sister's humiliation.

"Hamor" is the Hebrew word that Jacob uses to denote Issachar in blessing his sons ([Genesis 49:14](#)). It is the usual word for "ass" in the Old Testament (for example, [Genesis 42:26](#); [Exodus 20:17](#); [Judges 15:15](#); [Isaiah 1:3](#); [Zechariah 9:9](#)).

Hamran

Alternate name for Hemdan, Dishon's oldest son in [1 Chronicles 1:41](#) (see nlt mg). *See* Hemdan.

Hamuel

KJV spelling of Hammuel, the Simeonite, in [1 Chronicles 4:26](#). *See* Hammuel.

Hamul, Hamulite

Perez's younger son ([Gn 46:12](#); [1 Chr 2:5](#)) and founder of the Hamulite family ([Nm 26:21](#)).

Hamutal

Daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah, one of King Josiah's wives, and the mother of two kings: Jehoahaz and Zedekiah ([2 Kgs 23:31](#); [24:18](#); [Jer 52:1](#)).

Hanamel

Shallum's son, from whom Jeremiah bought a field in Anathoth ([Jer 32:7-12](#)). This purchase signified that God would restore the nation and that possession of the land would again be possible.

Hanan

1. Shashak's son and one of the chief men of Benjamin ([1 Chr 8:23](#)).
2. Azel's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:38](#); [9:44](#)).
3. Warrior among David's mighty men, who were known as "the thirty" ([1 Chr 11:43](#)).
4. Ancestor of a group of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:46](#); [Neh 7:49](#)).
5. Levitical assistant who explained to the people passages from the law read by Ezra ([Neh 8:7](#)).
6. Levite who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile ([Neh 10:10](#)).
- 7, 8. Two political leaders who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile ([Neh 10:22, 26](#)).
9. One of the Levites whom Nehemiah appointed as treasurer over the storehouses ([Neh 13:13](#)).
10. Igdaiah's son and head of a prophetic guild occupying the room in the temple where Jeremiah offered the Rechabites wine to drink ([Jer 35:4](#)).

Hananel, Tower of

Tower on the north wall of Jerusalem, located near the Sheep Gate ([Neh 3:1](#); [12:39](#); kjv "Hananeel"). Later in Israel's history John Hyrcanus erected a Maccabean fortress on this spot, which Pompey destroyed in 63 BC. Still later, Herod the Great built the Tower of Antonia here to oversee the temple area. Two prophecies refer to the Tower of Hananel as a boundary point in the rebuilding of Jerusalem ([Jer 31:38](#); [Zec 14:10](#)).

Hanani

1. Seer who rebuked King Asa for giving treasure to Ben-hadad of Syria to persuade him to attack Israel. Hanani was imprisoned for his preaching ([2 Chr 16:1-10](#)). Hanani was the father of the prophet Jehu, who made protests against Baasha, king of Israel ([1 Kgs 16:1-7](#)), and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah ([2 Chr 19:2](#)).
2. Heman's son, David's seer, and a musician in the temple ([1 Chr 25:4, 25](#)).
3. Priest who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his pagan wife after returning from exile ([Ezr 10:20](#)).
4. Brother of Nehemiah who induced him to act on behalf of the Jews when he reported the state of Jerusalem and Judah ([Neh 1:2](#)). Hanani was later given responsibility for the city of Jerusalem ([7:2](#)).
5. Priest and musician who participated in the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem ([Neh 12:36](#)).

Hananiah

1. A son of Zerubbabel and descendant of King David ([1 Chronicles 3:19, 21](#)).
2. A member of the tribe of Benjamin and the son of Shashak ([1 Chronicles 8:24](#)).
3. A son of Heman who led the 16th group of musicians who served in the temple of the Lord. These musicians were divided into 24 groups ([1 Chronicles 25:4, 23](#)).
4. One of the commanders of King Uzziah's army ([2 Chronicles 26:11](#)).
5. A son of Bebai who returned from exile in Babylon. Ezra later urged him to end his marriage to a non-Jewish wife ([Ezra 10:28](#)).
6. A maker of perfumes who helped Nehemiah rebuild the Jerusalem wall ([Nehemiah 3:8](#)).

7. A son of Shelemiah who, along with Hanun, repaired part of the Jerusalem wall during Nehemiah's time ([Nehemiah 3:30](#)). He is perhaps the same person as #6 above.
8. Commander of the citadel of Jerusalem. Nehemiah chose him to rule the city together with Hanani, Nehemiah's brother. Hananiah was described as a faithful and God-fearing man. He was given the task of making sure the city walls and gates were guarded ([Nehemiah 7:2-3](#)).
9. One of the leaders who signed his name to Ezra's agreement (covenant) with God ([Nehemiah 10:23](#)).
10. The head of the priestly family of Jeremiah when Joiakim was high priest in Jerusalem after the exile ([Nehemiah 12:12](#)).
11. One of the priests who blew a trumpet at the dedication of the Jerusalem wall during the days of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 12:41](#)).
12. A Gibeonite and the son of Azzur. Hananiah claimed to be a prophet during the fourth year of King Zedekiah of Judah's reign. Zedekiah was king of Judah from 597 to 586 BC. In the temple, Hananiah announced that within two years, the Lord would break Nebuchadnezzar's control over Judah and bring back all the people and sacred objects that had been taken to Babylon. However, the Lord told Jeremiah that Hananiah was lying. Jeremiah then told Hananiah he would die for spreading false messages, and Hananiah died two months later ([Jeremiah 28](#)).
13. The father of Zedekiah, who was an official serving King Jehoiakim of Judah (who ruled from 609 to 598 BC; [Jeremiah 36:12](#)).

- 14.** The grandfather of Irijah, the captain of the guards. Irijah arrested Jeremiah at Jerusalem's Gate of Benjamin for apparently deserting to the Babylonians ([Jeremiah 37:13](#)).
- 15.** One of Daniel's three Jewish friends who were taken to Babylon. The Babylonians called him Shadrach ([Daniel 1:6-19](#); [2:17](#)).
See also Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Hand

The part of the arm at its end that can hold and move things. We use our hands to pick up objects, write, work, and make gestures. The word "hand" appears hundreds of times in the Bible. Sometimes it refers to the actual body part. Other times, it is used as a way to explain ideas or feelings through comparison.

Symbolic Meanings of Hands

In the Bible, people often used the word "hand" to explain different ideas. When someone had strong hands, it showed they had power ([Deuteronomy 2:15](#); [Psalm 31:5](#); [Mark 14:62](#)). In [Joshua 8:20](#), "they could not escape" is described as they had no "hand to flee" (see [Psalm 76:5](#)). Weak or limp hands showed that someone was powerless or uncertain ([Isaiah 35:3](#))

The position or use of hands also had special meanings. When two people shook hands, it showed they were friends ([2 Kings 10:15](#)). If someone sat at a ruler's right hand, it meant they were honored and favored ([Psalms 16:11](#); [77:10](#); [110:1](#)). Clean hands meant someone was innocent of wrongdoing ([Psalm 26:6](#)). When people shook hands to make a deal, it showed the deal was official ([Proverbs 6:1](#)). Raising one's hand against someone meant they intended to hurt that person ([1 Kings 11:26](#)).

People also used their hands in worship. They raised their hands when they prayed ([Exodus 17:11](#); [Leviticus 9:22](#); [Isaiah 1:15](#); [1 Timothy 2:8](#)). People used their hands when they made promises to God ([Genesis 14:22](#); [24:2](#))

In the Bible, how people used their hands could show different feelings and actions. Someone might use their hands to express:

- Risking their life ([Judges 12:3](#))
- Showing happiness ([2 Kings 11:12](#))
- Sharing with others ([Deuteronomy 15:11](#))
- Showing sadness ([2 Samuel 13:19](#))
- Showing respect ([Proverbs 30:32](#))
- Starting an important task ([Luke 9:62](#))

When Pontius Pilate washed his hands during Jesus's trial, he was trying to show he was not responsible for what was happening to Jesus ([Matthew 27:24](#)). However, since Pilate was the governor who had to approve Jesus's death, washing his hands did not really remove his responsibility.

When the people of Israel left Egypt, the Bible says they went out "marching out defiantly" ([Exodus 14:8](#)). In the original language, this was written as "with a high hand," which meant they left boldly and confidently.

Hands in Work and Ritual

Working with one's hands was considered honorable ([Ephesians 4:28](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:11](#)). The apostle Paul was proud of the work he did with his hands ([Acts 20:34](#); [1 Corinthians 4:12](#)).

The Jewish priests had special rules about washing their hands before they could do their work in the temple ([Exodus 30:19-21](#); [40:30-32](#)). Later, some religious leaders (the scribes and Pharisees) made these rules too strict. Jesus chose not to follow these strict hand-washing rules to show that they had gone too far ([Matthew 15:1-20](#); [Luke 11:38](#)).

The Hand of the Lord

When the Bible talks about "the hand of the Lord," it describes different ways God works with people. It can mean:

- God's unstoppable power ([Deuteronomy 2:15](#))
- God's judgment or decisions about right and wrong ([Acts 13:11](#); [Hebrews 10:31](#))
- God's guidance given to prophets ([Ezekiel 8:1; 37:1](#))
- God's protection and care ([Ezra 7:6](#); [John 10:28-29](#))

The Laying on of Hands

In the Bible, placing hands on someone's head (called "laying on of hands") was a very important action that had special meaning. This action appears many times in the Bible in different situations.

In the Old Testament, when someone brought an animal to be sacrificed, they would place their hands on the animal's head before it was killed. The priest did not do this. The person bringing the animal did. When people placed their hands on the animal, it showed that their sins were being moved to the animal or that they were identifying themselves with the animal that would die ([Leviticus 1:4](#)).

People also placed their hands on others to give them special jobs or roles. For example:

- Moses put his hands on Joshua to make him the new leader of Israel ([Numbers 27:12-23](#))
- The apostles put their hands on seven helpers they chose for their work ([Acts 6:5-6](#))
- The church in Antioch put their hands on Paul and Barnabas when they sent them out as missionaries ([Acts 13:3](#))

When leaders put their hands on someone, it showed that person was now sharing in their work and authority ([1 Timothy 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#)). This action was always done with prayer. As an early church teacher named Augustine said: "What else is the laying on of hands but a prayer over one?"

Jesus often put his hands on sick people when he healed them ([Mark 6:5](#); [Luke 4:40](#); [13:11-13](#)). His followers did the same thing ([Mark 16:18](#); [Acts](#)

[9:12, 17](#); [28:8](#)). When someone placed their hands on a sick person, it showed several things:

- The healer cared about the sick person and wanted to help them.
- It helped the sick person trust that God would heal them.
- It showed that God was answering their prayers for healing.

See also Right Hand.

Handbreadth

A measure of length equal to one-sixth of a cubit or just under 7.6 centimeters (three inches) in length. The fingers, up to four ([Jeremiah 52:21](#)), made a handbreadth; three handbreadths made a handstretch or span ([Exodus 28:16](#)).

See Weights and Measures.

Handmaid, Handmaiden

Female servants. They were familiar members among many households in biblical days. The handmaid cared for the women and children of a family and served as the woman's personal attendant. She enjoyed the protection of the law ([Lv 25:6](#); [Dt 5:14](#); [15:12-15](#)), and as a free wife's maid, sometimes became a concubine where there was a childless marriage ([Gn 30:3](#)).

Hands, Washing of

See Hand.

Hanes

City in Egypt included with Zoan (or Tanis) in [Isaiah 30:4](#) as a center of Egyptian government to which ambassadors would be sent. This indicates that it was one of the dynastic centers. It has been identified with Heracleopolis Magna, south of Memphis, the capital of northern Egypt in Roman times, and also with Heracleopolis Parva in the eastern delta region.

Hanging

See Criminal Law and Punishment; Impalement.

Haniel

KJV spelling of Hanniel, Ulla's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:39](#). See Hanniel #2.

Hannah

Wife of Elkanah from Ephraim's tribe and the mother of the prophet Samuel. The childless Hannah prayed annually at Shiloh for a son. She promised to dedicate him to the Lord.

The Lord answered her prayer, and she called her son Samuel. When he was weaned (at about age three) she dedicated him at Shiloh to the Lord's service in the sanctuary. From then on, Samuel lived with Eli the priest. His parents visited him on their yearly trips to worship at the temple. Hannah had three more sons and two daughters ([1 Samuel 1:1-2:21](#)). Hannah's prophetic song of praise in [1 Samuel 2:1-10](#) is very similar to the song Mary would later sing, called the "Magnificat" ([Luke 1:46-55](#)).

Hannathon

Northern border town of Zebulun ([Jos 19:14](#)), mentioned in the Amarna tablets (c. 1370 BC) and in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC). Not yet precisely located, it has been identified with Kefr 'Anau near Rimmon and with Tell el-Beduiyyah, north of Nazareth.

Hanniel

1. A son of Ephod and leader of the tribe of Manasseh. He represented his tribe when Moses portioned land to Israel ([Numbers 34:23](#)).
2. A son of Ulla and warrior in the tribe of Asher ([1 Chronicles 7:39](#)).

Hanoch

1. Midian's third son, and grandson of Abraham by Keturah ([Genesis 25:4](#); [1 Chronicles 1:33](#)).
2. Reuben's first son ([Genesis 46:9](#); [Exodus 6:14](#); [1 Chronicles 5:3](#)) and ancestor of the Hanochites ([Numbers 26:5](#)).

Hanochite

Any descendant of Hanoch, the firstborn son of the patriarch Reuben ([Numbers 26:5](#)).

See Hanoch #2.

Hanukkah

See Feasts and Festivals of Israel; Judaism.

Hanun

1. A son of Nahash and successor to the Ammonite throne. When King Nahash died, King David of Israel sent messengers to comfort Hanun. They also expressed the continual friendship of David. But Hanun insulted David. He humiliated his messengers and accused them of spying. This action led to war and the defeat of Ammon ([2 Samuel 10:1-14](#); [11:1](#); [12:26-31](#); [1 Chronicles 19:1-20:3](#)).
2. A man who helped repair the Valley Gate of Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 3:13](#)).
3. A son of Zalaph who repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall during the time of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 3:30](#)). He may be the same person as #2 above.

Haphraim

Town included in the territory allotted to Issachar's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:19](#)). Some scholars have identified it with et-Taiyibeh, about ten miles (16 kilometers) northwest of Beth-shan.

Happizzez

Head of a division of priests whom David assigned to official duties in the temple ([1 Chr 24:15](#)).

Har-Heres

Mountain in Aijalon of Dan's territory ([Jgs 1:35](#)). See Heres #1.

Hara

Place where Tiglath-pileser of Assyria exiled Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh ([1 Chr 5:26](#)). A possible miscopying of [2 Kings 17:6](#) and [18:11](#) may have substituted Hara for "cities of Media." The Greek version reads "mountains of Media," indicating an area east of the Tigris Valley. A district rather than a single site seems to be indicated.

Haradah

The twentieth wilderness encampment of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to the promised land. It is the ninth place they camped after leaving Sinai. It is listed between Mount Sheper and Makheloth. Its location is uncertain ([Numbers 33:24-25](#)).

Haran (Person)

1. Terah's son, brother of Abraham, and the father of Lot ([Gn 11:26-31](#)).
2. Caleb's son by his concubine Ephah, a member of Judah's tribe and the father of Gazez ([1 Chr 2:46](#)).
3. Shimei's son, a member of the Gershonite division of Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 23:9](#)).

Haran (Place)

City of northern Mesopotamia, first mentioned in [Genesis 11:31](#) as the destination of Terah, Abraham's father, in migrating from Ur of the Chaldees, and his home until his death. At age 75, Abraham was commanded by God to move to a land that God had for him ([Gn 12:1-4](#)). There were relatives who remained in Haran, however, to whom Jacob, Abraham's grandson, fled in fear of Esau ([27:42-43](#)). Jacob stayed in Haran many years while serving his Uncle Laban and acquiring Leah and Rachel as wives, as well as many sheep and goats, servants, camels, and donkeys ([30:43](#)).

This "city of Nahor" ([Gn 11:27-29; 24:10; 27:43](#)) was established in the third millennium BC, and its location on a branch of the Euphrates soon made it an important commercial center. Perhaps the ancient trade route that linked Damascus, Nineveh, and Carchemish passed by Haran. Ezekiel mentions trade between Haran and Tyre ([Ez 27:23](#)). Haran was an Aramean city and was famous for its worship of the lunar Sin and Nikkal. This system was an offspring of the cult found in Sumerian Ur. Sin and his consort Nikkal were revered not only here but throughout Canaan and even in Egypt. The cult persisted past NT times, its temple finally being destroyed by Mongols in the 13th century AD. It is little wonder that God commanded Abraham to leave this seat of idolatry. Modern Harran preserves the ancient cuneiform spelling of the name (cf. kjv "Charran," [Acts 7:2, 4](#)).

Harar, Hararite

The terms "Harar" and "Hararite" are used to describe several of King David's "mighty men" in the Bible. A Hararite was someone who came from a place called Harar.

Shammah was one of the mightiest men of David. He was father of Jonathan. This is a different Jonathan than the son of King Saul who was a friend of David. Shammah was a Hararite ([2 Samuel 23:11, 33; 1 Chronicles 11:34](#) has "Shagee"). Aggee, the father of Shammah was also a Hararite ([2 Samuel 23:11](#)). Sharar, the father of Ahiam, is also called a Hararite ([2 Samuel 23:33](#); in [1 Chronicles 11:35](#) he is called "Sachar").

We are not completely sure what these terms mean. They might refer to a mountain village called Harar, or they might mean "mountaineer" (someone who lives in the mountains).

Harbona

One of King Ahasuerus's seven personal servants. Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes) ordered them to parade Queen Vashti before a drunken feast so everyone could see her beauty ([Esther 1:10](#)). Harbona later suggested that Haman be hanged using the gallows Haman had built to execute Mordecai ([Esther 7:9](#)).

Hardness of Heart

Hardness of heart is a phrase that uses the idea of something hard that cannot be changed, like stone. It describes someone who stubbornly refuses to listen to God or change their ways.

The Story of Pharaoh's Hard Heart

The Bible first talks about hardness of heart in the story of Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt in the time of Moses. This is an important example that helps us understand what hardness of heart means. The Bible mentions Pharaoh's hardened heart at least 20 times in the Old Testament. Later, Paul writes about what this means in [Romans 9:17–24](#).

The first mention is in [Exodus 4:21](#), where God promises Moses that he will harden Pharaoh's heart so he will not allow the Israelites to leave. This promise is repeated in [Exodus 7:3](#), [14:4](#), and [17](#), and happens in [7:13–14](#). God performed many miracles that Pharaoh saw with his own eyes. God also warned Pharaoh about what would happen if he did not obey. When Pharaoh refused to listen, God sent ten terrible plagues to Egypt.

The Bible makes clear that Pharaoh's stubbornness was part of God's plan for his own ends and purposes ([Exodus 9:16](#); [Joshua 11:20](#); compare [Romans 9:17–18](#)). But it also says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart ([Exodus 8:15, 32](#); [9:34](#); [13:15](#)). This shows that hardening the heart is a result of rejecting the truth. This is an important point in the Bible. Hardening of the heart is not only something God allows to happen to a person but also a choice to turn away from the truth. Because of this, the person is responsible to God for their hard heart.

How Hearts Become Hard

Paul explains in [Romans 1:18–32](#) how people's hearts become hard. Everyone naturally knows

something about God, but they choose to reject this knowledge. They take what is true about God and turn it into lies. They try to hide the truth they know.

Because of this, their hearts become hard. Paul says their hearts become "darkened" when God lets them follow their sinful ways. This leads to intellectual, moral, and social consequences. Paul calls this a "hard and unrepentant heart" in [Romans 2:5](#). He explains that these people are not just fighting against God's punishment or the results of their sins. Instead, they are fighting against the truth and against what they know in their hearts is right ([Romans 2:14–16](#)).

Warnings About Hard Hearts

Many times in the Bible, God warns people not to let their hearts become hard. A hard heart shows that someone does not believe in God ([Deuteronomy 15:7](#); [Hebrews 3:8, 15](#); [4:7](#)). Jesus felt deep sadness when he saw people's hard hearts ([Mark 3:5](#); [16:14](#)). In one example, Jesus explained that Moses allowed divorce only because people's hearts were too hard to follow God's original plan for marriage ([Matthew 19:8](#)).

The Gospels tell us that sometimes God makes people unable to understand spiritual truth ([Matthew 13:13–15](#); [John 12:39–41](#)). When people keep refusing to obey God, their hearts become harder and harder. This shows their deeper rebellion against God ([Psalm 95:8](#); [John 12:40](#); [Hebrews 3:8, 15](#); [4:7](#)). The Bible shows many examples of this when God's people turned away from following him ([2 Kings 17:14](#); [Nehemiah 9:16–17](#); [Hebrews 3:8](#)).

See also Blindness; Judgment; Regeneration.

Hare

Small, swift, long-eared mammal similar to the rabbit ([Lv 11:6](#); [Dt 14:7](#)). See Animals.

Hareph

Caleb's descendant from Judah's tribe and founder (or perhaps father) of Beth-gader ([1 Chr 2:51](#)).

Hareth

KJV spelling of Hereth in [1 Samuel 22:5](#). See Hereth.

Harhaiah

Father of Uzziel, a goldsmith who worked to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time ([Neh 3:8](#)).

Harhas

Shallum's grandfather. Shallum's wife was Huldah the prophetess ([2 Kgs 22:14](#); spelled "Hasrah" in [2 Chr 34:22](#)), who delivered an oracle for Josiah after the discovery of the Book of the Law by the high priest Hilkiah.

Harhur

Ancestor of a group of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:51](#); [Neh 7:53](#)).

Harim

1. Priest whom King David appointed to official duties in the temple ([1 Chr 24:8](#)).
2. Ancestor of a Jewish family who returned from the Babylonian exile with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:32](#); [Neh 10:5](#)). Members of this family were guilty of marrying foreign women ([Ezr 10:31](#)), but they divorced their wives and a representative of the clan signed Ezra's covenant ([Neh 10:27](#)).
3. Ancestor of a family of priests who returned from the exile with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:39](#); [Neh 7:42](#)). Some identify him with #1 above. Members of this family were guilty of marrying foreign women.
4. Ancestor of Malkijah. Malkijah repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall during Nehemiah's time ([Neh 3:11](#)). This Harim could be the same as #2 above.
5. Priest who returned from the exile with Zerubbabel ([Neh 12:3](#); Hebrew "Rehum," see nlt mg). His son (or grandson) Adna is listed as a leading priest during the high priesthood of Joiakim ([12:15](#)). Later, under Ezra, a representative of the family (probably related to

#3 above) signed the covenant of faithfulness to God ([10:5](#)).

Hariph

Ancestor of a family who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Neh 7:24](#)). The name Jorah appears in the parallel list of [Ezra 2:18](#). A representative of this family signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others ([Neh 10:19](#)).

Harlot

See Prostitute, Prostitution.

Harmon

Place mentioned by the prophet Amos to which the inhabitants of Bashan would be exiled ([Am 4:3](#), nlt mg). Harmon occurs only once in the Bible, and there is no known place with such a name. There are problems with the text and numerous emendations have been proposed. Some Hebrew manuscripts render it as a common noun, meaning "palace" (kjav), rather than a proper name. The Septuagint renders it "the mountain of Rimmon," perhaps referring to a hill east of Rimmon (see [Igs 20:45-47](#); cf. [Jos 15:32](#); [19:13](#)).

Harnepher

Zophah's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:36](#)).

Harod

1. A spring which Gideon and his army camped next to before their encounter with the Midianites ([Judges 7:1](#)). It might be the same spring by which Saul and his army set up their tents before their battle with the Philistines ([1 Samuel 29:1](#)). The spring of Harod is at 'Ain Jalud by the northern side of Mt Gilboa. This is about 3.2 kilometers (two miles) southeast of Zerin.

2. Home of Shammah and Elika, two of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:25](#)). In [1 Chronicles 11:27](#), Elika's name is not included, and Shammoth (also called Shammah) is listed as a Harorite instead of a Harodite. The term "Harorite" is likely the result of a later copying error where the person copying the text mistook the Hebrew letter "d" for an "r."

Harodite

The title given to Shammah and Elika, two of King David's mighty men ([2 Samuel 23:25](#)). This name indicates they came from a place called Harod.

See Harod #2.

Haroeh

Alternate name of Reaiah, Shobal's son, in [1 Chronicles 2:52](#). *See* Reaiah #1.

Harorite

Alternate description of one of David's mighty men ([1 Chr 11:27](#)). *See* Harod #2.

Harosheth-Haggoym

Town in Canaan that was the home of Sisera. This Canaanite general led his forces from Harosheth against Deborah and Barak ([Jgs 4:2-13](#), kjv "Harosheth of the Gentiles"). After his soldiers panicked, they fled back to Harosheth where they were defeated (v [16](#)).

Harp

Stringed instrument. *See* Musical Instruments (Nebel).

Harrow

Agricultural term for implement or procedure, though no implement corresponding to the modern harrow is known from Palestine or Egypt. [Job 39:10](#) speaks of an ox performing the harrowing, while [Isaiah 28:24](#) notes that plowed ground was leveled as part of the process. Like the foregoing references, [Hosea 10:11](#) speaks of harrowing in connection with plowing. Most probably harrowing consisted of branches being pulled behind an animal or plow to smooth the land and before seeding. *See* Agriculture.

Harsha

Ancestor of a group of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:52](#); [Neh 7:54](#)).

Hart

A hart is an adult male red deer.

See Deer.

Harum

Aharhel's father from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:8](#)).

Harumph

Jedaiah's father. Jedaiah helped repair the wall of Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah ([Neh 3:10](#)).

Haruph, Haruphite

Name applied to Shephatiah, one of David's ambidextrous warriors from Benjamin's tribe who joined him at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:5](#)). Whether the name refers to a family or a place is uncertain.

Haruz

Haruz was the maternal grandfather of Amon, who was a king of Judah ([2 Kings 21:19](#)). This means Haruz was the father of Meshullemeth, who was Amon's mother.

Harvest

Harvesting is the gathering of crops, especially for food. In ancient Israel, different crops were harvested at different times of the year. Olives were picked from September to November, flax in March to April, barley in April to May, and wheat from May to June. Fruits like figs and grapes were harvested at the end of summer, in August or September. The Israelites' calendar was centered around these harvest periods ([Judges 15:1](#); [Ruth 1:22](#)).

In the Old Testament, Pentecost was one of the three major festivals where Israelites gathered to celebrate the harvest ([Exodus 23:16](#)). It was a time to remember that the land they had was a gift from God ([Deuteronomy 8:7-10](#)). By offering the firstfruits of their harvest ([Leviticus 23:10-11](#)), they showed gratitude to God and acknowledged their dependence on him. They were also instructed to leave some of their harvest for those in need ([Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22](#)).

In the New Testament, the term "harvest" is often used figuratively. For example, in a parable, the harvest represents the final judgment, where angels separate the righteous from the wicked ([Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#)). In another instance, the harvest refers to people who have not yet heard the gospel, and the "laborers" are those who share it with them ([Matthew 9:37-38](#)).

See also Agriculture; Feasts and Festivals of Israel; Vines, Vineyard.

Hasadiah

One of Zerubbabel's sons ([1 Chr 3:20](#)).

Hasenuah

KJV rendering of Hassenuah in [1 Chronicles 9:7](#). See Hassenuah.

Hashabiah

1. Ancestor of Ethan, a Levite and descendant of Merari. Ethan was a musician in the temple during the reign of David ([1 Chr 6:45](#)).

2. Ancestor of a group of Levites who helped rebuild the temple after the Babylonian exile ([1 Chr 9:14](#); [Neh 11:15](#)).

3. Jeduthun's son, a Levite and musician in the temple during the time of David ([1 Chr 25:3, 19](#)).

4. Head of a group of Hebronites who was given the position of overseer of Israel west of the Jordan. He was in charge of both political and religious activities ([1 Chr 26:30](#)).

5. Kemuel's son, a Levite and head of a household during the reign of David ([1 Chr 27:17](#)).

6. Chief of the Levites who participated in the Passover kept by King Josiah in the kingdom of Judah (640–609 BC; [2 Chr 35:9](#)).

7. Merarite Levite who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Ezra ([Ezr 8:19](#)).

8. Priest who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Ezra ([Ezr 8:24](#)); perhaps the same person as #7 above.

9. Parosh's son, who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his pagan wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:25](#)); possibly the same as Asibias ([1 Esd 9:26](#)).

10. Ruler over half the district of Keilah (a city of Judah in the Shephelah district of Libnah-maresheh) who participated in rebuilding the Jerusalem wall for his district after the exile ([Neh 3:17](#)).

11. Levite who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God ([Neh 10:11](#)).

12. Ancestor of Uzzi, an overseer of Levites in Jerusalem after the exile ([Neh 11:22](#)).

13. Priest and head of a household in Palestine after the exile during the time of the high priest Joiakim ([Neh 12:21](#)).

14. Chief of the Levites and a temple musician after the exile during the time of Joiakim the high priest ([Neh 12:24](#)); perhaps the same person as #11 above.

Hashabnah

One of the leaders who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile ([Neh 10:25](#)).

Hashabneiah, Hashabniah

1. Hattush's father. Hattush assisted in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem during Nehemiah's day ([Neh 3:10](#)).

2. Levite who joined with others in an invocation at the covenant-signing ceremony ([Neh 9:5](#)).

Hashbaddanah

Man, possibly of Levite origin, who stood on Ezra's left when Ezra read the law to the people ([Neh 8:4](#)).

Hashem

A warrior among the mighty men of King David ([1 Chronicles 11:34](#), see also New Living Translation marginal note). Another name for Jashen in [2 Samuel 23:32](#).

See Jashen.

Hashmonah

One of the places where the Israelites stopped during the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness ([Numbers 33:29–30](#)).

See Wilderness Wanderings.

Hashub

KJV alternate spelling of Hasshub. *See* Hasshub.

Hashubah

One of Zerubbabel's sons ([1 Chr 3:20](#)).

Hashum

1. Ancestor of a family who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:19; 10:33](#); [Neh 7:22](#)).

2. Israelite who stood to Ezra's left at the reading of the law ([Neh 8:4](#)).

3. Leader who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile ([Neh 10:18](#)).

Hashupha

KJV alternate spelling of Hasupha in [Nehemiah 7:46](#). *See* Hasupha.

Hasideans, Hasidim

Transliterations of a Hebrew word meaning “the pious.” The influence of Greek customs and ways threatened the preservation of Jewish patterns of life in the third and fourth centuries BC. Jews were required to employ the Greek language in their daily lives, and with the language came the influence of Greek culture. This process was quite apparent in Palestine during the second century BC, and the Jewish people responded in two antagonistic ways: one party was friendly to the Greeks; the other party set as their goal strict adherence to the principles of Judaism. The latter group, known as “the pious,” or Hasideans, cherished the ideals of responsible covenant observance ([Dt 7:9](#)), and in the Maccabean period became militants in their efforts to worship God according to the Mosaic law. Both the Pharisees and the Essenes may have had early roots in the Hasidim movement.

See also Essenes; Judaism; Pharisees.

Hasmonean

Family name of the Jews who instigated the Jewish revolt against the Greeks in 167 BC. *See* Judaism.

Hasrah

Variant spelling of Harhas, Shallum's grandfather, in [2 Chronicles 34:22](#) (nlt mg). *See* Harhas.

Hassenaah

Alternate name for Senaah in [Nehemiah 3:3](#). *See* Senaah.

Hassenuah

Ancestor of a Benjamite family that returned to Judah with Zerubbabel after the exile ([1 Chr 9:7](#); [Neh 11:9](#), kjv "Senuah"); perhaps alternately called Senaah ([Ezr 2:35](#); [Neh 7:38](#)), and Hassenaah ([Neh 3:3](#)). See Senaah.

Hasshub

1. Merari clan leader of Levi's tribe. Hasshub was the father of Shemaiah, a settler in Jerusalem after the return from captivity ([1 Chr 9:14](#); [Neh 11:15](#)).
2. Pahath-moab's son, who repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall and the Tower of the Ovens during the time of Nehemiah ([Neh 3:11](#)).
3. Another Hasshub who repaired the Jerusalem wall opposite his house ([Neh 3:23](#)).
4. Leader who signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God with Nehemiah and others after the exile ([Neh 10:23](#)).

Hassophereth

The ancestor of a family of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile in Babylon ([Ezra 2:55](#)). Hassophereth may be the same person called Sophereth in [Nehemiah 7:57](#).

Hasupha

Ancestor of a group of temple assistants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:43](#); [Neh 7:46](#)). He is perhaps the same person as Gishpa in [Nehemiah 11:21](#). See Gishpa, Gispa.

Hat

See Head Covering.

Hatach, Hathach

A eunuch the Persian king Ahasuerus chose to wait on Esther. Hathach brought Esther messages from Mordecai. In this way, Esther learned of Haman's

plot against the Jews ([Esther 4:5–10](#)). Hathach is sometimes spelled Hatach.

Hathath

Othniel's son and the grandson of Kenaz ([1 Chr 4:13](#)).

Hatipha

Ancestor of a family of temple servants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the captivity ([Ezr 2:54](#); [Neh 7:56](#)).

Hatita

Ancestor of a family of gatekeepers who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:42](#); [Neh 7:45](#)).

Hatred

Hatred is a strong feeling of dislike or enemy-like feelings towards someone or something. It can make a person:

- Strongly dislike someone or something
- Want to get revenge for being wronged

The Scriptures forbid people to hate others ([Leviticus 19:17–18](#)) because it leads to sin. Indeed, hatred itself is considered murder ([1 John 3:15](#)). We are called upon to let God, the holy one, avenge all wrongs ([Proverbs 20:22](#)), and we are commanded by Jesus to love our enemies ([Matthew 5:43–44](#)).

Not all hatred is bad. The Bible tells us:

- God hates evil things ([Proverbs 6:16–19](#))
- God hates evil people ([Psalm 5:5](#))

The Scripture also contains expressions such as "Yet Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" ([Malachi 1:2–3](#)). This means that God elected Jacob and not Esau to be the founder of the Jewish people. Similarly, Jesus challenged people to hate their

lives and earthly relationships if they wanted to follow him ([Luke 14:26](#)). This means that they must choose Jesus above all else.

Hattil

Forefather of a family of King Solomon's servants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:57](#); [Neh 7:59](#)).

Hattush

1. Shemaiah's son and a descendant of David ([1 Chr 3:22](#)). Hattush returned from the Babylonian exile with Ezra ([Ezr 8:3](#)).
2. Son of Hashabneiah, who helped Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem ([Neh 3:10](#)).
3. Priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel ([Neh 12:2](#)). One of his descendants signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God ([Neh 10:4](#)). His name is omitted from [Nehemiah 12:14](#) through scribal error.

Hauran

Region in northeastern Transjordan mentioned in Ezekiel's description of the borders of the land ([Ez 47:16-18](#)). In biblical times it corresponded to the modern Jebel ed-Druze of the Leja. This area is mentioned as early as the reign of Shalmaneser III of Assyria in his description of a military campaign in 841 BC. His army marched to Mt Khauranu after a siege of Damascus and before crossing Galilee to Mt Carmel.

In 733–732 BC Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria conquered Damascus and its surrounding region and organized it into provinces, one of which was Khaurina, or Hauran. The same province is mentioned in the Annals of Ashurbanipal during his campaign against the Arabians (639–637 BC).

Havilah (Person)

1. Descendant of Cush ([Gn 10:7](#); [1 Chr 1:9](#)).
2. Descendant of Shem through Joktan ([Gn 10:29](#); [1 Chr 1:23](#)).

Havilah (Place)

Land in the neighborhood of Eden, now unknown but said to be watered by the river Pishon and containing supplies of gold, bdellium, and onyx stone ([Gn 2:11-12](#)). The location of Havilah has been a matter of much dispute. It cannot have any connection with the Havilah of [1 Samuel 15:7](#), where Saul fought against certain Amalekites, because the locale of the Eden narratives is Mesopotamian and not Palestinian. On the same basis, any attempt to locate Havilah in southern Arabia, Somaliland, or India would be mistaken. The "river" Pishon may have been an irrigation canal, since Akkadian does not have a separate word for these two different bodies of water, and the Mesopotamian custom was to name large irrigation canals as if they were rivers. This would help to account for the survival of the name "Pishon" long after the canal had disappeared. The Pishon was one of four branches that the river formed once it left Eden; hence, Havilah must have been to the north, since the narrative assumes an upstream perspective. Probably Havilah was in the general area of the Shinar plain and was watered by a major irrigation canal. Both Havilah and the canal have long disappeared.

Havoth-Jair, Havvoth-Jair

Series of settlements on the edge of Bashan across the Jordan captured by Jair, according to [Numbers 32:41](#) (nlt mg). Because of their location, they fell into the allotment of the half-tribe of Manasseh. The number of these villages is given in [Joshua 13:29-30](#) as 60, and they are probably included in the cities and towns of [1 Chronicles 2:22-23](#), although only 23 cities are specified as belonging to Jair. The kjv rendering as "Bashan-havoth-jair" ([Dt 3:14](#)) makes the location as specific as in the Hebrew. In [Judges 10:4](#) a judge named Jair had 30 sons who controlled 30 cities named Havvoth-jair. But he is obviously different from the Jair of [Numbers 32:41](#). If his sons controlled only 30 settlements, he himself probably governed the remaining 30. In [1 Chronicles 2:21-24](#), which reflects a relationship between Judah and Manasseh, Jair was said to have 23 cities in Gilead when Geshur and Aram captured 60 towns from the tent settlements of Jair and Kenath and its dependencies. While the variant numbers present difficulties, the narrative itself may be the Chronicler's way of indicating Judah's sense of sovereignty over Gilead.

Hawk

A hawk is a small bird of prey. It hunts and eats other animals. Hawks lived in the Holy Land and appear in the Bible.

Most Bible references are probably about the sparrow hawk (*Accipiter nisus*). This hawk is a little bigger than a kestrel. It has a grayish-brown back and a white belly with black and brown stripes. Its wings are broad and rounded, and it has long, curved claws called talons. These help it catch prey while flying.

Hawks can turn quickly in the air. Their long tails help them change direction while chasing small birds like warblers. They hunt during the day and catch their prey in the air. Unlike kestrels, they do not catch prey on the ground. Hawks have sharp eyesight and can see clearly from far away. Their eyes are on the sides of their heads. Hawks usually build their nests high in tall trees. The same pair of hawks often returns to the same nest every year.

In this context, *prey* means the animals that hawks catch and eat.

In ancient Egypt, people honored hawks. They sometimes embalmed (preserved) the bodies of sparrow hawks. They saw the hawk as a symbol of godly power. The Egyptian god Horus was often shown with the head of a hawk.

In Israelite culture, the hawk was considered unclean and not to be eaten ([Leviticus 11:16](#); [Deuteronomy 14:15](#)). Hawks did not live in Israel all year. They stopped there while flying from the north to the south during certain times of the year. This southward migration is mentioned in [Job 39:26](#). [Isaiah 34:11](#) may refer to a hawk, but the word is unclear in that verse. Some translations use "hawk," while others say "cormorant."

See also Birds, Cormorant, Falcon, Kite.

Hay

Dried grass used as animal fodder.

Hazael

King of Syria (843?–796? BC) who came to power by assassinating his ruler, Ben-hadad ([2 Kgs 8:7–15](#)), and establishing a new dynasty. An inscription of Shalmaneser speaks of Hazael as a "son of a nobody," and mentions that he had "seized the throne." The Hebrew prophet Elijah was told to anoint Hazael as the next king of Syria ([1 Kgs 19:15](#)).

Upon becoming king, Hazael continued the policy of Ben-hadad in resisting the Assyrian military influence in Palestine. Although most of Palestine came under Assyrian control in 841 BC, Hazael was able to retain independence by withstanding the siege of Damascus. Failing in a final attempt to subdue Damascus in 837 BC, the Assyrians withdrew. This allowed Hazael the freedom to begin a series of attacks against Israel that resulted in Syrian domination of most of Palestine.

Toward the end of Jehu's reign in Israel, Hazael occupied Israelite territory in the hills of Galilee and east of the Jordan ([2 Kgs 10:32](#)). After Jehu's death, the Syrian king continually harassed Israel, captured much of Philistia, and spared Jerusalem only because Joash, king of Judah, asked for peace and was willing to pay heavy tribute ([12:17–18](#)). The Syrian oppression continued during the reign of Hazael's son until Adad-nirari III, king of Assyria, marched into Syria, causing Damascus to submit and pay heavy tribute. This took the pressure off Israel and provided opportunity for her to regain territory taken by Hazael ([13:24–25](#)).

Archaeologists found the remains of a bed at Arslan Tash (Hadathah) that may have been included in the tribute taken from Damascus. Part of the inscription on a piece of ivory inlay from the bed reads "to our Lord Hazael." Evidently there was a high level of culture in Damascus under Hazael. According to Josephus, Hazael was long remembered for his part in building temples in Damascus.

See also Syria, Syrians.

Hazaiah

Maaseiah's descendant from Judah's tribe, who was one of the leaders in Jerusalem after the exile ([Neh 11:5](#)).

Hazar-Addar

A town, along with Azmon, that marked the southern border of Judah ([Numbers 34:4](#)). It is

usually identified with Khirbet el-Qudeirat near Kadesh-barnea.

The parallel passage in [Joshua 15:3-4](#) lists four places instead of two:

- Hezron
- Addar
- Karka
- Azmon

Some have suggested that Hazar-addar and Addar are the same place. Others think they renamed it Hezron to distinguish it from Addar.

Hazar-Enan, Hazar-Enon

Place describing the northeast corner of Israel's border ([Nm 34:9-10](#)); alternately spelled Hazar-enon in [Ezekiel 47:17-18](#) and [48:1](#) (rsv). It is identified with modern Hadr at the base of Mt Hermon.

Hazar-Gaddah

City in the southern extremity of the land assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:27](#)).

Hazar-hatticon

The King James Version spelling of the place Hazer-hatticon in [Ezekiel 47:16](#).

See Hazer-hatticon.

Hazar-Shual

Simeonite city located in the southern section of Judah ([Jos 15:28; 19:3](#); [1 Chr 4:28](#)). It is also listed among those cities occupied by the Jews who returned from captivity ([Neh 11:27](#)).

Hazar-Susah, Hazar-Susim

City assigned to Simeon within the territory allotted to Judah for an inheritance ([Jos 19:5](#)); alternately called Hazar-susim ([1 Chr 4:31](#)). Solomon probably used it as a transfer point for

horses brought from Egypt for sale to the Hittites and Syrians, as suggested by its name, meaning "horse station." Hazar-susah has been identified with Sbalat Abu Susein, east of the Wadi Far'ah.

Hazarmaveth

Descendant of Shem through Joktan ([Gn 10:26; 1 Chr 1:20](#)) whose progeny lived in southern Arabia ([Gn 10:30](#)) in the Wadi Hadhramaut. Excavations there revealed a flourishing economy in the fifth century BC, based on frankincense trade. This trade, revived in the second century BC, made the area prosperous and influential.

Hazazon-Tamar

City identifiable with En-gedi in [2 Chronicles 20:2](#). During the time of Abraham, it was inhabited by Amorites who were subdued by Kedorlaomer as he and other eastern kings swept through the area ([Gn 14:7](#)). It has been suggested that it may be the Tamar that Solomon fortified ([1 Kgs 9:18](#)), placed by Ezekiel southeast of Israel ([Ez 47:18-19; 48:28](#)). Wadi Hasasa has apparently been named after the ancient site.

Hazel

KJV mistranslation for almond in [Genesis 30:37](#). *See Plants (Almond).*

Hazelelponi

KJV spelling of Hazzelelponi, Etam's daughter, in [1 Chronicles 4:3](#). *See Hazzelelponi.*

Hazer-Hatticon

Boundary marker along Israel's northern perimeter ([Ez 47:16](#)). In conjunction with the use of Hazar-enan in this context, and in comparison with [Numbers 34:9-10](#), it appears that Hazer-hatticon may represent a scribal error for Hazar-enan.

Hazerim

KJV transliteration of the corresponding Hebrew word in [Deuteronomy 2:23](#). Instead of the proper name for a city, it may be a generic term for “villages,” a rendering favored by the nlt.

Hazeroth

Camp of the Israelites during their wanderings in the desert. It was the third camp from Mt Sinai ([Nm 11:35](#); [12:16](#); [33:17-18](#); [Dt 1:1](#)). Here Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses for marrying a Cushite woman and questioned whether God spoke only through Moses ([Nm 12:1-2](#)). The site is probably modern ‘Ain Khadra, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northeast of Jebel Musa.

See also Wilderness Wanderings.

Hazezon-Tamar

KJV spelling of the city Hazazon-tamar in [Genesis 14:7](#). See Hazazon-tamar.

Haziel

Levite and son of Shimei during David’s time ([1 Chr 23:9](#)).

Hazo

Nahor’s fifth son ([Gn 22:22](#)); probably used as the name for a Nahorite clan. It has been identified with the name Hazu, which designated a mountainous region in northern Arabia mentioned in an inscription telling of Esarhaddon’s Arabian campaign.

Hazor

1. City in northern Palestine in the territory of Naphtali, called “the capital of the federation of all these kingdoms [of Canaan]” in [Joshua 11:10](#). Located five miles (8 kilometers) southwest of Lake Huleh and ten miles (16 kilometers) north of the Sea of Galilee, it is known as Tell el-Qedah (or Tell Waggas) today. At its peak it numbered 40,000 inhabitants and was by far the largest Canaanite

city in area and population. It was a great commercial center on the trade routes between Egypt and Babylon.

Hazor is first mentioned in the 19th-century BC Egyptian Execration Texts. It is given prominence in the archives of Mari (18th century BC), being the only Palestinian city to be mentioned in these documents. It is frequently mentioned in Egyptian documents from the time of Thutmose III to Ramses II, including the Tell el-Amarna correspondence.

The OT mentions Hazor a number of times. The first time concerns the conquests of Joshua in which Hazor was completely destroyed ([Jos 11:1-15](#); [12:19](#)). At that time, Hazor was a Canaanite royal city whose king, Jabin, headed a northern Canaanite federation against the invading Israelites. Hazor figures in the revolt led by Deborah and Barak against another Jabin that resulted in a rout of Jabin’s forces under Sisera ([Jgs 4-5](#)). Hazor was fortified by Solomon ([1 Kgs 9:15](#)); the remains of Solomon’s Hazor are clearly preserved. King Ahab (874–853 BC) also added to the fortifications; the elaborate water system Ahab constructed when he rebuilt the whole upper city and fortified it to withstand long siege has been found. The city was destroyed by the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser III about 732 BC, thus bringing to an end its use as a fortified Israelite city ([2 Kgs 15:29](#)). Fortresses of the Assyrian, Persian, and Hellenistic periods have been found in various strata of the city. Hazor is not mentioned again in the OT, but [1 Maccabees 11:67](#) says Jonathan encamped near the plain of Hazor where he fought against Demetrius (147 BC). The last mention of Hazor in ancient sources was by Josephus.

Hazor has been of particular interest for the light it sheds on the conquest of Palestine described in Joshua. Excavations clearly show that the great city was destroyed by fire in the last half of the 13th century BC and was never rebuilt. Archaeological finds support the biblical picture of a violent conquest under Joshua. The meager Israelite occupation in the 12th and 11th century BC was replaced by a well-fortified city during the Solomonic era.

2. Town in southern Judah ([Jos 15:23](#)). It is perhaps el-Jebariyah, on the Wadi Umm Ethnan near Bir Hafir, about nine miles (14.5 kilometers) southeast of el-Auja.

3. Another town in southern Judah, called Hazor-hadattah ([Jos 15:25](#)). The kjv translates as separate cities, "Hazor, Hadattah." See Hazor-hadattah.

4. Alternate name for Kerioth-hezron ([Jos 15:25](#)), probably situated in southern Judah. The kjv translates as separate cities, "Kerioth, and Hezron." See Kerioth #1.

5. Town north of Jerusalem occupied by Benjamites after their return from exile ([Neh 11:33](#)). The name has been preserved in modern Khirbet Hazzur, west of Beit Hanina.

6. Place somewhere in the Arabian Desert east of Palestine. Jeremiah refers to its kingdoms in his oracle of judgment against Kedar and Hazor ([Jer 49:28-33](#)).

Hazor-Hadattah

One of the cities located in the southern extremity of Judah, near the border of Edom ([Jos 15:25](#)). The kjv translates the term as two different cities, "Hazor and Hadattah." The Aramaic adjective "Hadattah" indicates this as a settlement from Hazor, but this is unsure.

Hazzeleponi

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

Head

The head is the top part of the body that contains the brain, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. The word "head" appears many times in the Bible as a physical description of this body part. In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the word for "head" is also used in a symbolic way. Often, it represents leadership, importance, or authority.

Old Testament Usage

In the Old Testament, the position of the head had special meaning. To raise one's head was seen as an act of pride: "Those who surround me proudly rear their heads" ([Psalm 140:9](#), New International Version; see also [Judges 8:28](#)). To raise someone else's head was seen as an act of honor ([Genesis 40:20](#); [Psalms 3:3](#); [27:6](#)). To lower one's head showed humility ([Isaiah 58:5](#)) or sadness ([Lamentations 2:10](#)). The Hebrew word is used to

mean the top of mountains ([Genesis 8:5](#)), buildings ([Genesis 11:4](#)) or trees ([2 Samuel 5:24](#)), and the beginning of rivers ([Genesis 2:10](#)). It was often used to show positions of power in government, the army, or families. In this way, the "head" had control over those under them ([Judges 10:18](#); [1 Samuel 15:17](#); [Psalms 18:43](#); [Isaiah 7:8-9](#); [Jer 31:7](#); [Hos 1:11](#)).

Greek Usage

Greek thinkers used the idea of a body to explain the world. They saw Zeus (their chief god) or Reason as the "head" that created and supported all parts of the world. This included heavenly beings, humans, animals, plants, and non-living things. The universe, or "body," owed its existence to the "head."

The first writings of Hippocrates come from around 460 BC. Galen, who developed Hippocrates's writings, died in AD 200. During this time, Greek doctors came to understand the head as the place of thinking. They learned that the brain receives information from the body through the eyes, ears, skin, and other parts. The brain then sends signals back to control different parts of the body.

New Testament Usage

In the New Testament, the term "head" refers to the actual human head ([Matthew 5:36](#); [6:17](#); [14:8](#); [26:7](#); [Mark 6:27](#); [14:3](#); [Luke 7:46](#); [John 13:9](#); [20:7](#)). It is also used when describing heavenly beings in the book of Revelation ([Revelation 1:14](#); [4:4](#); [12:1](#)) and animals ([Revelation 9:7](#), [17](#), [19](#); [12:3](#)).

The New Testament also uses "head" in several expressions:

- "Heap burning coals on his head" means to return kindness for evil ([Romans 12:20](#); compare [Matthew 5:44](#)).
- "Shear" or "anoint the head" refers to making a vow ([Acts 21:24](#)).
- "To lay down the head" means to sleep ([Matthew 8:20](#); [Luke 9:58](#)).

The Apostle Paul's Usage

The apostle Paul used the Old Testament's symbolic understanding of "head" to explain the relationships of God as the head of Christ, Christ as

the head of man, and man as the head of woman ([1 Corinthians 11:316](#); compare [Ephesians 5:23](#)). Based on these relationships, Paul encouraged women in Corinth to wear veils during worship. The veil symbolized a woman's authority to worship equally with men before God. The word is used again to mean "authority" to show Christ's rule over everything ([Ephesians 1:21-22](#); [Colossians 2:10](#)).

Paul used the image of the head and body to show the relationship between Jesus and his church ([Ephesians 4:15; 5:23](#); compare [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)). Jesus is not only the ruler over the church but also the force that gives it direction and unity. The church's ability to exist and its main purpose come from its "head," Jesus Christ.

Some modern scholars say that being the head does not mean having power as much as being the source, like a spring of water. They see God as Jesus's source, Jesus as the church's source, and man as woman's source.

Head Covering

Something used to cover one's head either for protection or for religious reasons.

Men wore a cap, turban, or head scarf for protection against the sun. The cap was similar to a skullcap (a cap without a brim) and was sometimes worn by the poor. The turban (mentioned in [Isaiah 3:23](#)) was made of thick linen wound around the head with the ends tucked inside the folds. The priest's turban had a plate strapped to it bearing the inscription "HOLY TO THE LORD" ([Exodus 28:36](#)). The head scarf was made from 0.8 square meters (one square yard) of cloth, folded in half to form a triangle. The sides fell over the shoulders and the V-point down the back, and it was held in place by a headband made of cord. In the second century BC, male Jews began to wear phylacteries (small leather boxes with special Scripture passages) at morning prayers and festivals. But, they did not wear them on the Sabbath.

Women often wore veils in public, although this tradition changed over the centuries. In New Testament times, women usually wore veils ([1 Corinthians 11:5-6](#)). Women also wore a cloth similar to the head scarf. But, it was of a different quality and color from that worn by men. It was often pinned over a stiff hat and set with decorations. If a woman was married, these

decorations and other important coins covered the front of her hat. These items were given as wedding gifts when she got married ([Luke 15:8-10](#)). Women also styled their hair in complex braids. Peter warned Christian women not to focus too much on their outward appearance ([1 Peter 3:3-4](#)).

Heal, Healing

To make well. The OT provides the proper background for a Christian understanding of the concept of healing. In the OT the basic point is made that God is the healer of his people. In [Exodus 15:22-26](#), after God has delivered his people from Egypt, led them through the sea, and sweetened the water at Marah, he speaks of himself as their "healer." This refers primarily to physical sustenance, but it points to the more encompassing concept of God sustaining his people in an eternal relationship with himself. In a similar manner, [Deuteronomy 32:39](#) speaks of God as the one who heals. The context in Deuteronomy implies that this healing power derives from the fact that God is God. This concept of God as the healer is echoed throughout the OT by the psalmists ([Pss 6:2; 41:4; 103:3](#)) and prophets ([Is 19:22; Jer 17:14; Hos 7:1; Zec 11:16](#)).

Jesus the Healer: Accounts in the Gospels

The NT significantly emphasizes Jesus as the healer. Mark portrays him as a teacher and healer in his opening account of Jesus' ministry in Capernaum with the healing of the demoniac, Peter's mother-in-law, the sick brought to him in the evening, and the leper ([Mk 1:21-45](#)). Indeed, healing sickness and casting out demons characterize Jesus' ministry. Mark presents in rapid succession Jesus' healing of the paralytic ([2:1-12](#)), the man with the withered hand ([3:1-6](#)), the multitudes by the sea (vv [7-12](#)), the Gerasene demoniac ([5:1-20](#)), the woman with a hemorrhage, and Jairus's daughter (vv [21-43](#)). Jesus then commissioned the Twelve to proclaim repentance, to cast out demons, and to heal the sick ([6:7-13](#)). He himself continued with healings at Gennesaret (vv [53-56](#)), casting out the unclean spirit from the daughter of the Syrophenician woman ([7:24-30](#)), healing the deaf and mute man (vv [31-37](#)), the blind man of Bethsaida ([8:22-26](#)), the boy possessed with an evil spirit ([9:14-20](#)), and blind Bartimaeus ([10:46-52](#)).

Certainly healing is an important aspect of Jesus' ministry. The healings expressed not only his compassion for those suffering but also constituted a revelation of his person. This is brought out by the climactic statement of Jesus in healing the paralytic: "that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" ([Mk 2:10](#), rsv). It also seems that Mark intended his readers to understand that the healing of the deaf and mute man ([7:31-37](#)) and the blind man of Bethsaida ([8:22-26](#)) symbolize the awakening of spiritual understanding in the disciples of who Jesus is. It is also significant that Mark has placed the healing of Bartimaeus ([10:46-52](#)) immediately after Jesus' third announcement of his own coming death (vv [32-34](#)) and the disciples' third failure to understand that his being the Messiah entailed the necessity of suffering (vv [35-45](#)).

Matthew also portrays Jesus as teaching, preaching, and healing ([Mt 4:23-25](#)), and parallels the accounts in Mark, except for the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue ([Mk 1:23-28](#)) and the blind man of Bethsaida ([8:22-26](#)). However, according to his special purpose and structure, Matthew has placed many of Jesus' healings together in a "mighty works" section ([Mt 8-9](#)), complementing the "great words" ("sermon") section (chs [5-7](#)). Matthew views Jesus' healings as directly fulfilling the OT, as he states in [8:17](#). The unique way in which the healings of [8:16](#) are spoken of as fulfilling [Isaiah 53:4](#) seems to indicate that Jesus' power over sickness derives in some way from his death for sin, which was to be accomplished at the end of his ministry.

It is also interesting that Matthew, in relating Jesus' healing of the multitudes by the sea ([Mt 12:15-21](#); cf. [Mk 3:7-12](#)), cites [Isaiah 42:1-4](#). This OT passage speaks of God's servant anointed with the Spirit to proclaim justice to the nations. As used by Matthew, the quotation explains why Jesus commanded those healed not to make him known. Jesus did not want too much publicity about himself to thwart God's plan for him as the Suffering Servant who was to bring salvation to the nations. This action demonstrates that Jesus' healings are revelations of his person. Again another quotation from Isaiah ([6:9-10](#)) in [Matthew 13:14-15](#) brings out the fact that healing is understood primarily in the spiritual sense of hearing Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God.

Luke, like Matthew and Mark, portrays Jesus preaching and healing. After the account of the birth of John and Jesus and the ministry of John the

Baptist, Luke presents Jesus preaching in Nazareth ([Lk 4:16-30](#)). Here, in the synagogue of his hometown, Jesus himself, using a quotation from [Isaiah 61:1-2](#), affirms that the Spirit has anointed him to proclaim good news and to announce release for the captives and a recovery of sight for the blind ([Lk 4:18](#)). The healing aspect of Jesus' ministry occupies an important place in the rest of the book of Luke. Indeed, Luke has all the healing incidents noted by Mark, except for those in [Mark 6:45-8:26](#). However, Luke's opening scene in Nazareth seems to underscore that Jesus' healing is to be understood, not as merely expressing Jesus' compassion for the needy, but primarily as a sign of the arrival of the kingdom of God as promised in the Scriptures.

This emphasis may be seen in the distinctively Lukan account of the commissioning of the 72 disciples ([Lk 10:1-12](#)), where Jesus instructs them to heal the sick in any city they enter and announce to the people there that the kingdom of God has come near to them (vv [8-9](#)).

The first three Gospels take up the OT understanding of God as the healer of his people and see this as fulfilled in Jesus. This fulfillment signifies the presence of God's reign in the ministry of Jesus and points to him as the one through whom God is at work in the midst of his people.

John's Gospel has only four healing incidents: the official's son ([Jn 4:46-54](#)), the man ill for 38 years ([5:1-18](#)), the man born blind (ch [9](#)), and the climactic raising of Lazarus ([11:1-44](#)). The special purpose and structure of this Gospel indicate that these incidents are carefully related to the accompanying discourses and are clearly intended as signs revealing the person of Jesus. The heightened emphasis on healings as revelatory signs in this Gospel confirms the similar intention in the first three Gospels.

Healings Done by the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles tells of the continuation of Jesus' ministry through the Spirit at work in his disciples. The primary focus in Acts is on proclamation, as [1:8](#) indicates. However, the healing of the lame beggar in Jerusalem indicates that the disciples were able to exercise the power of healing in the name of Jesus ([3:1-16](#); [4:8-16](#)). The healing is clearly intended to point to and glorify the person of Jesus and lead to faith in him ([3:12-26](#)). The balanced, twofold ministry of the disciples may be seen in the prayer of [4:29-30](#): "O Lord, hear their threats, and give your servants

great boldness in their preaching. Send your healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (nlt).

The ministry of Philip in Samaria was devoted to proclaiming Christ ([Acts 8:5](#)) and healing the sick and those with unclean spirits (v [7](#)). Peter heals Aeneas and raises Tabitha ([9:34, 40](#)), and in each case the effects are that many believe in the Lord (vv [35, 42](#)). Paul is also described as preaching the gospel ([17:2-3](#)), healing ([14:8-11; 28:8](#)), casting out spirits ([16:18](#)), and raising a dead man ([20:9-10](#)).

Healings in the Church Age

The letters of the NT say little about healing. First Corinthians speaks of the gifts of healing ([1 Cor 12:9, 28](#)). The implication is that such gifts are intended to be part of the ministry of the church, but the context indicates that not all are given such gifts (v [30](#)) and that it is God who sovereignly distributes gifts for the good of the body. James indicates that a believer who is ill should request the church to pray for his healing ([Jas 5:14-16](#); cf. [Heb 12:13](#)). The clear implication is that God is willing and able to minister to his people for healing today.

Healing, Gift of

See Spiritual Gifts.

Heart

The heart is a vital organ. "Heart" can also mean the emotional center of a person.

In Hebrew and Greek, as in modern English, "heart" refers to both a physical organ and the emotional center of a person. The Hebrew word *lēb* and the Greek word *kardia* are usually translated as "heart." Together they appear about 1,000 times in the Bible, although some translations use different words to express the meaning. These words have a wide range of meaning.

The Physical Heart

The beating of the heart is a sign of life. This idea appears in the story of Nabal, who was struck down and later died ([1 Samuel 25:37-39](#)). Food and wine can affect the heart by strengthening or gladdening

it ([Judges 19:5](#); [Psalm 104:15](#); [Acts 14:17](#)). The Bible also speaks of the heart as able to "faint" or "tremble." Because the heart is located at the center of the body, it became a natural picture for "the center" of something ([Matthew 12:40](#)).

The Psychological Heart

The Bible often uses the word *heart* to describe the center of human thought and decision-making. Some translations use the word *mind* when referring to this idea of the psychological heart. The heart can pay attention (for example, [Jeremiah 12:11](#)). The heart also:

- perceives ([John 12:40](#)),
- understands ([1 Kings 3:9](#)),
- debates ([Mark 2:6](#)),
- reflects ([Luke 2:19](#)),
- remembers ([Luke 2:51](#)),
- thinks ([Deuteronomy 8:17](#)),
- imagines ([Luke 1:51](#)),
- is wise ([Ecclesiastes 1:17](#)), and
- has technical skill ([Exodus 28:3](#)).

The heart feels many emotions, such as:

- intoxicated happiness ([1 Samuel 25:36](#)),
- gladness ([Isaiah 30:29](#)),
- joy ([John 16:22](#)),
- sorrow ([Nehemiah 2:2](#)),
- anguish ([Romans 9:2](#)),
- bitterness ([Proverbs 14:10](#)),
- anxiety ([1 Samuel 4:13](#)),
- despair ([Ecclesiastes 2:20](#)),
- love ([2 Samuel 14:1](#)),
- trust ([Psalms 112:7](#)),
- affection ([2 Corinthians 7:3](#)),
- lust ([Matthew 5:28](#)),
- callousness ([Mark 3:5](#)),
- hatred ([Leviticus 19:17](#)),
- fear ([Genesis 42:28](#)),
- jealousy ([James 3:14](#)),
- desire ([Romans 10:1](#)),
- discouragement ([Numbers 32:9](#)),
- sympathy ([Exodus 23:9](#)),
- anger ([Deuteronomy 19:6](#)), and
- indecision ([2 Chronicles 13:7](#)).

The Bible also shows the heart as the center of a person's will. The heart can:

- plan or purpose ([1 Corinthians 4:5](#)),
- lean or incline towards something ([1 Samuel 14:7](#)),
- prompt a person to act ([2 Kings 12:4](#); compare [Proverbs 4:23](#)),
- remain steadfast and firm ([Acts 11:23](#)),
- be eager and willing ([Exodus 35:22](#)),
- plan evil acts ([Acts 5:4](#)), or
- follow its "treasure" ([Matthew 6:21](#)).

The Bible describes the morally good qualities that can come from the heart. The heart can be:

- gentle and humble ([Matthew 11:29](#)),
- holy ([1 Thessalonians 3:13](#)),
- faithful ([Nehemiah 9:8](#)),
- upright ([Psalms 97:11](#)),
- pure, focused ([James 4:8](#)),
- clean ([Acts 15:8](#)),
- loving toward God ([Mark 12:30](#)),
- loving toward others ([1 Peter 1:22](#)), and
- hardened or sensitive ([Ezekiel 11:19](#)).

Scripture often stresses the evil that comes from the heart ([Genesis 6:5](#) and throughout). The heart can be:

- self-deceiving ([James 1:26](#)),
- deceitful ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)),
- greedy ([Matthew 6:19–21](#)),
- lustful ([Matthew 5:28](#)),
- arrogant or proud ([Isaiah 9:9](#)),
- rebellious against God ([Acts 7:51](#)),
- perverse ([Psalms 101:4](#)), and
- unwilling to repent ([Romans 2:5](#)).

Jesus taught that nothing makes a person more unclean than what comes from the human heart ([Mark 7:18–19](#)).

But the Bible also teaches that good can come from the heart ([Luke 6:45](#); [8:15](#)). Even when fear or circumstances prevent action, the intention of the heart still matters. A good intention is counted as good, and an evil intention is counted as evil ([1 Kings 8:18](#); [Matthew 5:28](#)).

Because the heart is complex, it can become divided. Scripture praises a heart that is whole, perfect, and true—that is, a united heart ([Genesis 20:5](#); [Psalms 86:11](#); [Acts 8:37](#)). The word *heart* often refers to the total inner self, the hidden core of who a person is ([1 Peter 3:4](#)). With the heart a person communes with God, pouring out feelings in prayer, words, and deeds ([Psalms 62:8](#); [Matthew 15:18–19](#)). The heart is the true self, different from appearance, public role, and physical presence ([1 Samuel 16:7](#); [2 Corinthians 5:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:17](#)). This inner self has its own nature, character, and disposition (translated as "mind" in [Daniel 4:16](#); [7:4](#); see also [Matthew 12:33–37](#)).

The Spiritual Heart

The heart is especially important in biblical faith. The hidden self, which is a mystery to others, is fully known by God and by Christ ([Jeremiah 17:10](#); [Luke 9:47](#); [Romans 8:27](#)). The heart is where we understand God ([2 Corinthians 4:6](#)). The heart's condition affects how we see God ([Matthew 5:8](#)). We speak to God from the heart ([Psalm 27:8](#)). The heart is where God dwells within us ([2 Corinthians 1:22](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Ephesians 3:17](#)).

On the other hand, moral evil in the heart is understood in the Bible as sin against God. A heart without understanding becomes darkened, often hiding idolatry, and is far from God. Such a heart is "not right" before God ([Deuteronomy 29:18–19](#); [Matthew 15:8](#); [Acts 8:21](#); [Romans 1:21](#)). Yet the Lord does not reject a heart that is broken and contrite ([Psalms 51:17](#)). When a person turns their heart toward God, God promises to make it sensitive to his ways, renewed, and purified ([Deuteronomy 4:29](#); [2 Kings 23:25](#); [Psalms 51:10](#); [Joel 2:13](#); [Ezekiel 36:25–27](#)). God's law is then written on the heart as an inward guide and motivation ([Jeremiah 31:33](#); [Hebrew 8:10](#); see also [2 Corinthians 3:2–3](#)).

In Christian teaching, this transformation begins when a person believes the good news from an "honest and good heart." Such a heart is like good soil that produces fruit when the word of God is planted in it ([Luke 8:15](#); [Romans 10:9](#)). A true heart comes closer to God and loves God with all its mind, emotions, and will ([Luke 10:27](#); [Hebrews 10:22](#)).

God then gives strength, reward, renewal, grace, peace, and joy to the heart ([Psalms 73:26](#); [Isaiah 57:15](#); [Acts 2:46](#); [Philippians 4:7](#); [Hebrews 13:9](#)). In this way, the ancient ideal becomes possible again: to be a person after God's own heart ([1 Samuel 13:14](#); [Acts 13:22](#)).

Hearth

See Homes and Dwellings.

Heath

Type of evergreen shrub; kJV mistranslation for shrub or bush in [Jeremiah 17:6](#) and [48:6](#). See Plants (Juniper).

Heave Offering

Portions of the sacrifices and offerings set aside for the Lord and for the priests. See Offerings and Sacrifices (Fellowship Offerings).

Heaven

In the Bible, heaven can mean two different things. First, it can mean the sky above us, where we see clouds, birds, and stars. Second, it can mean God's special home (a spiritual place where God lives).

The original Hebrew word for heaven is interesting because its dual form suggests there might be two heavens. Some scholars think this could point to the two different meanings we just discussed: the physical heaven (the sky) and the spiritual heaven (where God is). However, others think this word form was just an old way of writing about more than one thing.

Heaven in the Old Testament

The Sky and Weather

The Old Testament writers viewed the physical heavens (sky) as a "firmament," an arch above the earth supported on foundations and pillars ([2 Samuel 22:8](#)). Rain fell through its doors ([Psalm 78:23](#)).

[Psalms 8](#) and [19:1–6](#) are descriptions of heaven. The Old Testament describes heaven as the region of:

- The clouds ([Psalm 147:8](#))
- Winds ([Zechariah 2:6](#))
- Rain ([Deuteronomy 11:11](#))
- Thunder ([1 Samuel 2:10](#))
- Dew ([Deuteronomy 33:13](#))
- Frost ([Job 38:29](#))
- Birds ([Genesis 1:26, 30](#))

It is also the location of destructive forces like:

- Hail ([Joshua 10:11](#))
- Fire and sulfur ([Genesis 19:24](#)).

The New Testament continues this description of the sky as where the weather happens, with clouds and storms ([Matthew 16:2](#); [Luke 4:25](#)). The sky is also where birds fly ([Luke 9:58](#)).

Space and the Heavenly Bodies

The Israelite idea of the heavens includes space, which consists of the universe. The heavenly bodies in the heavens were seen as God's creations which did not have their own power. These include:

- The sun
- The moon
- The planets
- The stars (seen as lights in the expanse of the sky; [Genesis 1:14](#); [15:5](#))

They were not worthy of worship because God made humans superior to them. The Israelites were not allowed to worship these heavenly bodies ([Exodus 20:4](#)) or the gods and goddesses who represented them ([Jeremiah 44:17–25](#)). They were also not allowed to try to tell the future through the stars ([Isaiah 47:13](#)). This lack of belief made the Israelites unique. Israel believed the heavenly bodies were made by God, while other nations worshiped them.

The Three Heavens

The Bible talks about the "highest heaven" ([Deuteronomy 10:14](#); also see [1 Kings 8:27](#); [Psalms](#)

[68:33](#); [148:4](#)). Some older translations like the King James Version use the phrase "heaven of heavens" instead. This was their way of translating an ancient Hebrew expression that emphasizes the most important heaven where God lives.

In one of his letters, Paul wrote about being taken up to "the third heaven" ([2 Corinthians 12:2](#)). Some people have connected this with ancient Greek ideas about three different levels of heaven. The Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages also taught about three heavens:

1. A heaven for water and air (called *Coelum Aqueum* in Latin)
2. A heaven for the stars (called *Coelum Sidereum* in Latin)
3. A heaven for God's throne (called *Coelum Empyreum* in Latin)

People who believe in this idea think of the three heavens as:

1. The sky where birds fly and clouds form
2. Space, where we see the sun, moon, and stars
3. The highest heaven where God lives and where believers go after death

Heaven in the New Testament

Jesus and Heaven

Jesus taught that heaven is where God lives ([Matthew 6:9](#)). While Jesus was on earth, he often said that he had come from heaven ([John 3:13](#); [6:33–51](#)). Three times, God's voice spoke from heaven to confirm what Jesus said ([Matthew 3:16–17](#); [17:5](#); [John 12:28](#)).

Worship in Heaven

Heaven is where the true holy place of worship exists. The tabernacle that was built on earth was just a copy of this heavenly one ([Hebrews 8:1–5](#)). This is the heaven Paul wrote about when he mentioned "the third heaven" ([2 Corinthians 12:2](#)). Sometimes when the Bible uses the word "heaven," it is actually referring to God himself (compare [Matthew 23:22](#); [Luke 15:18](#)).

Jesus's Return from Heaven

After Jesus went up to heaven, angels told his followers that he would come back from heaven someday ([Acts 1:6-11](#)). The apostle Paul later wrote about this in his letters ([1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#); [Ephesians 4:7-16](#); [1 Timothy 3:16](#)). This teaching became an important part of what Christians believe, as shown in the Apostles' Creed (an early statement of Christian beliefs).

The New Testament often talks about Jesus being in heaven with God. This is a key part of the good news about Jesus. The Bible teaches that Jesus is now at God's right hand (in the place of highest honor), where he prays for those who believe in him ([Hebrews 7:25](#); compare [Mark 14:62](#)).

Citizens of Heaven

Paul teaches that when Jesus returns from heaven, he will change believers' bodies to be like his own glorious body ([Philemon 3:20-21](#)). Believers need these heavenly bodies because they are citizens of heaven.

When the Bible talks about believers being "citizens of heaven," it means they are like people who live in one country but follow the laws of their home country ([Acts 22:28](#)). This means that Christians should follow God's ways as shown in the Bible, even when the world follows different standards.

Heavenly Blessings

God has joined believers with Christ and tells them to "strive for the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" ([Colossians 3:1](#)). Christ blesses his followers from heaven "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms" ([Ephesians 1:3](#)). The expression "in the heavenly realms" is only used in Ephesians ([Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12](#)). This teaches us that spiritual blessings are not just for the future. Believers can experience them now through faith. This is why the Bible says believers are already sharing in the "heavenly calling" ([Hebrews 3:1; 6:4](#)).

The Future of Heaven

While believers wait for Jesus to return, they look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, with a new Jerusalem. The Bible says this will be a wonderful place where there will be no tears, sadness, pain, death, or darkness, because Jesus, the Son of God, will be there ([Revelation 21:1-4, 27](#);

[22:1-5](#)). There will be no marriage in this new life after death ([Luke 20:27-38](#)).

In the Old Testament, two people went directly to heaven without dying:

- Enoch ([Genesis 5:22-24](#); [Hebrews 11:5](#)) and
- Elijah ([2 Kings 2:11](#))

Later, Paul wrote about visiting the third heaven, and John was also called up to heaven ([Revelation 4:1](#)), which God plans to fill with people (compare [Revelation 19:1](#)). All believers will eventually live in heaven with new resurrection bodies. They will receive these bodies when Jesus comes back for them ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#); [Revelation 19:1-4](#)). At that time, Jesus will also give special rewards to his followers ([Matthew 5:12](#); [1 Corinthians 9:25](#); [2 Corinthians 5:1](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [James 1:12](#); [1 Peter 1:4; 5:4](#); [Revelation 2:10; 4:10](#)).

See also "Abraham's Bosom"; New Heavens and New Earth; Paradise.

Heavenlies, the

Term unique to Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, also translated "heavenly places" or "realms," and referring to the super earthly upper regions of the air. Since the term "in the heavenlies" carried with it associations from pagan cultic vocabulary, it was perhaps used by the apostle in an apologetic manner.

"The heavenly places" indicates the sphere where the risen Christ has been seated at the right hand of God in a position of authority, power, and dominion, reigning as conqueror and ruler high above the heavenly world ([Eph 1:20-21](#)). Other usage points to the idea of the realized hope of those who are in Christ, in that believers have already been blessed with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies" (v 3) and are raised with Christ, seated with him in the heavenlies ([2:6](#)). The church will make known the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies ([3:10](#)). She will thus participate in the victory over the spiritual hosts of wickedness, also present in the heavenly places ([6:12](#)).

See also Heaven; Principalities and Powers.

Heavens, New

See New Heavens and New Earth.

Heber

1. A descendant of Jacob through Asher and Beriah ([Genesis 46:17](#)) and father of the family of Heberites ([Numbers 26:45](#); [1 Chronicles 7:31-32](#)).
2. Husband of Jael, the woman who sneakily killed Sisera, known as Heber the Kenite ([Judges 4:11-21](#); [5:24](#)).
3. Judahite, Mered's son and the father of Soco ([1 Chronicles 4:18](#)).
4. Elpaal's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chronicles 8:17](#)).
5. The King James Version spelling for Eber in [1 Chronicles 5:13](#); [8:22](#); and [Luke 3:35](#). *See Eber #1, #2, #4.*

Heberites

Descendants of Heber in the family of the patriarch Jacob ([Numbers 26:45](#)).

See Heber #1.

Hebrew Language

Language of the Jewish people. The name Hebrew is not applied by the OT to its own language, although the NT does use the name that way. In the OT, "Hebrew" means the individual or people who used the language. The language itself is called "the language of Canaan" ([Is 19:18](#), nlt mg) or "the language of Judah" ([Neh 13:24](#)).

Preview

- Origin and History
- Family of Languages
- Character
- Hebrew Script and Grammar
- Style
- Legacy

Origin and History

In the Middle Ages a common view was that Hebrew was the primitive language of humankind. Even in colonial America, Hebrew was still referred to as "the mother of all languages." Linguistic scholarship has now made this theory untenable.

Hebrew is actually one of several Canaanite dialects that included Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Moabite. Other Canaanite dialects (for example, Ammonite) existed but have left insufficient inscriptions for scholarly investigation. Such dialects were already present in the land of Canaan before its conquest by the Israelites.

Until about 1974, the oldest witnesses to Canaanite language were found in the Ugarit and Amarna records dating from the 14th and 15th centuries BC. A few Canaanite words and expressions appeared in earlier Egyptian records, but the origin of Canaanite has been uncertain. Between 1974 and 1976, however, nearly 17,000 tablets were dug up at Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla) in northern Syria, written in a previously unknown Semitic dialect. Because they possibly date back to 2400 BC (perhaps even earlier), many scholars think that language may be the "Old Canaanite" that gave rise to Hebrew. By 1977, when another 1,000 tablets were unearthed, only about 100 inscriptions from Ebla had been reported on. Languages change over a long period of time. For example, the English used in the time of Alfred the Great (ninth century AD) seems almost like a foreign language to contemporary English speakers. Although Hebrew was no exception to the general principle, like other Semitic languages it remained remarkably stable over many centuries. Poems such as the Song of Deborah ([Jgs 5](#)) tended to preserve the language's oldest form. Changes that took place later in the long history of the language are shown in the presence of archaic words (often preserved in poetic language) and a general difference in style. For example, the book of Job reflects a more archaic style than the book of Esther.

Various Hebrew dialects apparently existed side by side in OT times, as reflected in the episode involving the pronunciation of the Hebrew word "shibboleth/sibboleth" ([Jgs 12:4-6](#)). It seems that the Israelites east of the Jordan pronounced the initial letter with a strong "sh" sound, while those in Canaan gave it the simple "s" sound. Scholars have also identified features of Hebrew that could be described as reflecting the northern or southern parts of the country.

Family of Languages

Hebrew belongs to the Semitic family of languages; these languages were used from the Mediterranean Sea to the mountains east of the Euphrates River valley, and from Armenia (Turkey) in the north to the southern extremity of the Arabian peninsula. Semitic languages are classified as Southern (Arabic and Ethiopic), Eastern (Akkadian), and Northwestern (Aramaic, Syriac, and Canaanite—Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Moabite).

Character

Hebrew, like the other early Semitic languages, concentrates on observation more than reflection. That is, things are generally observed according to their appearance as phenomena, not analyzed as to their inward being or essence. Effects are observed but not traced through a series of causes.

Hebrew's vividness, conciseness, and simplicity make the language difficult to translate fully. It is amazingly concise and direct. For example, [Psalm 23](#) contains 55 words; most translations require about twice that many to translate it. The first two lines, with slashes separating the individual Hebrew words in the original, read:

The Lord/[is] my shepherd/

I shall want/not

Thus eight English words are required to translate four Hebrew words.

Hebrew does not use separate, distinct expressions for every shade of thought. Someone has said, "The Semites have been the quarries whose great rough blocks the Greeks have trimmed, polished, and fitted together. The former gave religion; the latter philosophy."

Hebrew is a pictorial language in which the past is not merely described but verbally painted. Not just a landscape is presented but a moving panorama. The course of events is reenacted in the mind's sight. (Note the frequent use of "behold," a Hebraism carried over to the NT.) Such common Hebraic expressions as "he arose and went," "he opened his lips and spoke," "he lifted up his eyes and saw," and "he lifted up his voice and wept" illustrate the pictorial strength of the language.

Many profound theological expressions of the OT are tightly bound up with Hebrew language and grammar. Even the most sacred name of God himself, "the Lord" (Yahweh), is directly related to the Hebrew verb "to be" (or perhaps "to cause to

be"). Many other names of persons and places in the OT can best be understood only with a working knowledge of Hebrew.

Hebrew Script and Grammar

Alphabet and Script

The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 consonants; signs for vowels were devised and added late in the language's history. The origin of the alphabet is unknown. The oldest examples of a Canaanite alphabet were preserved in the Ugaritic cuneiform alphabet of the 14th century BC.

The old style of writing the letters is called the Phoenician or paleo-Hebrew script. It is the predecessor of the Greek and other Western alphabets. The script used in modern Hebrew Bibles (Aramaic or square script) came into vogue after Israel's exile into Babylon (sixth century BC). The older style was still used sporadically in the early Christian era on coins and for writing God's name (as in the Dead Sea Scrolls). Hebrew has always been written right to left.

Consonants

The Canaanite alphabet of the Phoenician and Moabite languages had 22 consonants. The older Canaanite language reflected in Ugaritic had more consonants. Arabic also preserves some Old Canaanite consonants found in Ugaritic but missing in Hebrew.

Vowels

In the original consonantal Hebrew script, vowels were simply understood by the writer or reader. On the basis of tradition and context, the reader would supply whatever vowels were needed, much as is done in English abbreviations ("bldg." for "building"; "blvd." for "boulevard"). After the collapse of the nation in AD 70, the dispersion of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem led to Hebrew's becoming a "dead language," no longer widely spoken. Loss of traditional pronunciation and understanding then became more of a possibility, so Jewish scribes felt a need for permanently establishing the vowel sounds.

First, vowel letters called "mothers of reading" (*matres lectionis*) were added. These were consonants used especially to indicate long vowels. These were added before the Christian era, as the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal.

Later (about the fifth century AD), the scribes called Masoretes added vowel signs to indicate short vowels. At least three different systems of vowel signs were employed at different times and places. The text used today represents the system devised by Masoretic scribes who worked in the city of Tiberias. The vowels, each of which may be long or short, are indicated by dots or dashes placed above or below the consonants. Certain combinations of dots and dashes represent very short vowel sounds, or "half-vowels."

Linkage

Hebrew joins together many words that in Western languages would be written separately. Some prepositions (be-, "in"; le-, "to"; ke-, "like") are prefixed directly to the noun or verb that they introduce, as are the definite article ha-, "the" and the conjunction wa-, "and." Suffixes are used for pronouns, either in the possessive or accusative relationship. The same word may simultaneously have both a prefix and a suffix.

Nouns

Hebrew has no neuter gender; everything is masculine or feminine. Inanimate objects may be either masculine or feminine, depending on the formation or character of the word. Usually, abstract ideas or words indicating a group are feminine. Nouns are derived from roots and are formed in various ways, either by vowel modification or by adding prefixes or suffixes to the root. Contrary to Greek and many Western languages, compound nouns are not characteristic of Hebrew.

The Hebrew plural is formed by adding -im for masculine nouns (*seraphim, cherubim*) and -oth for feminine nouns.

Three original case endings indicating nominative, genitive, and accusative have dropped away during the evolution of Hebrew. To compensate for the lack of case endings, Hebrew resorts to various indicators. Indirect objects are indicated by the preposition le-, "to"; direct objects by the objective sign 'eth; the genitive relationship by putting the word before the genitive in the "construct state," or shortened form.

Adjectives

Hebrew is deficient in adjectives. "A double heart" is indicated in the original Hebrew by "a heart and a heart" ([Ps 12:2](#)), and "two differing weights" is

actually "a stone and a stone" ([Dt 25:13](#)); "the whole royal family" is "the seed of the kingdom" ([2 Kgs 11:1](#)).

Adjectives that do exist in Hebrew have no comparative or superlative forms. Relationship is indicated by the preposition "from." "Better than you" is expressed literally in Hebrew "good from you." "The serpent was more subtle than any other beast" is literally "the serpent was subtle from every beast" ([Gn 3:1](#)). The superlative is expressed by several different constructions. The idea "very deep" is literally "deep, deep" ([Ecl 7:24](#)); the "best song" is literally "song of songs" (compare "king of kings"); "holiest" is literally "holy, holy, holy" ([Is 6:3](#)).

Verbs

Hebrew verbs are formed from a root usually consisting of three letters. From such roots, verbal forms are developed by a change of vowels or by adding prefixes or suffixes. The root consonants provide the semantic backbone of the language and give a stability of meaning not characteristic of Western languages. The vowels are quite flexible, giving Hebrew considerable elasticity.

Hebrew verb usage is not characterized by precise definition of tenses. Hebrew tenses, especially in poetry, are largely determined by context. The two tense formations are the perfect (completed action) and imperfect (incomplete action). The imperfect is ambiguous. It represents the indicative mood (present, past, future) but may also represent such moods as the imperative, optative, and jussive or cohortative. A distinctive usage of the perfect tense is the "prophetic perfect," where the perfect form represents a future event considered so sure that it is expressed as past (e.g., see [Is 5:13](#), kJV).

Style

Vocabulary

Most Hebrew roots originally expressed some physical action or denoted some natural object. The verb "to decide" originally meant "to cut"; "to be true" originally meant "to be firmly fixed"; "to be right" meant "to be straight"; "to be honorable" meant "to be heavy."

Abstract terms are alien to the character of Hebrew; for example, biblical Hebrew has no specific words for "theology," "philosophy," or "religion." Intellectual or theological concepts are

expressed by concrete terms. The abstract idea of sin is represented by such words as “to miss the mark” or “crooked” or “rebellion” or “trespass” (“to cross over”). Mind or intellect is expressed by “heart” or “kidneys,” and emotion or compassion by “bowels” (see [Is 63:15](#), kjv). Other concrete terms in Hebrew are “horn” for strength or vigor, “bones” for self, and “seed” for descendants. A mental quality is often depicted by the part of the body thought of as its most appropriate embodiment. Strength can be represented by “arm” or “hand,” anger by “nostril,” displeasure by “falling face,” acceptance by “shining face,” thinking by “say.”

Some translators have attempted to represent a Hebrew word always by the same English word, but that leads to serious problems. Sometimes there is considerable disagreement on the exact shade of meaning of a Hebrew word in a given passage. A single root frequently represents a variety of meanings, depending on usage and context. The word for “bless” can also mean “curse, greet, favor, praise.” The word for “judgment” is used also for “justice, verdict, penalty, ordinance, duty, custom, manner.” The word for “strength” or “power” also means “army, virtue, worth, courage.”

Further ambiguity arises from the fact that some Hebrew consonants stand for two different original consonants that have merged in the evolution of the language. Two words that on the surface appear to be identical may be traced back to two different roots. For an example of this phenomenon in English, compare “bass” (a fish) with “bass” (a vocalist).

Syntax

Hebrew syntax is relatively uncomplicated. Few subordinating conjunctions (“if,” “when,” “because,” etc.) are used; sentences are usually coordinated by using the simple conjunction “and.” English translations of biblical texts generally try to show the logical connection between successive sentences, even though it is not always clear. In [Genesis 1:2-3:1](#), all but three of the 56 verses begin with “and,” yet the nlt translates that conjunction variously as “then” ([1:3](#)), “so” ([v 27](#)), “so” ([2:1](#)), and “instead” ([v 6](#)).

Hebrew style is enlivened by use of direct discourse. The narrator does not simply state that “such and such a person said that . . .” (indirect discourse). Instead, the parties speak for themselves (direct discourse), creating a freshness that remains even after repeated reading.

Poetry

Hebrew poetry uses a variety of rhetorical devices. Some of them—such as assonance, alliteration, and acrostics—can be appreciated only in the original Hebrew. But parallelism, the most important characteristic of Hebrew poetry, is evident even in English translation. Among the many forms of parallelism possible, four common categories exist: (1) synonymous, a repeating style in which parallel lines say the same thing in different words; (2) antithetic, a contrasting style in which contrary thoughts are expressed; (3) compleptive, with a completing parallel line filling out the thought of the first; (4) climactic, in which an ascending parallel line picks up something from the first line and repeats it. Numerous other forms of parallelism enrich Hebrew poetry. The possible variations of parallelism are almost endless.

Figures of Speech

Hebrew abounds in expressive figures of speech based on the Hebrew people’s character and way of life. Certain odd but well-known expressions found in English literature come from the Hebrew style, like “apple of his eye” ([Dt 32:10](#); [Ps 17:8](#); [Prv 7:2](#); [Zec 2:8](#)) and “skin of my teeth” ([Job 19:20](#)). Some of the more striking Hebrew modes of expression are hard to transfer into English, such as “to uncover the ear,” meaning “to disclose, reveal.” Others are more familiar, like “to stiffen the neck” for “to be stubborn, rebellious”; “to bend or incline the ear” for “to listen closely.”

Legacy

English and a number of other modern languages have been enriched by Hebrew. English even contains a number of Hebrew “loan words.” Some of these have had wide influence (“amen,” “hallelujah,” “jubilee”). Many Hebrew proper nouns are used in modern languages for persons and places, such as David, Jonathan/John, Miriam/Mary, Bethlehem (the name of several towns and cities in the United States).

Many common Hebrew expressions have been unconsciously accepted into English figures of speech, as in “mouth of the cave” and “face of the earth.” Some figures, such as “east of Eden,” have been used as titles for books and films.

Hebrews, Letter to the

One of the most profound and enigmatic books in the NT. The identity of its author, the time of its writing, and the people and place to which it was sent are all shrouded in mystery. Yet, in spite of the uncertainty, Hebrews remains one of the most timely and relevant books in the Bible. Some 300 years ago John Owen, the English Puritan, appropriately remarked: "No doubt the Epistle next in importance to Romans is this to the Hebrews." The letter is both doctrinal and practical, theological and pastoral. In short, it builds a compelling case for the superiority of Christianity. Hebrews also reflects the impassioned concern of a pastor's heart. Those who have experienced God's ultimate work of grace in Christ are urged to hold fast to God's final word of revelation in his Son.

Unlike most other NT epistles, Hebrews does not begin like a letter. There is no introductory salutation, the writer is not identified, and no mention is made of those to whom the document is addressed. The author characterizes the work as a "word of exhortation" ([13:22](#), rsv), which suggests a sermon or oral homily (cf. [Acts 13:15](#)). Nonetheless, its conclusion is that of a conventional letter ([Heb 13:22-25](#)). Some have detected a gradual transition in the document from an essay to a more specifically epistolary form (cf. [2:1](#); [4:1](#); [13:22-25](#)). The evidence thus suggests that the author may have cast the original homiletic "word of exhortation" into letter form when the need to communicate in writing with his Christian friends became urgent.

Preview

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

Author

Who wrote the book is not directly stated in the letter. Since the late second century, various authorities have linked the document with the apostle Paul. Clement of Alexandria (d. 220) theorized that Paul wrote the letter in Hebrew for Jews and that Luke translated it into Greek.

However, this suggestion has not been widely received by modern scholars. Clement's pupil Origen (d. 254) stated more generally that the thoughts of the letter are Pauline but that the style is unlike that of the known writings of the apostle. Other early authorities, such as Jerome (d. 419) and Augustine (d. 430), persuaded that canonicity demanded apostolic authorship, likewise affirmed that Paul was the author.

Yet a number of factors argue against the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. The anonymity of the letter is contrary to the consistent pattern of Paul's introduction in the opening salutation of his letters. Moreover, [Hebrews 2:3](#) indicates the writer was discipled by eyewitnesses of the Lord. Yet Paul insists that his knowledge of Christ was gained from a firsthand encounter with the risen Christ (cf. [Gal 1:12](#)). F. F. Bruce evaluates the authorship of Hebrews as follows: "We may say with certainty that the thought of the epistle is not Paul's, the language is not Paul's, and the technique of OT quotations is not Paul's."

Early Christian tradition suggests that Barnabas may have written Hebrews. According to Tertullian (d. 220), many early authorities believed that Barnabas was responsible for the letter. [Acts 4:36](#) (asv) speaks of him as a "son of exhortation" (cf. [Heb 13:22](#)). Furthermore, as a Levite, Barnabas would have been familiar with the Jewish sacrificial ritual so prominent in the letter.

Luther was the first to suggest that Hebrews may have been penned by Apollos, "an excellent man of learning, who had been a disciple of the apostles and learned much from them, and who was very well versed in Scripture." As a native of Alexandria ([Acts 18:24](#)), Apollos would have been familiar with the typological interpretation evident in Hebrews. Clearly Apollos was the sort of man who was qualified to write Hebrews.

Other names have been suggested as possible authors. Calvin surmised that either Luke or Clement of Rome was responsible for the letter. It is noted that the Greek of Hebrews resembles the language and style of the third Gospel and Acts. Others theorize that Hebrews may have been written by Silas, a Jewish Christian from Jerusalem who would have been thoroughly familiar with the Levitical ritual. Silas is described as one of "the church leaders" ([Acts 15:22](#)). He was a coworker with Paul in the gentile mission, and apparently was known in Rome as well as in Jerusalem ([1 Pt 5:12-13](#)).

In conclusion, it is probable that the author of Hebrews was a second-generation Jewish Christian, a master of classical Greek whose Bible was the Septuagint, conversant with first-century Alexandrian philosophy, and a creative apologist for the Christian faith. As to the identity of that author, we can affirm no more than Origen in the third century: "But as to who actually wrote the Letter, God alone knows."

Background

The very early title of the letter, "To Hebrews," suggests that the book concerns Jewish Christians living in the Dispersion. The letter itself offers a few hints of the historical circumstances surrounding its composition. Not long after becoming Christians, the readers of the letter were exposed to severe persecution ([Heb 10:32-36](#)). During their trial, the new believers endured imprisonment, confiscation of personal property, and public ridicule. Yet the persecution had not been fatal; they had not yet been called upon to lay down their lives in martyrdom ([12:4](#)). Amid the excitement of their newfound faith in Christ, they had demonstrated practical concern and love by ministering to fellow believers in need ([6:10](#)) and comforting others who had been harassed for their faith ([10:34](#)).

But since the time of those earlier trials, the readers had made little progress in Christian maturity ([5:11-13](#)). Moreover, in the face of a new wave of persecution, and despondent over an apparent delay in the Lord's coming, the believers had begun to waver and abandon hope. Indeed, they threatened to renounce Jesus Christ and to revert back to the security of the Jewish religion that enjoyed the protection of Roman law.

Thus we read that because of the strange, new teachings of certain Judaizers who sought to draw them back to their former religion ([13:9](#)), the wavering believers had neglected to assemble together ([10:25](#)) and had lost confidence in their spiritual leaders ([13:17](#)). Faced with the possibility that these Jewish Christians might abandon their faith altogether, the writer sternly warns them of the tragic consequences of renouncing the Son ([6:4-6; 10:26-31; 13:12-19](#)) and urges them to renew their commitment to Christ, God's foremost and final revelation.

Date

Lacking firm information as to the author and recipients of the letter, no certainty exists as to the

date of the writing. We have noted that the author of Hebrews, and probably his readers as well, had been discipled by those who were personally acquainted with Jesus ([2:3](#)). Further evidence in the letter suggests that Paul probably was not alive. Timothy, Paul's younger associate, was still living ([13:23](#)).

The absence of any mention in Hebrews of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple is significant for dating the letter. In terms of his argument that the old covenant had passed away and the legal priesthood had been superseded, the writer would scarcely have omitted mention of the temple's destruction had he written the letter later than AD 70. [Hebrews 9:6-10](#) and [10:1-4, 11-14](#) plainly suggest that the Jewish sacrifices were still being offered. Hence, it may be supposed with some degree of certainty that the letter was written prior to AD 70. If it was written after Paul's death, that would put it after AD 67, the traditional date of his execution. Thus, Hebrews may have been written in the period AD 67-70.

Origin and Destination

The place from which Hebrews was written is also uncertain. Some manuscripts of the letter bear the subscription "written from Rome" or "written from Italy." Such notations are educated deductions drawn from the statement "The Christians from Italy send you their greetings" ([13:24](#)). Most probably this indicates that the writer is extending greetings to a church in Italy on behalf of Italian Christians associated with him in another land, possibly Asia. Nevertheless, we cannot locate the point of origin with any certainty.

It has been suggested that the letter was written to a group of Jewish converts to Christianity. Yet the precise community to which it was sent is a matter of debate. Opinions vary from Judea to Spain. Tradition has it that Hebrews was directed to Jewish Christians living in Palestine. But against a Palestinian destination it may be argued: (1) the readers had had no personal contact with Jesus ([2:3](#)), an unlikely event for mid-first-century residents of Palestine; (2) the statement in [12:4](#) that his readers had not yet given their lives could hardly be said of Palestinian Christians of the period; (3) the generosity of the believers ([10:34; 13:16](#)) was inconsistent with the poverty of the Jerusalem church; and (4) the general tone of the letter is Hellenistic rather than rabbinical.

Other proposals for the destination of Hebrews include (1) Caesarea, on the supposition of Lukan

authorship; (2) Syrian Antioch or Cyprus, assuming Barnabas wrote the letter; (3) Ephesus, in the light of the conversion of many Jews during Paul's ministry in that city; (4) Colosse, noting certain similarities between the Colossian heresy and the false beliefs of the "Hebrews"; and (5) Alexandria, because of the apparent influence of the philosopher Philo Judaeus in the letter.

The thesis that Hebrews was directed to a group of Jewish Christians in Rome has found favor with a number of scholars. Arguments in support of a Roman destination include the following facts: (1) The letter was first known in Rome no later than AD 96. (2) [Romans 11:13, 18](#) suggests that the church at Rome consisted of a Jewish-Christian minority. (3) References to persecution and suffering endured by the readers ([Heb 10:32–33](#); [12:4](#)) are consistent with known repressive measures exacted by the Roman authorities. (4) There is a good possibility that saints who "come from Italy" would convey greetings to their brethren in Rome. (5) The Jewish community in Rome preserved certain features of nonconformist or sectarian Judaism that would explain several notable similarities between the theology and praxis of the Qumran community and that expressed in Hebrews.

It is likely that the letter was addressed to a small subgroup within a local church. The exhortation in [5:12](#) (rsv)—"by this time you ought to be teachers"—hardly would have been relevant to an entire congregation. [Hebrews 13:7, 24](#) lends further support to the theory that the letter was sent to a small group, perhaps to a "house church" within a larger assembly.

Tentatively, one might conclude that the addressees were converts from Judaism who dwelt in the Dispersion. Hence they were familiar with OT Judaism and were acquainted with the religious philosophy of the Greek world. Possibly the readers comprised a house fellowship that tended to disassociate itself from the parent group ([10:25](#)). The existence of such house churches in Rome is confirmed by [Romans 16:5, 14–15](#).

Purpose

In response to the threat that his Jewish-Christian friends might renounce Christianity and revert to Judaism, the writer by a "word of exhortation" ([13:22](#)) communicated to them the finality of the Christian revelation. He sought also to inform his despondent, vacillating readers that Christ, the object of God's final revelation, is vastly superior to

the greatest of Judaism's heroes. The author, in addition, affirmed the heavenly and eternal character of the salvation secured by Christ. Whereas the legal sacrificial system was powerless to effect the remission of sin, Christ the eternal High Priest "is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him" ([7:25](#), nlt).

In short, the writer commended to his readers the need for patient endurance amid the persecution and sufferings to which the heirs of eternal salvation are inevitably exposed. Just as Jesus, the forerunner of our faith, suffered and patiently endured in anticipation of eternal reward, so ought harassed, oppressed believers "take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs" ([12:12](#), nlt) in anticipation of their reception in that eternal "kingdom that cannot be destroyed" ([12:28](#), nlt).

The author's final purpose for writing was to proclaim the fearful judgment that awaits those who repudiate Jesus Christ. Since "our God is a consuming fire" ([12:29](#), nlt), "what makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation" ([2:3](#), nlt)?

Content

Next to Romans, Hebrews is the most doctrinal book in the NT. The writer develops a series of weighty arguments to demonstrate the superiority of the gospel of Christ to the religion of Judaism. Since Jesus is final both as to his person and his work, Christianity is the ultimate and normative faith. The book's particularism runs counter to the spirit of the modern world.

The Superiority of the Son to Former Revelation ([1:1–4](#))

The writer acknowledges that God revealed himself to the prophets of old in many ways—through dreams, visions, audible speech, and mighty acts. But "in these last days" (the advent of the end times, cf. [9:26](#)) God spoke finally and definitively through his own Son ([1:2](#)). Central to the argument is the fact that in one way or another the prophets received an eternal word from God. Yet given the intimate relation of the Son to the Father, God's latest revelation has come forth from the very depths of his own being.

Identification of the Son as the pinnacle of divine revelation leads to a concise but profound statement of Christ's person and his cosmic work.

The Son reflects the glory of God in that the sum of the divine attributes brilliantly shine through his person. Moreover, he bears the very image and stamp of God's nature ([1:3](#)), as the wax bears the impress of the seal. Jesus as God's final word of revelation is truly the divine and eternal Son of God. Christ's excellence is further displayed in the fact that he is the mighty agent through whom the universe was created ([v 2](#)) and by whom the cosmic order is sustained ([v 3](#)). In the moral realm he has wrought the purification of sins and now sits enthroned on God's right hand (cf. [8:1](#)). God's pleasure toward the Son is seen in that he has appointed Christ heir and head of all ([1:2](#)). His name is surpassed by none save God the Father ([v 4](#)).

The Superiority of the Son to Angels ([1:5-2:18](#))

Angels enjoyed an exalted status in biblical and postbiblical Judaism. Traditionally the Jews believed that angels praised God upon his throne, mediated God's revelation to men, attended to God's will, and gave succor to the people of God. Angels were far superior to men in power and knowledge. According to the Jewish Apocrypha, angels ruled the stars and were responsible for the rise and fall of civilizations. In Qumran thought, angelic beings would engage in a final cosmic struggle with Belial and the forces of evil at the end of the age.

Against this background the writer of Hebrews argues that the Son is vastly superior to the angels. To prove his point, the author assembles a string of well-known OT texts and applies them directly to the Son. God never said of any angel, "Today I have become your Father" ([Ps 2:7](#), nlt). Yet just such a claim was made on behalf of the Son ([Heb 1:5](#)). When the Son incarnated himself in the world, he received the obedient worship of angels ([v 6](#)). His is the sovereignty and the eternality and the majesty at God's right hand (vv [8, 11-12](#)). By contrast, angels are "only servants" ([v 14](#)) that rank below the Son in dignity and might.

In [Hebrews 2:1-4](#) the writer parenthetically warns his wavering congregation of the danger of drifting away from the truth of God. If disobedience to the law mediated by angels resulted in stern punishment, how much more severe would be God's judgment on those who trampled under foot the revelation delivered by the Son? If God's saving grace in Christ is neglected, retribution will surely follow ([2:3](#)).

The mention of angels turns the writer's mind to Jesus' humiliation and exaltation ([2:5-18](#)). [Psalm 8](#), a song about the smallness and yet the significance of man, is applied to the experience of Jesus. In assuming human flesh and blood, Jesus was made "for a little while . . . lower than the angels" ([Heb 2:7](#), nlt). But subsequent to the completion of his earthly work, he was elevated above the angels and crowned with the glory and honor of heaven ([v 9](#)). The theological implications of Christ's descent and ascent are carefully spelled out: Christ descended to earth (1) to bring many children to glory ([v 10](#)), (2) to destroy the devil ([v 14](#)), (3) to deliver his people from the bondage of death ([v 15](#)), and (4) to make an offering on the cross for the sins of the people ([v 17](#)). He ascended to heaven (1) to intercede on our behalf as a faithful High Priest ([v 17](#)), and (2) to succor those who are sorely tempted ([v 18](#)). The perfect summary of Christ's person and work is given in [Hebrews 2:9](#): "What we do see is Jesus, who 'for a little while was made lower than the angels' and now is 'crowned with glory and honor' because he suffered death for us. Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone in all the world" (nlt).

The Superiority of the Son to Moses and Joshua ([3:1-4:13](#))

Jewish Christians contemplating reversion to Judaism surely believed that Moses was one of the greatest figures in Israel's history. So esteemed was the one who led Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness and who gave them the Law that there was no one in Israel's history so honored as Moses. Yet the author of Hebrews argues that Moses, though faithful to his calling, was but a servant in the house of God. Jesus, by contrast, was not a servant but a Son; he was not a mere dweller in the house but the very builder of the structure. Jesus, therefore, far transcends the revered figure of Moses.

Practical implications are drawn from Jesus' superiority to Moses. From [Psalm 95:7-11](#) the writer rehearses the tragic experience of Israel under Moses during the desert wanderings ([Heb 3:7-19](#)). Throughout the 40-year wilderness experience the people hardened their hearts and rebelled against God. In turn God was provoked by their stubbornness and swore that those who sinned would never enter the rest he was going to provide (vv [10-11, 18](#)). The writer thus argues that if disobedience to God under Moses had serious consequences, forsaking Christ will be much more perilous. Hence the wavering Christians are urged

to watch lest due to an evil, unbelieving heart they should fall away from the living God (v [12](#)). Nothing short of steadfast persistence will lead to the attainment of the heavenly goal (v [14](#)).

Joshua, likewise, was regarded as a great leader of Israel. Yet because of disobedience, the people under Joshua's leadership failed to enter the rest that God had planned. That rest spoken of corresponds to the Sabbath rest of God ([4:3-4](#)), and is a concept closely related to salvation. It is a spiritual reality that is achieved by turning from our own empty works and trusting in the finished work of Christ (v [10](#)). The author reminds the readers that "there is a special rest [a Sabbath rest] still waiting for the people of God" (v [9](#), nlt), one that only Christ can provide. Christians not only benefit from this Sabbath rest in the present age but anticipate its full realization in the age to come. One of the chief means of ensuring entry into the Sabbath rest of salvation is the Word of God (v [12](#)). The living and powerful Word penetrates the innermost depths of the soul, reveals our impoverished condition, and strengthens the trusting heart.

The Superiority of the Priesthood of the Son ([4:14-7:28](#))

Almost half of Hebrews is devoted to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The writer goes to great lengths to demonstrate that the revered Aaronic priestly system has been superseded by the High Priest "in the line of Melchizedek" ([5:6](#); [6:20](#); [7:11](#)). This central theme had been anticipated earlier when Christ was referred to as "our merciful and faithful High Priest before God" who has made atonement for sins ([2:17](#), nlt).

Hebrews makes the claim that Jesus' priesthood is the ultimate ground of the believers' confidence ([4:14-16](#)). On three counts Jesus surpasses the old legal priestly order. First, he is an *exalted* high priest (v [14](#)). The Jewish high priest climbed the mount to enter the temple sanctuary. But Jesus, our great high priest, has ascended to heaven itself and entered the sanctuary on high. He ministers in no earthly tabernacle but in the very presence of God. Second, Jesus is an *empathetic* high priest (v [15a](#)). Fully God and fully man, Jesus suffers along with his people in their trials and afflictions. From heaven's perspective he knows fully what his people are called upon to endure. He "feels" our hurts, and he does so perfectly. Finally, Jesus is a *sinless* high priest (v [15b](#)). Day in and day out ([7:27](#)), year in and year out, the Levitical priests were required to

bring sacrifices for their own sins. Yet Jesus had no sin that needed cleansing, for "he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin" (v [26](#), nlt). In view of Jesus' priestly perfections, sorely tempted Christians are urged to come to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need ([4:16](#)).

For those not convinced that Jesus was indeed a legitimate priest, two prerequisites for priesthood are detailed. First, if the high priest is to represent humanity before God, he must be taken from among men ([5:1-2](#)). And second, he must be called by God to high priestly office, as was Aaron (v [4](#)). Christ has fully satisfied these qualifications. From [Psalms 2:7](#) and [110:4](#) it is shown that Jesus did not take this office upon himself but was appointed by God ([Heb 5:5-6](#)). Moreover, from the obedience that he had to learn (v [8](#)) and from the agony of the Gethsemane experience (v [7](#)) it is clear that Jesus was in every way a man. Nevertheless, Hebrews makes it perfectly clear that Jesus was not a priest after the order of Aaron but a high priest in the line of Melchizedek (v [10](#)).

After introducing the theme of Christ as a Melchizedekian high priest, the writer recalls that his readers were not ready for such advanced teaching. Although not new converts ([5:12](#)), his friends had remained spiritually immature and sluggish. Hence the writer issues the challenge to press on to Christian maturity, to be ready for the solid food of advanced teaching.

In his digression the writer warns not only against spiritual immaturity but also against "apostasy." The question now arises whether the author's apostasy teaching in [Hebrews 6:4-8](#) and [10:26-31](#) contradicts the NT doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Undoubtedly it does not. Some authorities hold that those addressed were not true Christians, hence the issue is not one of apostasy. It is possible, like Judas Iscariot or Simon Magus ([Acts 8:9-24](#)), to possess considerable knowledge of the gospel and fall short of personal commitment. But the writer makes it quite clear that in the case of his addressees he is persuaded otherwise ([Heb 6:9](#)). The most reasonable view is that in these two hortatory passages the writer advances a hypothetical argument warning his friends of the utter seriousness of reverting back to Judaism. That is, if a falling away were to occur, renewal would be impossible unless Christ were to die a second time. The writer sums up the point of these difficult passages with the words "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God" ([10:31](#),

nlt). Nevertheless, followers of Christ may confidently lay hold of God's promises, confirmed by solemn oath, to see them through their trials ([6:13-18](#)). God may be trusted to hold the believer fast.

[Hebrews 7](#) contains an intricate argument for the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the old legal order. Melchizedek, the ancient priest-king of Salem ([Gn 14:18-20](#)), is regarded as a primordial type of Christ. He is "king of righteousness" and "king of peace" ([Heb 7:2](#)). The solemn priest from Salem has figuratively what Christ possesses actually: neither mother nor father, neither beginning nor end of life (v [3](#)). Melchizedek is shown to be superior to Abraham on three counts: (1) Melchizedek blessed the patriarch (vv [1,7](#)); (2) he accepted tithes from Abraham (vv [2-6](#)); and (3) Melchizedek lives on since the OT nowhere mentions his death (v [8](#)). It follows that since Levi was in the loins of Abraham as seed (v [10](#)), Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical priests. And inasmuch as Christ is a priest in the likeness of Melchizedek (v [15](#)), it follows that the Son of God is more excellent than the old legal priesthood.

The result is that the old Levitical priesthood has been superseded by the priesthood of Christ. The demise of the old order was inevitable, for its repetitive animal sacrifices could never effect spiritual perfection ([7:11](#)). It was a system characterized by weakness and uselessness (v [18](#)). By contrast, Christ's priesthood is indestructible, eternal, uninterrupted, efficacious, final, and perfect (vv [16, 21, 24-27](#)). Forgiveness and reconciliation is possible only through Christ, our great High Priest.

The Superiority of the Priestly Work of the Son ([8:1-10:39](#))

Since Christ's priestly office far excels the old order, it follows that his priestly ministration is superior to all that has gone before. The theme of Christ as high priest in a better sanctuary is introduced ([8:1-5](#)). The writer utilizes Plato's distinction between the ideal form in heaven and the imperfect copy on earth to argue that the Levitical sanctuary and sacrifices are mere shadows of the heavenly realities: (1) Christ ministers in the true tent that is the heavenly sanctuary (vv [2,5](#)); (2) he discharges his high priestly service in the very presence of the Father, which results in a far more effective ministry (vv [1,6](#)); and (3) his oblation on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice (v [3](#)). How unreasonable

it is that his Christian readers should go back to the old Jewish priestly system!

Christ is the minister of a new and better covenant ([8:6-13](#)). The old covenant established by God with the nation's fathers was not to be despised; nevertheless, it had become ineffectual and obsolete (v [13](#)). Indeed, the prophet Jeremiah ([Jer 31:31-34](#)) foresaw the new covenant that God would inaugurate with his people. This new covenant sealed by Christ involves (1) the immediate work of the Holy Spirit on the mind and heart ([Heb 8:10](#)); (2) a personal and intimate knowledge of God (v [11](#)); and (3) the full absolution of sins (v [12](#)). This new and better covenant has been established on the work of Christ, the great High Priest.

Chapter [9](#) gives a detailed comparison of the efficacy of priestly service under the old and new covenants. The Levitical priests ministered in a material sanctuary on earth (vv [1-5](#)). Features of the tabernacle and its furnishings are described to highlight their obsolescence. More important, however, is the character of the sacrificial ritual conducted in the earthly sanctuary. The Jewish priests in their daily service were not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, which contained the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat—the place of propitiation of sins (v [6](#)). The high priest alone could enter the Holy of Holies, and then but once a year on the Day of Atonement, and only after sacrificing for his own sins (v [7](#)). The inaccessibility of the Holy of Holies signified that access to the presence of God had not been opened. The presence of the curtain symbolized that the people had no way to the throne of God, the priests had no way, and the high priest had a limited way and only once a year. Moreover, the sacrifices brought by the Jewish priests could not purify the conscience but merely dealt with external ritual cleansing (vv [9-10](#)). A truly effectual sacrifice must await "the time of reformation" (v [10](#)).

Christ's priestly ministration is shown to be far more efficacious. First, the Christian's High Priest has brought a better sacrifice ([9:11-14](#)), and here we arrive at the heart of the message of Hebrews. Employing the imagery of the tabernacle, the author demonstrates that Christ our High Priest has accomplished what the Jewish priests failed to do. He entered the heavenly Holy of Holies, not repeatedly, but *once* for all, thereby effecting a completed redemption (v [12](#)). Christ brought to the altar, not the blood of bulls and goats, but his own life's blood. The Lord did not merely lay down a

material body, but he presented himself to God through the eternal Spirit (v 14). Christ's better sacrifice thus goes beyond cleansing of the flesh to the purification of the defiled conscience.

Second, Christ through his death has instituted a better covenant (9:15–23). The teaching of [Hebrews 8:6–13](#) is developed further. The old covenant was sealed with the blood of calves and goats (9:19). But the new covenant was ratified with the blood of Christ, God's own Son. The new covenant thus could accomplish what the old covenant merely foreshadowed—forgiveness and cleansing of sins (v 22).

Third, Christ ministers in a better tabernacle (9:24–28). Our Lord entered, not into a merely earthly sanctuary, but into the holy place of heaven, there to represent us (v 24). Access to the throne is not limited to one day per year, for he is continually in the presence of the Father. Nor is it necessary that repeated sacrifices be made. Christ's single sacrifice on the cross has conquered sin once and for all (v 26). In sum, as regards the sanctuary, the covenant, and the sacrifices, the Christian's High Priest is vastly superior to the old Jewish order.

In order to drive home these crucial points, the writer in chapter 10 expands on the theme of the absolute finality of Christ's high priestly work. The earlier argument concerning the futile character of the Levitical sacrifices (9:6–14) is repeated for emphasis (10:1–4). The Mosaic ceremonial legislation called for repetitive sacrifices, which could never perfect the worshiper (v 1). Instead of purifying one's life, they served only as a yearly reminder of sin (v 3) until Christ should come.

The writer discovers in [Psalm 40:6–8](#) a prediction that the eternal Christ would become man for the purpose of offering himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin ([Heb 10:5–10](#)). Once again the sanctifying power of Christ's single self-oblation is emphasized (v 10). The vivid contrast is again drawn between the ineffective ministry of the Jewish priests who stand during the daily ritual (v 11), and the effectual single sacrifice of Christ, who is now seated at the right hand of God (v 12). Since Jesus "by that one offering . . . perfected forever all those whom he is making holy" (v 14, nlt), nothing can be added to what the seated Sovereign has accomplished (v 18).

In view of the manifest superiority of Christ's priestly office and work, the struggling Christians are exhorted to appropriate the means of grace at their disposal (10:19–39). In the midst of trials and

persecution they should remember that Christ has effectively opened the way to God (vv 19–20). They are summoned to come to God in faith with hearts cleansed by Christ's sacrifice (v 22). Those tempted to revert to legal religion should hold fast and support one another in love (vv 23–24). The means of grace afforded by corporate worship should not be neglected (v 25). In short, the wavering Jewish Christians are summoned to renewed endurance and fidelity to their Lord (vv 26–31). What God has promised to his people he will surely make good.

The Superiority of the Life of Faith (11:1–12:29)

The discussion of faith and endurance as the solution to despondency (10:36–38) prompts a fuller consideration of the faith theme. Faith is a prominent concept in the book of Hebrews, as attested by the fact that the word occurs some 35 times in the letter. The Pauline idea of faith as the means of legal justification is adapted to the particular circumstances of the threatened Jewish Christians. The concept of faith is broader in this book than the strictly saving faith discussed by Paul, in that it leads to spiritual salvation (11:39–40). Faith is the power by which heaven's unseen realities are laid hold of to satisfy the soul. Faith enables the Christian disciple to view the world and interpret the flow of history from the divine perspective. Faith is the means of victory over the world of sin and woe. Through faith the believer approaches the throne of grace (4:16) with the confidence and assurance that God will enable him to overcome.

The victory faith affords is amply illustrated from the history of God's OT people. Abel, Enoch, and Noah in the primal history; Abraham, the father of faith; Moses, the leader of the young nation; and many valiant prophets and martyrs serve as living memorials to faith's overcoming power. And yet God has something better in store for his sanctified people, the church (11:40): the reality of the living Christ.

Yet the greatest model of steadfast endurance in suffering is Jesus, "the Originator and Perfecter of our faith" (12:2, nlt mg). When surrounded with trials, the Christian needs to recall Christ, who in anticipation of the heavenly crown endured the cross and its shame. The Christian's trials are trivial compared with what Jesus Christ was called upon to suffer (v 3). Moreover, for the people of God, suffering and persecution prove to be disguised blessings. The rod of discipline confirms our status

as children of the living God (vv [5–10](#)). But beyond this, the sovereign God is able to transform the Christian's suffering into inestimable blessing (v [11](#)). Hence the wavering saints should strive for spiritual wholeness and maturity, taking care lest they be overtaken by bitterness and resentment (v [15](#)).

Final Exhortations and Benediction ([13:1–25](#))

The writer in his closing words challenges his Christian friends to be faithful to the tasks that lie at hand. They are to show continued love to the brethren, to extend hospitality to strangers, to uphold the sanctity of marriage, to be content with what they now possess, and to be obedient to their spiritual leaders ([13:1–7](#)).

The readers are warned against the trickery of the Judaizers, who would lead them astray from Jesus Christ, the one who remains “the same yesterday, today, and forever” ([13:8](#)). Spiritual determination is strengthened by recalling the example of Christ, who “suffered outside the city gates” for their salvation (v [12](#)). As the people of God, they are challenged to follow Christ “outside the camp,” bearing abuse for him (v [13](#)). Patient endurance is possible when the Christian realizes that he has no enduring city here (v [14](#)). His goal is the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal city of God.

The anonymous letter to the unknown “Hebrews” closes with a glorious benediction. The Christian’s God is described as the great “God of peace” ([13:20](#)), and Jesus is “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” who established a new and eternal covenant and then rose triumphant from the dead. And the promise is made to the trusting soul that the triune God would “equip you with all you need for doing his will” (v [21](#), nlt).

The letter to the Hebrews is rich in doctrinal teaching. It discloses more about the historical Jesus than any other NT letter. It alone explains the atoning work of Christ under the rubric of the Melchizedekian priest. The letter’s discussion of repentance, justification, sanctification, and perseverance makes it a mine of salvation teaching. Its explication of old and new covenants, impending judgment, and the world to come make a significant contribution to Christian theology. And the letter’s teaching on faith, endurance, and the practical Christian combine to make Hebrews one of the most important documents God has given to the church.

Hebron (Person)

1. The third of Kohath’s four sons. Hebron was a descendant of Levi ([Exodus 6:18](#); [Numbers 3:19](#); [1 Chronicles 6:2, 18; 23:12](#)). Hebron’s sons were Jeriah, Amariah, Jahaziel, and Jekameam ([1 Chronicles 23:19](#)). Hebron’s descendants were called the Hebronites. They are mentioned in a census taken in the plains of Moab ([Numbers 26:58](#)). The Hebronites are mentioned in connection with the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem in David’s time ([1 Chronicles 15:9; 26:23, 30–31](#)).
2. Mareshah’s son and Korah’s father ([1 Chronicles 2:42–43](#)).

Hebron (Place)

1. Hebron is an old city that still exists today. It was built on the southern end of a mountain range that runs through the middle of the land of Palestine. In the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), it was called Kiriath-arba ([Genesis 23:2](#)). It stood on a hill named El Arbain. The modern city of Hebron now sits across both ridges of the mountain.

Location and Geography Hebron is about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of Jerusalem. It is less than 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) from Mamre, where Abraham lived for many years. Hebron is about 914 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level. The land drops down quickly to the east but slopes more gently to the west and south.

The soil in this area is good for farming. Many fruits (like apples, plums, figs, pomegranates, and apricots), nuts, and vegetables grow well. To the south is the Negev, which has good land for animals to graze. Many springs and wells provide water for the people.

Hebron in the Life of Abraham In the Old Testament, Hebron included a nearby area called Mamre. Abraham built an altar to the

Lord there after he and Lot went separate ways ([Genesis 13:18](#)). Abraham also heard there that Lot had been captured ([14:12-16](#)). Later, he welcomed three angels there who told him that Sodom and Gomorrah would soon be destroyed ([chapter 18](#)).

Abraham's wife Sarah died in Hebron. Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah to bury her ([Genesis 23:8-9, 17; 25:9-10; 49:29-32; 50:12-13](#)). Today, that cave is inside the modern city. The famous mosque of Haram el-Khalil was built over it.

Hebron in the Time of Moses and Joshua

When the Israelites left Egypt, Moses sent twelve spies to explore the land God had promised them. They started in the south and crossed the central highlands of Palestine. This extended from Kadesh-barnea through Hebron to Rehob ([Numbers 13:17-21](#)). The spies brought back fruit to show how good and productive the land was (verses [23-24](#)). But they also saw very tall people living in Hebron. These people were called the sons of Anak ([Numbers 13:33](#)). Ten of the spies became afraid and gave a bad report. Only Caleb and Joshua trusted God. Because of their faith, God promised they would receive land in Canaan. Caleb later received Hebron as his inheritance ([Joshua 14:9, 13](#)). The ten spies who doubted God died in a plague ([Numbers 14:36-37](#)).

Hebron in Other Events in the Old Testament

During the time of the judges, the strong man Samson carried the gates of Gaza to Hebron ([Judges 16:3](#)).

Later, Saul, Israel's first king, died. Then David became king over Judah and Benjamin in Hebron ([2 Samuel 2:1](#)). David chose Hebron because it was in a central location. It was far from the Philistines in the west and the Amalekites in the south. It was also easy to protect from enemies.

Hebron was an important city because major trade roads passed through it. But when David became king over all of Israel, he moved his capital to Jerusalem. This change may have upset the people of Hebron.

Absalom, one of David's sons, began his rebellion in Hebron. He hoped to become king instead of his father ([2 Samuel 15:7-12](#)). After Solomon died, the kingdom of Israel was divided. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, became

king of the southern kingdom. He strengthened the city of Hebron because he feared an attack from Egypt on his southern border ([2 Chronicles 11:1-12](#)). After this, the Old Testament does not mention Hebron again.

1. The King James Version also uses the name Hebron for a different town called Ebron in [Joshua 19:28](#). See Ebron.

Hebronite

Any descendant of Hebron from the tribe of Levi ([Numbers 3:27; 26:58](#); [1 Chronicles 26:23, 30-31](#)).

See Hebron (Person) #1.

Hedge

A hedge is a row of closely planted shrubs or low-growing trees that forms a fence or boundary. In Bible times, people used several different plants to create hedges.

One common hedge plant was the Palestine buckthorn (*Rhamnus palaestina*). This plant grows as a shrub or small tree reaching 0.9 to 1.8 meters (3 to 6 feet) tall. It has velvety, thorny branches, evergreen leaves, and clusters of small flowers that bloom in March and April. The Palestine buckthorn grows in thickets and on hillsides from Syria through Israel and the surrounding areas to Arabia and the Sinai.

Two other prickly shrubs widely used as hedges in Israel and the surrounding areas were the Jericho balsam (*Balanites aegyptiaca*) and the European boxthorn (*Lycium europaeum*). These plants may be the ones referred to in [Proverbs 15:19](#) and [Hosea 2:6](#).

See Balm; Boxthorn.

Hedgehog

Small, insect-eating mammal with a coat of short spines and similar to the porcupine ([Is 14:23](#); [Zep 2:14](#)). See Animals (Porcupine).

Hegai, Hege

A manager of Ahasuerus's household and keeper of his harem when Esther was chosen as queen ([Esther 2:3](#)).

Hegemonides

Principal Syrian officer appointed by Antiochus, king of Syria, to govern the territory from Ptolemais to Gerar ([2 Macc 13:24](#)).

Heglam

Alternate name for Gera, Bela's son, in [1 Chronicles 8:7](#). See Gera #4.

Heifer

Young cow. See Animals (Cattle).

Heir

One who inherits something or who is entitled to a future inheritance. An heir is the one who receives the property of a deceased person, particularly on the basis of law and usually by means of a will. In both the Old Testament and New Testament, the Hebrew and the Greek words encompass these ideas.

In [Genesis 15](#), after God had reiterated his special promise to Abraham, Abraham wondered how the fulfillment of the promise might occur. At the time, only his steward who managed his household, Eliezer of Damascus, was "the son of his house." That is, the person of his large household who would inherit. There was no natural-born son of Abraham within the family (see [Genesis 15:3-4](#)). Without a son in patriarchal times, a man's chief steward could be his heir as a substitute. Later, after the birth of Ishmael (Abraham's son by Hagar, Sarah's maid servant) and of Isaac (his son by Sarah, his wife), trouble erupted between the women. Sarah demanded that Abraham send Hagar and her son away, because Sarah did not want Ishmael to be an heir with her own son, Isaac ([Genesis 21:10](#)).

A wise woman, at Joab's instigation, told David a story about herself and her two sons. She said that

one son killed the other, and that her family now wanted to kill the remaining son for the murder. If this happened, she claimed, the heir of her deceased husband would be destroyed and the family would be left with no inheritance ([2 Samuel 14:7](#)).

Another biblical illustration of this normal use of the word "heir" is seen in a parable told by Jesus. The workers in the vineyard, who saw the son of their master coming, said among themselves, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance" ([Matthew 21:33-43](#); compare [Mark 12:7](#); [Luke 20:14](#)).

In multiple references in the New Testament, the word "heir" is used to refer to the believer in Christ. The believer has an inheritance coming because of being a child of God the Father and consequently a joint heir with Christ ([Romans 8:16-17](#)). The inheritance of salvation is variously referred to in different sections of the New Testament. In [Hebrews 6:17](#), Christians are called "heirs of the promise." This promise occurred when God said to Abraham, "I will surely bless you and multiply your descendants" ([Hebrews 6:14](#)). In [Hebrews 11:7](#), Noah is described as an "heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." In [James 2:5](#), the poor in the world who are rich in faith are said to "inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him." Paul writes that those who are justified by God's grace, a declarative act of God by which God establishes persons as righteous, are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life ([Titus 3:7](#)).

In [Hebrews 1:2](#), the word "heir" is used with a singular reference to God's Son, who is said to have been appointed "heir of all things" by his Father. Here is an instance where someone has been designated to receive an inheritance but will enter into full possession of it much later.

In biblical times the right of primogeniture—that is, the right of the eldest son in the family to be the primary heir in the household—prevailed. In Old Testament times, the firstborn son possessed the birthright, which included inheriting a double portion of his father's possessions and headship of the family ([Deuteronomy 21:15-17](#)). The other sons shared the remainder equally. If there were no sons to inherit, the daughters became the heirs ([Numbers 27:8; 36:1-12](#)). However, there was a stipulation that the daughters could not marry outside their tribe. This was to preserve the tribal territory intact. If there were no daughters, then the dead man's brothers inherited. If there were no brothers, then his uncles. And if there were no

uncles, then the nearest relative ([27:9-11](#)). Because the matter of tribal possession was so important, it is easy to understand why there was such a concern for records of ancestry among the Hebrew people.

See also Firstborn; Inheritance; Birthright.

Helah

One of Ashhur's wives who bore him Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:5-7](#)).

Helam

A place east of the Jordan River where King David defeated the armies of Hadadezer, King of Syria ([2 Samuel 10:16-17](#)).

Helbah

One of the Canaanite strongholds that was not conquered by the tribe of Asher after they took possession of the land ([Jgs 1:31](#)).

Helbon

District north of Damascus, which produced choice wine ([Ez 27:18](#)); perhaps identifiable with modern Halbun, where the vine is still cultivated.

Heldai

1. A son of Baanah, described as a Netophathite (from Netophah) in the family line of Othniel. He appears first as one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:29](#); [1 Chronicles 11:30](#), where he is called "Heled"). In [1 Chronicles 27:15](#) he is named as commander who led an army division of 24,000 soldiers that served during the 12th month of the year.

2. One of the people who returned from exile in Babylon. The prophet Zechariah took gold and silver from him to make a crown for Joshua, the high priest ([Zechariah 6:10](#)).

Heleb

Another name for Heldai, the son of Baanah ([2 Samuel 23:29](#)).

See Heldai #1.

Helech

Term mentioned in Ezekiel's prophecy against the city of Tyre ([Ez 27:11](#)), perhaps referring to Cilicia or to mercenaries from Cilicia, which was southeast of Asia Minor. Assyrian texts indicate that Cilicia was once called Hilakku, but little is known about the people. They are first mentioned by Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria (854–824 BC), in his conquest of Asia Minor. Their history under the Assyrians was quite violent. Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon had to put down revolts from the Hilakku. Later, they gave tribute to Ashurbanipal.

Heled

Alternate name for Heldai, Baanah's son, in [1 Chronicles 11:30](#). *See* Heldai #1.

Helek, Helekite

A son of Gilead from the tribe of Manasseh ([Joshua 17:2](#)). He founded the Helekite clan ([Numbers 26:30](#)).

Helem

1. Member of Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:35](#)), called Hotham in verse [32](#).
2. KJV rendering for Heldai in [Zechariah 6:14](#). *See* Heldai #2.

Heleph

Village on Naphtali's southern border ([Jos 19:33](#)), northeast of Mt Tabor. Its site may be modern Khirbet 'Arbathah.

Helez

1. One of the mighty men of King David. He is called a Paltite in [2 Samuel 23:26](#) and a Pelonite in [1 Chronicles 11:27](#). Most experts believe "Paltite" is the correct term, meaning he came from Bethpelet. Most scholars think he is the same person who was the officer in charge of the seventh group of soldiers during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 27:10](#)).
2. A descendant of Jerahmeel from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 2:39](#)).

Heli

An ancestor of Joseph according to [Luke 3:23](#).

See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

Heliodorus

There is an inscription in the temple of Apollo at Delos that indicates that Heliodorus was prominent in the court of the Seleucid king Seleucus IV Philopator, who reigned from 187 to 175 BC. In his *Syrian Wars* (45) Appian says that Heliodorus was a close friend of this king. According to 2 Maccabees, he is the object of divine vengeance because Seleucus IV sent him to Jerusalem to remove the temple treasury ([2 Macc 3:7ff](#)). Heliodorus was arriving at the treasury when he was attacked and wounded by a horse with a rider wearing golden armor and two young men of surpassing strength and glorious beauty (vv [25-26](#)). Heliodorus was deprived by this divine act of all hope of recovery (v [29](#)). The Jewish high priest, Onias III, offered a sacrifice for the restoration of Heliodorus. When this occurred, the Syrian offered a sacrifice to the Lord, returned to his king, and gave witness of the miracles of the supreme God (v [36](#)).

Heliopolis

An ancient Egyptian city known for worshiping the sun god Re. Its name means "city of the sun." It was located in the Nile River delta area of Lower Egypt, near modern Cairo. Heliopolis became important around 2400 BC when Atum-Re became the main god. Many pharaohs improved the city's temples and built monuments, especially during the New Kingdom period (1570–1150 BC).

The temples in Heliopolis kept the royal records, so the priests became Egypt's official historians. Herodotus, a Greek historian from the 5th century BC, said the priests at Heliopolis were famous for knowing Egyptian history. The city also had schools for priests and a medical school.

There were other sun worship centers in Egypt, but Heliopolis stayed popular for about 2,000 years. While it was not very important politically, it had a big influence on religion. The temple of Re at Heliopolis was the second largest religious building in Egypt, after the temple of Amon at Thebes.

In the Old Testament, Heliopolis is called On. When Joseph worked for the Egyptian government, he married Asenath, whose father Potiphera was a priest of On ([Genesis 41:45, 50; 46:20](#)). The prophet Ezekiel warned that the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar would destroy Egyptian cities, including Heliopolis ([Ezekiel 30:17](#)).

In the book of [Amos 1:5](#), the Revised Standard Version (RSV) Bible offers a different way to read "Valley of Aven." In the margin, it suggests "On" as another possible translation. The same change is seen in [Ezekiel 30:17](#), where the New Living Translation (NLT) uses "Heliopolis" instead.

Jeremiah also said the sacred pillars of Heliopolis would be destroyed ([Jeremiah 43:13](#)). [Isaiah 19:18](#) might also refer to Heliopolis.

Heliopolis lost importance in the fourth and third centuries BC, partly because of the new library in Alexandria. Alexandria took over as Egypt's main center of learning.

Today, not much is left of the ancient sun city, but you can still see an obelisk built by Sesostris I at the site of Heliopolis. Sesostris I ruled Egypt from 1971 to 1928 BC. Several obelisks from Heliopolis, built by Thutmose III, have been moved to different parts of the world in modern times. Thutmose III ruled Egypt from 1490 to 1436 BC.

Helkai

Head of Meraioth's priestly house in the time of Joiakim the high priest ([Neh 12:15](#)).

Helkath

First of 22 cities mentioned in the territory allotted to Asher's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:25](#)). Helkath was one of four cities in Asher given to the Levitical Gershonite families ([21:31](#)). It is alternately spelled Hukok in [1 Chronicles 6:75](#). Its ancient site is perhaps located at the modern Tell el-Harbaj.

Helkath-hazzurim

An area near the pool of Gibeon, where a deadly battle took place. Twelve warriors from Joab's army and twelve from Abner's army fought against each other. All 24 men died in this fight, as each fighter killed his opponent([2 Samuel 2:16](#)).

Some scholars think the name may mean, "field of the crafty," which could be understood as "field of ambush" or "field of the adversaries." The New living Translation marginal reading calls it, "the Field of Swords."

Hell

Hell is a place where people who choose to do evil and refuse to follow God will be punished after death.

Preview

- Definition and Description
- Biblical Terms
- The Justice of Eternal Punishment

Definition and Description

The Bible uses different images to describe hell, which is the place where people go after death if they reject God. These images include:

1. A burning furnace with fire that never goes out ([Matthew 13:42, 50; 25:41, 46](#))

2. A place of complete darkness where people weep in pain ([8:12](#))
3. A lake of fire called "the second death" ([Revelation 21:8](#))
4. A place made for the devil and demons ("evil angels," [Matthew 25:41](#))

Those in hell are completely cut off from God forever. They will never experience God's presence or see his power ([2 Thessalonians 1:9](#)). Those who worshiped the beast will face endless suffering ([Revelation 14:10-11](#)).

The Bible uses several phrases to show that hell lasts forever. Here are some examples:

1. "Burn ... with unquenchable fire" ([Matthew 3:12](#))
2. "To the unquenchable fire ... where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" ([Mark 9:43, 48](#))
3. There is sin that "will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the one to come" ([Matthew 12:32](#))

The Bible describes hell as a serious and final judgment for those who reject God. It shows that the punishment is lasting and cannot be undone. Many of the strongest words about hell come from Jesus, who warns about its reality and importance.

The Bible teaches that hell means losing all that is good and experiencing the misery and suffering of a guilty conscience. The worst part is being completely separated from God and from everything pure, holy, and beautiful. Those in hell are also aware that they are under God's anger and facing the consequences of their own sins, which they chose to commit.

The Bible describes hell using physical images like:

- Worms that eat
- Whips that hurt
- Fire that burns

But hell is more than just these physical things. The worst parts of hell are:

- Being completely cut off from God forever
- Being unable to have good relationships with others
- Fighting with yourself inside because of guilt and shame

People in hell suffer in three ways:

- They are separated from God
- They cannot get along with others
- They feel terrible about themselves

Even if these descriptions use symbols (like worms, whips, and fire) to help us understand hell, the real experience is even worse than these symbols show. Nothing could be worse than being separated from God forever while feeling constant guilt about the wrong things we did.

Hell is total conflict. It is a conflict with God, one's neighbors, and oneself. If the descriptions of hell are symbolic, the state they represent is more intense and real than the figures of speech in which they are described.

The Bible consistently teaches that God punishes sin. This teaching appears throughout the entire Bible, from beginning to end.

The Bible repeatedly teaches about punishment for sin. The idea of judgment is found throughout the entire Bible. Some examples of these teachings are [Genesis 2:17; 3:17–19; 4:13; Leviticus 26:27–33; Psalm 149:7; Isaiah 3:11; Ezekiel 14:10; Amos 1:2–2:16; Zechariah 14:19; Matthew 25:41, 46; Luke 16:23–24; Romans 2:5–12; Galatians 6:7–8; Hebrews 10:29–31](#); and [Revelation 20:11–15](#).

Biblical Terms

The Hebrew word "Sheol" in the Old Testament is mainly used for "the grave, the pit, the place of the dead" ([Genesis 37:35; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13–16; Psalms 6:5; 16:10; 55:15; Proverbs 9:18; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isaiah 14:11; 38:10–12, 18](#)). In the Old Testament, it is not always clear if there is a difference between where the good and evil people go after death. Both the good and the bad go to the grave, a place below ground filled with darkness, decay, and forgetfulness, far from God ([Job 10:20–22; Psalms 88:3–6](#)).

Yet, it is also a place where God can still be reached ([Job 26:6; Psalms 138:8; Amos 9:2](#)). Sheol is often

described as silent ([Psalms 94:17; 115:17](#)) and restful ([Job 3:17](#)). Some texts suggest that there may be some awareness, hope, and even communication in Sheol ([Job 14:13–15; 19:25–27; Psalms 16:10; 49:15; Isaiah 14:9–10; Ezekiel 32:21](#)). A few verses seem to hint at the possibility of judgment after death ([Psalms 9:17; 55:15](#)). Overall, Sheol was seen as a place of fear and uncertainty ([Deuteronomy 32:22; Isaiah 38:18](#)).

Between the time when the Old Testament was completed and when the New Testament began, Jewish writers started to explain more clearly what happens after death. These writers began to teach that good and bad people would go to different places after they died. They described separate areas within Sheol. There was one place for people who followed God and another for those who did not.

The Old Testament shows that Jewish people believed life continued somehow after death. However, they did not fully understand what this life after death would be like.

The Greek word "hades" in the New Testament is used very similarly to "Sheol" in the Old Testament. Translators of the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) used "hades" for "Sheol." Most of the time when the New Testament uses "hades," it simply means the place where dead people go.

But in one story Jesus told, "hades" clearly means a place where evil people are punished ([Luke 16:23](#)). In all other instances, hades is simply the place of the dead.

The Greek word "Gehenna" is used in several New Testament texts to express the fiery place for the punishment of sinners and is often translated as "hell" or "the fires of hell" ([Matthew 5:22, 29–30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; James 3:6](#)). When the Bible uses this word, it often talks about the final judgment and punishment that lasts forever.

The word "Gehenna" comes from a real place, a valley outside the city of Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom. This valley was the center of idol worship in which children were burned by fire as an offering to the god Molech ([2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6](#)).

Later, during King Josiah's time, the valley became a terrible place filled with bones of the dead and trash ([2 Kings 23:10–14](#)). The city of Jerusalem used it as a garbage dump. Fires burned there all the time to destroy the waste. Because of these

always-burning fires, people began to use this valley as a symbol of hell, a place where people who reject God would suffer forever. The prophets used this valley as a warning about how God would punish people who worshiped false gods and did not obey him ([Jeremiah 7:31–34; 32:35](#)).

Another Greek word used for hell or “the lower regions” is “Tartarus” ([2 Peter 2:4](#)). The apostle Peter uses this word when he writes about evil angels who were thrown into a dark prison. They will stay there until God judges them.

As mentioned earlier, there are also clear and strong phrases in the Bible that clearly teach about hell, as explained at the beginning of this article. The biblical teaching on hell is determined more by these strong phrases than by the more uncertain terms “Sheol” and “Hades,” which are used more often but are less clear.

The Justice of Eternal Punishment

It is difficult to understand how God can hate evil but still love people who do evil things. God loves these people so much that he sent his only Son to save them from their sins. God’s anger is the necessary reaction of a holy God who hates all that goes against his righteous nature.

When humans reject God’s grace and refuse any chance at peace with God, God must leave the sinner to his or her chosen destination. Punishment for sin is then the only response to holiness. Sin is the opposite of holiness.

Hell must continue as long as the sinful condition requiring it continues. There is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that lost sinners in hell can repent and believe. If a person did not turn away from sin and receive Christ as Savior in this life, it is not reasonable to think they will in the next life. Punishment cannot come to an end until guilt and sin come to an end. When the sinner rejects the work of the Holy Spirit, he or she is convicted of sin. No more possibility of repentance or salvation exists. This person has committed an eternal sin ([Mark 3:29](#); [Revelation 22:11](#)). An eternal sin deserves eternal punishment.

People in hell cannot change their minds about God. During their life, they chose again and again to go against God. Each time they did this, it became harder to turn back to him. Over time, their choices became permanent. Because they keep sinning forever, God must keep punishing them forever.

If someone asks, how can a loving God send people to eternal hell? One needs to say that God does not choose this destination for people. People choose it for themselves. God simply agrees with their choice and gives the full punishment for their evil choice. We must remember God is loving, holy, and righteous. Sin has brought evil consequences into the world, and God must bring justice.

God’s punishment for those who choose hell is forever, but there are degrees of punishment equal to the degrees of guilt of each sinner. Only God can decide what those degrees are. He will assign the consequences with perfect justice for each sinner. The evidence for the levels of punishment is found in Scripture ([Matthew 11:20–24](#); [Luke 12:47–48](#); [Revelation 20:12–13](#); compare [Ezekiel 16:48–61](#)). These verses compare the different levels of punishment that are involved in the different situations.

From all that has been said, it should be clear that some ideas, though popular or convincing, are not widely supported by traditional interpretations of the Bible. These include universalism, annihilationism, and second probation.

- Universalism is the belief that God will eventually save everyone.
- Annihilationism teaches that hell is not a place of suffering but a place of complete destruction.
- Second probation is the idea that people can be rescued from hell after death.

We must remember the Bible is our guide for understanding Christian teaching about hell. While this teaching can be difficult to understand, the Bible is clear in describing hell as a place of eternal separation and punishment. Rejection or neglect of this doctrine may affect how the church approaches its mission.

See also Dead, Place of the; Death; Gehenna; Hades; Intermediate State; Sheol; Wrath of God.

Hellenism

That unique blend of Greek cultural, philosophical, and ethical ideals that had a profound effect on the development of culture throughout the Mediterranean world. While the antecedents of the movement occurred long before, the Hellenistic

Age is seen by most to have begun in 323 BC, with the death of Alexander, and to have continued until either 30 BC, when Rome conquered Egypt, or (more likely) AD 300. Rome itself was culturally conquered by Hellenism.

Preview

- Hellenistic Age
- Hellenism and Judaism
- Hellenism and Christianity

Hellenistic Age

Alexander the Great was more than a military conqueror. He made Hellenistic culture the norm throughout his realm. He taught conquered people the Greek language and customs, and he built new Greek cities (34 in all), like Alexandria in Egypt, which became bastions of Hellenism. His major accomplishment was not so much territorial as cultural; after him, Hellenism controlled the Western world for centuries. It was Alexander who spearheaded the triumph of the Attic koine (common) dialect over the other Greek dialects, and this became the primary force in the Hellenization of the East. The koine dialect was to be the basis for the acceptance of Hellenism by subject peoples. The first period after his death would be characterized by the dissolution of Alexander's empire and an emerging balance of power among the forces of Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt and Palestine; Seleucus, who ruled Babylon and Asia Minor; and Antipater (followed by Antigonus), who reigned over Macedonia and the Hellespont.

In the East the next century was typified by intermittent skirmishes between the Ptolemies and Seleucids, with the result that Palestine became a buffer state between the two. An important difference is that the Ptolemies had a unified kingdom and so were not interested in change; under their rule, Palestine was autonomous both culturally and religiously. However, the Seleucids controlled many different groups and so tried to unite them by forcing Hellenization on them. This finally led to the successful revolt of the Jews under the Maccabees and the disintegration of both empires. In the West, Rome became progressively involved in Greek affairs and by 149 BC controlled the Greek lands politically, while they themselves were overtaken by Greek ideals culturally.

During this period, there was a growing middle class, which was brought about partly because Alexander's conquests led to a vast dispersion of Greeks into the conquered lands. The redistribution of wealth this engendered was based upon a Greek education and an acceptance of Hellenistic ideals. The term "civilized" came to be identified with the Greek way of life. Education was controlled by the idea of sound rhetoric, so that style triumphed over truth. Greek drama turned to comedy, which stressed realism in human emotions, and Hellenistic art grew even more naturalistic than in the classical period.

Philosophy also developed, with at least three schools arising to dominate Greek thought for the next few centuries. Interestingly, all three centered on practical ethics rather than the classical quest for truth and knowledge. The Cynics, founded by Diogenes, stressed a total self-sufficiency that left the individual in a social vacuum but taught him how to deal with human misery. The two most influential schools were the Epicureans and the Stoics. Epicurus sought freedom from anxiety or fear and taught that peace of the soul could only be derived from a disciplined, moderate experience of pleasures. The result was a retreat from society into one's own selfhood. Stoicism, founded by Zeno and named after the stoa (porch) in Athens where he taught, was similar to cynicism in its emphasis on self-sufficiency, but it combined this with a stress on the brotherhood of man. Every person was to strive after virtue and live above the vicissitudes of life. This last philosophy had become the center of Hellenism by the time of Christ.

Hellenism and Judaism

Judaism was virtually the only culture that resisted the encroachment of Hellenism. Therefore, the power of this movement can be seen in the degree to which it permeated Judaism.

The pull of Hellenism was always felt primarily by the upper-class nobility, and it was strongest in Jewish communities of the Dispersion. However, under the Seleucids, the temple priesthood was pro-Hellenist, so this added a religious dimension to the economic pressure upon the wealthy. From the beginning Palestine was split into two factions: the urban nobility, who tried to make Jerusalem another polis, or Hellenistic city-state, by adding such things as gymnasiums and Greek drama; and the agricultural, poor peasants, who saw in Hellenism a threat to the very existence of the Mosaic system.

Jews had to learn koine Greek to make business transactions and participate in legal matters. Archaeology shows that almost all inscriptions in Palestine from the third century BC were in Greek, and the translation of the Torah into Greek in the Septuagint shows the permeation of the language in the Jewish communities outside of Palestine (diasporate communities). The gymnasium was the school in Hellenistic cities, and Greek education was the key to citizenship. Alexandria, Egypt, in this regard became the intellectual center of the Greek world, and its influence on the strong Jewish community in that city was considerable. Well-to-do Jews in lands of the Dispersion and in Jerusalem itself were expected to procure a gymnasium education. Many followed the Greek practice of participating naked in sports, as can be seen from the literature of the intertestamental period, which is strongly antagonistic a century later (due to Jewish aversion to such public display). Jewish synagogue schools, as a result of competition with the gymnasia, adopted Greek ways. In fact, the development of the scribal tradition is partly due to this interaction; the movement was away from the oligarchical system of the temple era and toward a democratic instruction of the whole people.

Jewish literature and philosophy became permeated by Hellenistic patterns. This is seen in 1 and 2 Maccabees, which reflect Greek historiography. And Hellenistic influence can be seen in virtually every Jewish work of this period. The major exponent, of course, was Philo of Alexandria, whose allegorical interpretation of the OT was designed to make Jewish teachings palatable to the Hellenistic world and vice versa. This attitude was quite common. The symbolism of Jewish apocalyptic writing was influenced by a combination of Hellenistic and Oriental (primarily Persian) themes, and even the hyperconservative Essene movement used thought forms that had been molded via Judaism's penetration by Hellenistic and Persian ideas. The stress on "eternal knowledge" and "revealed mystery" and the dualistic combination of salvation history and anthropology are evidence of this. Of course, the influence was not all one way. The development of Greek philosophy was strongly influenced by Semitic forms, especially Phoenician; and the strong Jewish piety was very attractive to the Greek mind.

It is accurate to say that even the Judaism of Palestine in the first century BC was a Hellenistic Judaism. The universality of the koine Greek, the infiltration of Greek learning and thought patterns,

the presence of Jewish literature in Greek, and the permeation of Hellenistic rhetorical devices, even into the very literature of the opposition movement, shows the power of Hellenism in Palestine.

Hellenism and Christianity

Some scholars have attempted to stratify early Christianity into periods typified by Palestinian, Hellenistic-Jewish, and Hellenistic outlooks. However, as the evidence above has shown, this is by no means an easy task, since even Judea was penetrated by Greek thought patterns. To be sure, the reactionary stance against Hellenism in Judaism is paralleled by the Hellenist-Hebrew conflict of [Acts 6](#) and the gentile mission. However, from the very earliest stages, the influence of Hellenism on the church can be traced. Moreover, it becomes virtually impossible to know whether a phrase is drawn from Palestinian or from Hellenistic sources, due to the mutual penetration of both into Palestine itself, and to the bilingual nature of the church from the beginning.

This does not mean that there were no differences at all. The Hellenistic background of Stephen allowed him to see the logical implications of the land and the temple typifying Christ (cf. [Acts 6–7](#)), while the more conservative Jerusalem church did not. Also, a study of the speeches in Acts shows that the kerygma (preaching) developed differently for Jewish and gentile audiences. The first centered on OT fulfillment and the second on the active penetration of history by the one true God, who, unlike dead idols, involved himself in the affairs of man.

The fact that the NT was written in koine Greek makes the influence very direct. Strongly Jewish-oriented works, such as Hebrews or James, are written in polished Greek, and even the Gospels, which record the life of Jesus in a Jewish setting, reflect Hellenistic historiography (e.g., an interest in the theological meaning of the historical events). Most obviously Hellenistic, of course, are ideas found in the Epistles stemming from the gentile mission. Early hymns like [Colossians 1:15–22](#) use terminology from the Hellenistic environs to describe the incomparable superiority of Jesus over pagan ideals. The stress on the universal mission, while based on the teachings of Jesus, developed during the gentile mission; the primitive church interpreted it in keeping with Jewish proselyte theology, which was that the Gentiles became Christians after becoming Jews.

See also Epicureans; Gnosticism; Greece, Greek; Hellenists; Judaism; Stoicism, Stoics.

Hellenists

Name used in [Acts 6:1, 9:29](#), and possibly [11:20](#) for a distinct branch of the early church that was characterized by Greek modes of thinking. Their actual identification is disputed, and the following possibilities have been propounded: (1) Greek-speaking Jews rather than Aramaic-speaking Jews (but “Hebrews,” as in [6:1](#), was seldom used in a linguistic sense); (2) proselytes of “Greeks” as opposed to true Jews (the list of deacons in [6:5](#) makes this doubtful, for it is unlikely that they were all proselytes); (3) diasporate Jews living in Palestine (fits [6:1–6](#) but not the other passages); (4) pro-Hellenist sect within Judaism (this does not fit the whole tenor of the passages); (5) Gentiles who joined the church at an early date (this does not really fit the context of all three passages); (6) a general, not specific, term simply referring to one who either speaks Greek or follows Greek customs (or both). This is the best answer, as a study of the context illustrates.

In [6:1](#) the group was probably made up of Hellenistic Jews then living in Palestine. This is seen in the deacons chosen in [6:5](#). Luke used Greek names for all of them, probably not because they were Greek but to symbolize the desire of the apostles to unify the separate groups. Most Jews in the ancient world had three names—a Jewish, a Greek, and a Roman name—and used one or the other depending on the occasion. The diversity is even more apparent in [6:9](#). Hellenistic Jews differed sufficiently in their background and worship habits, especially in the use of Greek in the service, that there would be separate synagogues for them (there were seven such in Jerusalem alone). This created a potentially divisive situation for the early church, and the schism here was the result. The “Hebrews” would naturally tend to allocate the common pool to those they knew, and so the separation between the groups would add to the problem.

In [9:29](#) the “Hellenists” are members of the same group. Paul, a diasporate Jew himself, would naturally go to his old compatriots on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. In [11:20](#) the manuscript evidence is equally divided between “Hellenists” and “Greeks.” As “Hellenist” is used in [11:20](#), it designates the Greek-speaking populace

of Antioch and therefore Gentiles in general. This is different from the usages in [6:1](#) and [9:29](#).

See also Acts of the Apostles, Book of the; Hellenism; Judaism.

Helmet

See Armor and Weapons.

Helon

The father of Eliab. He was the leader of the tribe of Zebulun when Moses counted all the Israelite people (called a census) at God's command ([Numbers 1:9; 2:7; 7:24, 29; 10:16](#)).

Helps, Gift of

See Spiritual Gifts.

Hemam

KJV spelling of Heman, Lotan's son, in [Genesis 36:22](#). See Heman #1.

Heman

1. Lotan's son, the brother of Hori and a descendant of Seir the Horite ([Gn 36:22](#)); alternately spelled Homam in [1 Chronicles 1:39](#), reflecting a later scribal error.

2. Mahol's son, descendant of Zerah from Judah's tribe and one of the sages whose wisdom was surpassed by King Solomon's ([1 Kgs 4:31](#); [1 Chr 2:6](#)). He is perhaps the Ezrahit and author of [Psalm 88](#).

3. Kohathite Levite, Joel's son and one appointed, along with Asaph and Ethan (also called Jeduthun), by David to lead the musicians in the sanctuary ([1 Chr 6:33; 15:17; 16:41](#)). During the transport of the ark from Obed-edom's house to Jerusalem, he was responsible for sounding the bronze cymbals ([1 Chr 15:19; 2 Chr 5:12](#)). Heman fathered 14 sons and 3 daughters, all of whom served as musicians in the Lord's house ([1 Chr 25:1–6](#)). Later, his descendants participated in the cleansing of the temple during King Hezekiah's reign (715–686 BC;

[2 Chr 29:14](#)) and assisted with the Passover celebration initiated by King Josiah (640–609 BC; [2 Chr 35:15](#)).

Hemath

KJV form of Hammath, the Rechabite, in [1 Chronicles 2:55](#). See Hammath (Person).

Hemdan

Dishon's son and a descendant of Seir the Horite ([Gn 36:26](#)). He is also called Hamran in [1 Chronicles 1:41](#) (kjv "Amram").

Hemlock

KJV mistranslation for poisonous weeds and for wormwood in [Hosea 10:4](#) and [Amos 6:12](#), respectively. See Plants (Wormwood).

Hemorrhage

A flow of blood coming from a cut or nosebleed ([Proverbs 30:33](#)).

In Scripture, it mostly refers to menstruation. Laws about normal and abnormal menstruation are given in [Leviticus 15:19–30](#). A woman with normal menstruation was unclean for seven days, as well as anything she touched. Any woman who bled longer than seven days was unclean as long as she was bleeding, plus seven additional days.

All the Gospels except John tell the story of Jesus miraculously healing the woman who had bled for 12 years ([Matthew 9:20–22](#); [Mark 5:25–34](#); [Luke 8:43–48](#)). By touching Jesus's clothing, the woman violated the Old Testament laws about menstruation, as she was making Jesus's garment unclean ([Leviticus 15](#)). Her act of faith in Jesus healed her.

See also Medicine and Medical Practice.

Hen

See Birds (Fowl, Domestic).

Hen (Person)

KJV alternate name for Josiah, Zephaniah's son, in [Zechariah 6:14](#). See Josiah #2.

Hena

One of the six cities that the rabshakeh boasted fell before the armies of Sennacherib, in spite of their gods ([2 Kgs 18:34](#)). Rabshakeh hoped the example of these cities would strike fear in King Hezekiah's heart and make him doubt the Lord's deliverance as the same hordes surrounded Jerusalem. The kings of the five other cities are mentioned along with Hena again in [2 Kings 19:13](#) and [Isaiah 37:13](#).

Henadad

Head of a Levite family that participated in the rebuilding of the temple ([Ezr 3:9](#)). Members of this family also helped to build the Jerusalem wall ([Neh 3:18, 24](#)), and signed Ezra's covenant of faithfulness to God together with Nehemiah ([10:9](#)).

Henna

A sweet-smelling, flowering shrub mentioned in [Song of Songs 1:14](#) and [4:13](#). In older Bible translations like the King James Version, the Hebrew word *kopher* was translated as "camphire." But scholars today agree it refers to the henna plant (*Lawsonia inermis*).

Henna is native to northern India and grows wild in the Sudan, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel and the surrounding areas. It grows between 1.2 to 3.7 meters (4 to 12 feet) tall. Its fragrance is similar to that of roses.

People have used henna for beauty purposes since ancient times. To prepare it, the leaves are dried and crushed into a powder, then mixed with water to make a paste. This paste creates a bright yellow, orange, or red color that was used to dye fingernails, toenails, fingertips, palms of hands, and soles of feet. Henna was especially used by young girls. Men also used henna to color their beards, and it was used on the manes and tails of horses. The color would last for two or three weeks before needing to be applied again.

Archaeologists have discovered Egyptian mummies decorated with henna. The use of henna

as a cosmetic was common in Egypt during the time the Israelites were slaves there, so they would have been familiar with it.

Heno

1. KJV form of Enoch, Jared's son, in [1 Chronicles 1:3](#). See Enoch (Person) #2.
2. KJV form of Hanoch, Midian's son, in [1 Chronicles 1:33](#). See Hanoch #1.

Hepher (Person)

1. A man from the tribe of Manasseh and founder of the Hepherite clan ([Numbers 26:32](#)).
2. A son of Ashhur from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chronicles 4:6](#)).
3. One of the "mighty men" of King David ([1 Chronicles 11:36](#)).

Hepher (Place)

Canaanite city located northwest of Jerusalem. It was captured by Joshua ([Jos 12:17](#)) and later used as an administrative district under Solomon ([1 Kgs 4:10](#)).

Hepherite

Any descendant of Hepher from the tribe of Manasseh ([Numbers 26:32](#)).

See Hepher (Person) #1.

Hephzibah

1. Mother of Manasseh, king of Judah ([2 Kgs 21:1](#)).
2. Symbolic name (kjv) for the restored city of Jerusalem, meaning "my delight is in her" ([Is 62:4](#)).

Herb

Plant valued for its culinary, medicinal, or aromatic properties. *See* Plants (Cummin; Dill; Mint; Nard); Bitter Herbs.

Hercules

A Greek god, the son of Zeus, renowned for strength. Second Maccabees 4 records the Hellenizing fervor of Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 BC), who succeeded Seleucus IV Philopator, as he "founded a gymnasium right under the citadel" ([2 Macc 4:12](#)). At the quadrennial games in Tyre when the king was present, Jason the brother of Onias, who had obtained the high priesthood by corruption, "sent envoys, chosen as being Antiochian citizens from Jerusalem, to carry three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Hercules" (v [19](#), rsv). Those who were sent with the money thought it inappropriate to use it for the sacrifice, so they applied it to the construction of ships instead (vv [19–20](#)), which indicates some resistance to the pattern of Hellenization.

See also Gods and Goddesses.

Herdsmen

Men who cared for domestic animals, such as cattle, sheep and goats ([Genesis 13:7–8](#); [26:20](#); [1 Samuel 21:7](#)). They also included shepherds. In the New Testament, shepherds were well known. The metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep was used by Jesus ([John 10:1–16](#)). Some herdsmen kept pigs ([Matthew 8:33](#); [Mark 5:14](#); [Luke 8:34](#)).

Heres

1. Region from which the Amorites were not expelled by the Israelites, known as Mt Heres ([Jgs 1:34–35](#), rsv "Har-heres"). In [Joshua 19:41–42](#), Mt Heres is synonymous with the town of Ir-shemesh (Beth-shemesh).
2. Ascent of Heres ([Jgs 8:13](#), rsv; nlt "Heres Pass"). Though the text and the exact nature of the terrain is unclear, it was the place on the Jordan River from which Gideon returned after his victory over Zebah and Zalmunna.

Heresh

Levite who returned to Jerusalem following the exile ([1 Chr 9:15](#)).

Heresy

A sectarian group or teaching that deviates from the norm. The Greek word (hairesis), literally meaning “choice,” designates a sect or faction. For example, the Sadducees were a sect within Judaism ([Acts 5:17](#)), as were the Pharisees ([15:5](#)). When many Jews first believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were known as “the sect of the Nazarenes” ([24:5](#)). In each of these verses, the word haiesis denotes nothing more than a sect. After the church grew and developed, any factious group within a local church was called haiesis—that is, it was a sect that held certain opinions contrary to the truths established by the apostles. In view of this, Paul told the Corinthian church that factious sects would develop among them as a way of separating the false from the true ([1 Cor 11:19](#)). Eventually, the word “heresy” came to connote the particular teaching that caused certain ones to break away from orthodoxy. Thus, Peter warned Christians about various false teachers who would try to deceive believers with their heretical teachings ([2 Pt 2:1](#)). In the modern era, this is how the word “heresy” is usually understood; it is unorthodox and/or false teaching that damages the faith of certain believers and also causes divisive factions within the church.

Hereth

Section of forested land in the territory of Judah where David and his men hid for a time as they fled from King Saul ([1 Sm 22:5](#)).

Hermas

1. Christian to whom Paul sent greetings in his letter to the Romans ([Rom 16:14](#)).
2. Christian who wrote the apocryphal book called The Shepherd (referring to the work's central shepherd figure). In The Shepherd, Hermas states that he was originally a slave, gained his freedom, married and started a business, lost nearly everything material, saw his children lapse, and finally brought his family together by acts of

repentance. Hermas indicates also that he knew Clement of Rome, late-first-century bishop of Rome. From internal evidences, it is impossible to tell if this biography is fictional or not. As to external facts, references to Hermas are contradictory. Some authorities, most eminently the Muratorian Canon, a late-second-century document, make Hermas a brother of Pius, bishop of Rome about 150. In the third century, Origen thought Hermas was the individual Paul named in [Romans 16:14](#), an identification upholding Hermas's own statements. Modern scholarly commentators lean much toward the first opinion. *See also Shepherd of Hermas.*

Hermes

1. A Greek god who was the son of Zeus and Maia. The Romans called him Mercury. In Greek mythology, Hermes was the messenger of the gods. He guided the souls of dead people to Hades (the place of the dead). He was the god of fertility, the patron of music, the guardian of travelers, and the god of expressive speech. When Paul was ministering in Lystra, the local people thought the apostle Paul was Hermes. This was because Paul performed a miracle and was the main speaker. The people of Lystra believed Paul was a god who had come to visit them in human form ([Acts 14:11–12](#), Mercurius in the King James Version).
2. A Christian to whom Paul sent greetings in his letter to Rome ([Romans 16:14](#)).

Hermogenes

An important Asian Christian who “turned away” from Paul ([2 Timothy 1:15](#)). He refused to defend Paul during the apostle's second imprisonment in Rome. It is uncertain why he abandoned Paul. He might have disagreed about some teaching. But, it seems more likely that Hermogenes was afraid to suffer the same fate as Paul.

Hermon, Mount

Mount Hermon is a large mountain that marks the northern edge of the land that Joshua and Moses conquered east of the Jordan River. This mountain served as the northern border of the land given to half of the tribe of Manasseh, as well as the northern border of all Israel ([Deuteronomy 3:8; 4:48; Joshua 11:17; 12:1, 5; 13:11; 1 Chronicles 5:23](#)). It stands high above the Lebanon Valley and the land of Mizpah ([Joshua 11:3, 8](#)). Joshua chased the kings of Canaan to this area after defeating them at the waters of Merom ([Joshua 11:17; 13:5](#)).

The Bible's poetry praises Mount Hermon for two things: its great height and the dew it causes to fall on Mount Zion ([Psalm 133:3](#)). The mountain was also known for its wild animals ([Song of Solomon 4:8](#)). Other Bible passages mention it together with the Jordan River and Mount Tabor ([Psalm 42:6; Psalm 89:12](#)). The mountain itself is about 21 kilometers (13 miles) long and rises to a height of 2.8 kilometers (9,166 feet).

Hermonite

KJV mistranslation for Hermon (Mount) in [Psalm 42:6](#). Mt Hermon, a sacred site since antiquity, lies on the northernmost boundary of Joshua's conquest ([Jos 12:5; 13:11](#)). See Hermon, Mount.

Herod, Herodian Family

Political rulers during the lifetime of Christ. Christ was born when Herod the Great was ruling. Herod's son Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee and Perea, the territories in which Jesus and John the Baptist carried out most of their ministries. It was this ruler who beheaded John the Baptist and tried Christ just before his death. Herod Agrippa I is the persecutor of the church in [Acts 12](#), and Herod Agrippa II heard Paul's testimony ([Acts 26](#)) just before he went to Rome to be tried by Caesar. Without a knowledge of the Herodian family, one can hardly have a proper understanding of the times of Christ.

Preview

- The Herodian Dynasty
- Herod the Great
- Archelaus
- Antipas

- Philip the Tetrarch
- Agrippa I
- Agrippa II

The Herodian Dynasty (67–47 BC)

The Herodian dynasty became prominent during the confusion that resulted in the decay of the Hasmonean dynasty, the transference of Syria and Palestine to Roman rule, and the civil wars that marked the decay of the nation. Much of what we know about the Herods comes from the historian Josephus's writings: *Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Jewish War*.

Herod the Great (47–4 BC)

As Governor of Galilee (47–37 BC)

Herod the Great became governor of Galilee at 25 years of age. Although he gained the respect of both the Romans and the Galilean Jews for quickly capturing and executing the bandit leader Ezekias, some in Hyrcanus's court thought that he was becoming too powerful and arranged to have him brought to trial. He was acquitted and released and thereafter fled to Sextus Caesar at Damascus. Sextus Caesar, governor of Syria, appointed Herod governor of Coele-Syria, and thus he became involved with Roman affairs in Syria. He remained in this position under a series of rulers and was successful in collecting taxes and suppressing various revolts. Thus, in 41 BC when Antony came to power under Octavius Caesar, after asking the advice of Hyrcanus II, Sextus appointed Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs of Judea.

As King (37–4 BC)

The reign of Herod is divided by most scholars into three periods: (1) consolidation from 37 to 25 BC; (2) prosperity from 25 to 13 BC; and (3) domestic troubles from 13 to 4 BC.

The period of consolidation extended from his accession as king in 37 BC to the death of the sons of Babas, the last male representatives of the Hasmonean family. During this period, he had to contend with many powerful adversaries.

The first adversaries, the people and the Pharisees, objected to his being an Idumean, a half Jew, and a friend of the Romans. Those who opposed him were punished, and those who took his side were rewarded with favors and honors.

The second adversaries were those of the aristocracy who sided with Antigonus. Herod had executed 45 of the wealthiest and had confiscated their properties to replenish his own coffers.

The third group of adversaries was the Hasmonean family. Herod's chief problem was his mother-in-law, Alexandra. She was upset that he had not appointed another Hasmonean to the high priesthood to replace Hyrcanus, specifically her son Aristobulus. She wrote to Cleopatra, asking her to influence Antony to force Herod to remove the appointed high priest, Ananel, and replace him with Aristobulus. Finally, Herod gave way to the pressure. In the end, after a celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, Herod had Aristobulus drowned, making it look like an accident. Herod put Alexandra in chains and placed her under guard to keep her from causing him more trouble.

Herod's fourth adversary was Cleopatra. When civil war broke out between Antony and Octavius, Herod wanted to help Antony. But Cleopatra persuaded Antony to set Herod in battle against the Arabian king Malchus, who had failed to pay tribute to her. When she saw Herod winning, she ordered her troops to help Malchus, hoping to weaken both parties to the breaking point so that she could absorb them both. After a catastrophic earthquake in his domain in 31 BC, Herod defeated the Arabs and returned home. Soon after, on September 2, 31 BC, Octavius defeated Antony in the Battle of Actium, resulting in the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra.

The second period of Herod's reign was one of prosperity (25–14 BC). It was a period of splendor and enjoyment interrupted by occasional disturbances. According to Josephus, the most noble of all Herod's achievements was the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, begun in 20/19 BC (*Antiquities* 15.8.1). Rabbinic literature claims, "He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building" (Babylonian Talmud: *Baba Bathra* 4a). Prior to this, he had built theaters, amphitheaters, and racecourses for both men and horses. In 24 BC Herod built himself a royal palace and built or rebuilt many fortresses and gentile temples, including Strato's Tower, later renamed Caesarea.

During this time, he became very interested in culture and gathered around him men accomplished in Greek literature and art. Greek rhetoricians were appointed to the highest offices of the state. One of these was Nicolas of Damascus, Herod's instructor and adviser in philosophy,

rhetoric, and history. In late 24 BC he married Mariamne, daughter of Simon, a well-known priest in Jerusalem (she will be referred to as Mariamne II).

During this period, Herod's rule was favorably accepted by the people. They were annoyed, however, by two things. First, he violated Jewish law by his introduction of the quinquennial games in honor of Caesar; and second, he built theaters and racecourses. He demanded a loyalty oath from his subjects, except for a privileged few. Also, he would not allow them to congregate freely for fear of a revolt. Despite these things, he had good control of the people and twice favored them by lowering taxes (in 14 BC he reduced taxes by one-fourth).

The third period of Herod's rule was clearly marked by domestic troubles (13–4 BC). By now he had married ten wives. His first wife, Doris, had only one son, Antipater. He repudiated Doris and Antipater when he married Mariamne I, allowing them to visit Jerusalem only during the festivals. He married Mariamne I in 37 BC. She was the granddaughter of Hyrcanus and had five children, two daughters and three sons. The youngest son died while in Rome, and the remaining two sons were to play an important role in this part of Herod's reign. In late 24 BC he married his third wife, Mariamne II, to whom one child was born, Herod (Philip). Malthace, his fourth wife, was a Samaritan and mother of two sons, Archelaus and Antipas. His fifth wife, Cleopatra of Jerusalem, was the mother of Philip the tetrarch. Of the remaining five wives, only Pallas, Phaedra, and Elpsis are known by name, and none played a significant part in the events of this period.

Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Mariamne I, were his favorites. Immediately following their own marriages, troubles began within the Herodian household. Salome, Herod's sister and mother of Berenice (wife of Aristobulus), hated these two sons, mainly because she wanted the position and favor they enjoyed for her own son. Herod decided to recall his exiled son Antipater to show Alexander and Aristobulus there was another heir to the throne. Antipater took full advantage of the situation and used every conceivable means to acquire the coveted throne. Finally, a man of bad character, Eurycles from Lacedaemon, took it upon himself to inflame the father against his two sons and vice versa. Soon other mischief makers joined Eurycles, and Herod's patience became exhausted.

He put Alexander and Aristobulus in prison and named Antipater heir.

In his impatience to gain the throne, Antipater attempted to poison Herod. This plot failed when Pheroras, Herod's brother, drank the poison by mistake. Herod put Antipater in prison and reported the matter to the emperor (c. 5 BC). At this time Herod became very ill with an incurable disease. He drew up a new will that bypassed his older sons, Archelaus and Philip, because Antipater had poisoned his mind against them also. He chose his youngest son, Antipas, as his sole successor.

It was during this time that the wise men arrived in Judea, searching for the newborn king of the Jews. Herod instructed them to report to him the whereabouts of this child as soon as they found him. Being warned in a dream, they did not do so, but rather returned to their homes by another route. God warned Joseph (husband of the mother of Jesus) to flee to Egypt because of Herod's intention to kill Jesus. Joseph took his family and left Bethlehem. Shortly after, Herod killed all the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under.

Herod's disease grew increasingly worse. Permission came from Rome to execute Antipater, which he promptly did. He again altered his will, making Archelaus king of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; Antipas tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Philip tetrarch of territories east of Galilee. On the fifth day after Antipater's execution, Herod died at Jericho in the spring of 4 BC. The people acclaimed Archelaus as their king.

Archelaus (4 BC–AD 6)

Archelaus was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace (a Samaritan) and was born around 22 BC. Archelaus was faced with a multitude of problems. He had killed 3,000 people in putting down a revolution led by people avenging the blood of those killed by his father, Herod. Thus his rule got off to a bad start. At Pentecost in 4 BC, another revolt broke out, which lasted about two and a half months and during which the temple porticoes were burned and the treasury was pillaged by the Romans. This unrest spread to the countryside of Judea and to Galilee and Perea.

Archelaus treated both the Jews and the Samaritans brutally (*War* 2.7.3), a fact borne out by the Gospels. When Joseph returned from his flight to Egypt and learned that Archelaus was ruling Judea, he was afraid to go there and was warned

against it by God; he took the infant Jesus to Galilee instead ([Mt 2:22](#)).

Archelaus's tyranny finally caused the Jews and Samaritans to send a delegation to Rome and complain formally to Augustus. The fact that such bitter enemies as the Jews and Samaritans could cooperate in this matter indicates the serious nature of the complaint. Antipas and Philip also went to Rome to complain about him. Presumably they resented his neglect as their Roman representative for Palestine. Thus in AD 6 Archelaus was deposed and exiled to Vienna in Gaul (modern Vienne on the Rhône, south of Lyons). Antipas and Philip were allowed to continue their respective rules, and Archelaus's territories were reduced to a province ruled by prefects or procurators.

Antipas (4 BC–AD 39)

Antipas was the younger brother of Archelaus, born around 20 BC. Of all the Herodians, he is mentioned most in the NT because he ruled over Galilee and Perea, where both Jesus and John the Baptist concentrated their ministries.

Antipas's domain was in turmoil caused by the rebellion begun at Pentecost in 4 BC. He immediately set out to restore order and rebuild what had been destroyed. Following the example of his father, Herod the Great, Antipas founded cities. Sepphoris was his first project; it was the largest city in Galilee and his capital city until he built Tiberias. Since Nazareth was only four miles (6.4 kilometers) south-southeast of Sepphoris, it is quite possible that Joseph, Mary's husband, was employed as a carpenter ([Mt 13:55](#); [Mk 6:3](#)) to help rebuild that city.

Of the 12 cities built by the Herodian family, Tiberias is the most important. It was the first city in Jewish history to be founded with the municipal framework of a Greek polis. It was built in honor of the reigning emperor, Tiberius. Due to the fact that a cemetery was destroyed in the process of building, Tiberias was considered unclean by the Jews. Antipas offered free houses, land and tax exemptions for the first few years to anyone who would move into the city. He completed the city in AD 23 and made it his capital.

In the Christian world the incident for which Antipas is most remembered is his beheading of John the Baptist ([Mt 14:3–12](#); [Mk 6:17–29](#); [Lk 3:19–20](#); *Antiquities* 18.5.2.116–119). There was a tangle of family events leading up to the death of

John the Baptist. Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas IV (the daughter's name is unknown). Aretas IV was the Nabatean king, and Augustus may have encouraged this marriage since he favored intermarriages between various rulers to promote peace in his empire.

Around AD 29 Antipas took a trip to Rome, and on the way he paid a visit to his half brother Herod Philip, who must have lived in a coastal city in Palestine. Antipas fell in love with Herodias, Philip's wife, who was also Antipas's niece. The idea of becoming the wife of a tetrarch appealed to her, and she agreed to marry him when he returned from Rome if he would oust Aretas's daughter. Antipas agreed to the plan, and when Aretas's daughter heard of it, she fled to her father. This was a breach of political alliance as well as a personal insult, which led to retaliation by Aretas.

The marriage of Antipas and Herodias was in violation of the Mosaic law that forbade marriage to a brother's wife ([Lv 18:16; 20:21](#)) except in order to raise children for a deceased childless brother by a levirate marriage ([Dt 25:5; Mk 12:19](#)). In this case, Philip not only had a child, Salome, but he was still alive. This is the situation that John the Baptist spoke so boldly against, and Antipas threw him in prison. Herodias's hatred of John the Baptist was too great merely to settle for his incarceration. At an appropriate time, possibly Antipas's birthday, she planned a banquet at Machaerus in Perea. Her daughter, Salome, danced for the king, and in an impulsive moment Antipas promised her under oath that he would give her anything, up to half of his kingdom. Following her mother's advice, she asked for John the Baptist's head on a platter. Immediately Antipas was sorry for his rash promise, but in order to save face in the presence of his underlords, he granted the request. Thus, John's ministry ended around AD 31 or 32.

There are three specific times when Antipas and Jesus are mentioned together in the Gospels.

Early in Jesus' ministry Antipas heard of him and commented, perhaps with irony, that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected ([Mt 14:1-2; Mk 6:14-16; Lk 9:7-9](#)). It was obvious to Antipas that Jesus' ministry was even more remarkable than John's, but he was reluctant to use force to bring about the meeting for fear of once more arousing the people against him. Eventually, Jesus withdrew from Antipas's territories without the two meeting.

Later, as Jesus became more popular, Antipas saw a potential threat to his own power and threatened

to kill Jesus. Thus it was that on Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem he was warned by some of the Pharisees that he should leave Antipas's territories for his own safety ([Lk 13:31-33](#)). Jesus sent as answer to "that fox" that he would continue his ministry of healing and casting out demons for a little longer, and when he had finished, he would then go to Jerusalem to die. The lion and fox were often contrasted in ancient literature. The Lion of Judah, Jesus Christ, was not going to be coerced by the crafty coward, Antipas.

The final encounter between the two occurred when Jesus was tried by Antipas in AD 33 ([Lk 23:6-12](#)). Since this event is mentioned only by Luke, some scholars consider it legendary. It must be remembered, however, that Luke's addressee was Theophilus, probably a Roman officer, who would be especially interested in the reconciliation between Pilate and Antipas mentioned in this passage.

According to Luke's account, when Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, he sent him to Antipas (who was celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem). Pilate thus freed himself from an awkward situation. A more subtle reason may have been to reconcile himself to Antipas. Their relationship had been rather strained since the Galilean massacre ([Lk 13:1](#)), and because Pilate brought votive shields into Jerusalem, arousing the anger of the Jews (Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium* 299-304). When Jesus was brought before Antipas, the ruler only mocked him and sent him back to Pilate. The main political accomplishment of the incident was Antipas and Pilate's reconciliation.

Philip the Tetrarch (4 BC-AD 34)

Philip the tetrarch was the son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra of Jerusalem and was born around 22 BC. When Herod's will was resolved, Philip was made tetrarch over Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Trachonitis, and Iturea, all in the northern part of Herod the Great's domain ([Lk 3:1](#)). His subjects were mainly Syrian and Greek. Thus he was the first and only Herodian to have his image on his coins.

He built two cities. First, he rebuilt and enlarged Paneas and renamed it Caesarea Philippi. Here Peter made his confession of faith to Jesus and was given the revelation of the church ([Mt 16:13-20; Mk 8:27-30](#)). Next, he rebuilt and enlarged Bethsaida and renamed it Julias. Here Jesus healed the blind man ([Mk 8:22-26](#)), and in a nearby desert place he fed the 5,000 ([Lk 9:10-17](#)).

Philip was not as politically ambitious as his brothers. His rule was marked by tranquility and the loyalty of his subjects. When Philip died in AD 34, Tiberius annexed his territories to Syria. After Caligula became emperor in AD 37, he gave the territories to Agrippa I, brother of Herodias.

Agrippa I (AD 37–44)

Agrippa I was the son of Aristobulus (son of Herod the Great and Mariamne I) and Berenice. He was born in 10 BC and was the brother of Herodias.

Agrippa I might be considered the black sheep of the Herodian family. While at school in Rome, he lived a wanton life, incurring many debts. In Rome he became a friend of Gaius Caligula and at one point stated that he wished Caligula were king rather than Tiberius. This was overheard and reported to Tiberius, who imprisoned him. He remained in prison until Tiberius's death six months later.

Upon Caligula's accession to the throne, he released Agrippa and gave him Philip the tetrarch's territories and the northern part of Lysanias's territory as well as the title of king. The title of king aroused the jealousy of his sister Herodias, and that eventually led to her husband, Antipas's, downfall. At that time (AD 39) Agrippa acquired all of Antipas's territories and property.

When Caligula died in AD 41, Agrippa curried the favor of the new emperor Claudius, whereupon Claudius added Judea and Samaria to Agrippa's territory. This territory was once ruled by Agrippa's grandfather, Herod the Great.

Agrippa I is mentioned in the NT for his persecution of the early church in order to gain favor with the Jews ([Acts 12:1–19](#)). He killed James, the son of Zebedee, and imprisoned Peter. When Peter was released by an angel, Agrippa put the sentries to death.

Agrippa died in AD 44 in Caesarea. Accounts of this incident are recorded both by Josephus (*Antiquities* 19.9.1.274–275; *War* 2.11.5.214–215) and the Scriptures. The incident occurred at Caesarea; he was wearing a sparkling silver robe, and when the people flattered him by calling him a god, he was suddenly struck with a mortal illness and died a horrible death. He was survived by his daughters, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla, and by a son, Agrippa, who was 17 at the time. Because of Agrippa II's youth, his father's territories were temporarily made a province.

Agrippa II (AD 50–100)

Agrippa II was the son of Agrippa I and Cypros. In AD 50, six years after his father's death, Claudius made him king of Chalcis.

Agrippa II was in control of the temple treasury and the vestments of the high priest and thus could appoint the high priest. The Romans consulted him on religious matters, which is probably why Festus asked him to hear the apostle Paul at Caesarea (AD 59), where he was accompanied by his sister Bernice ([Acts 25–26](#)).

In May AD 66 the Palestinian revolution began (*War* 2.14.4.284). When Agrippa's attempt to quell the revolt failed, he became a staunch ally of the Romans throughout the entire war (AD 66–70). During this time, Nero committed suicide, the new emperor Galba was murdered, and Vespasian became the emperor. After pledging his allegiance to the new emperor, Agrippa remained with Titus, Vespasian's son, who was in charge of the war (Tacitus's *History* 5.81). After the fall of Jerusalem (August 6, AD 70), Agrippa was probably present to celebrate the destruction of his own people.

Following this, Vespasian added new territories to Agrippa's kingdom, though just which ones is not known. In AD 79 Vespasian died and Titus became emperor. Little is known of Agrippa's rule after this, except that he wrote to the historian Josephus praising him for *The Jewish War*, and he purchased a copy of it (Josephus's *Life* 65.361–367; *Apion* 1.9.47–52).

Although the Talmud implies that Agrippa II had two wives (Babylonian Talmud: *Sukkah* 27a), Josephus gives no indication that he had any wives or children. Rather, he was known for his incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice. He died around AD 100. His death marked the end of the Herodian dynasty.

See also Herodians; Judaism.

Herodians

The Herodians were a Jewish group that supported King Herod's family as rulers. They lived in Israel during the time of Jesus. They worked closely with other Jewish leaders called the Pharisees, especially when they opposed Jesus's teachings and actions.

Herodians in the Gospels

The Gospels mention a Jewish group called the Herodians three times. They appear in two events: one in Galilee and one in Jerusalem. In both events, they worked with the Pharisees against Jesus. In [Mark 3:6](#), Jesus healed the man with the withered hand. After this healing, the Pharisees and Herodians planned to destroy Jesus. Later, in [Matthew 22:16](#) and [Mark 12:13](#), the Pharisees and Herodians worked together to trick Jesus. They asked him if the law allowed Jews to pay taxes to Caesar. Luke and John do not mention the Herodians in their Gospels.

Were the Herodians and the Sadducees the Same Group?

In [Mark 8:15](#), Jesus warns about the "leaven of Herod." (Leaven is yeast that makes bread rise, but Jesus used it as a symbol for harmful influence.) Some versions of this text say "leaven of the Herodians" instead. However, when Matthew tells the same story ([Matthew 16:6](#)), he writes about the "leaven of the Sadducees." This difference makes us wonder: Were the Herodians and the Sadducees the same group?

Matthew and Mark describe Jesus's opponents differently in their Gospels. Matthew focuses on how religious leaders opposed Jesus. Mark shows that both religious and government leaders were against Jesus. This helps explain why they use different words about the "leaven" (harmful influence). Matthew writes about "the leaven of the Sadducees," while Mark writes about "the leaven of Herod" or "the leaven of the Herodians."

Scholars have different ideas about why this is:

- Some think the Herodians were a group that supported the government, and most of their members were Sadducees.
- Some think the Herodians and Sadducees were actually the same group.
- Others say the Herodians were also called Boethusians (a group named after Boethus, a high priest).
- The Boethusians believed the same things about God and religion as the Sadducees did.

The Sadducees supported a powerful Jewish family called the Hasmoneans, who led a successful fight against Greek rulers in 167 BC. The Boethusians, on the other hand, supported King Herod's family. This is why people called them "Herodians."

While these two groups supported different rulers, they were connected in other ways. The Herodians shared many religious beliefs with the Sadducees. Both groups were very powerful in the region of Palestine (the Jewish homeland).

By the time of Jesus, the Herodians and Sadducees had become more similar. One reason for this was that Herod Antipas (a ruler from Herod's family) married Herodias, a princess from the Hasmonean family. This marriage brought the two groups closer together.

Opposition to Jesus

The Herodians and Sadducees both supported the Roman rulers of their time. The Pharisees did not like either group because of this. In [Matthew 16:12](#) and [Mark 8:15](#), we see that the Pharisees were against both the Sadducees and Herodians. However, these groups put aside their differences when they saw Jesus as a threat. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians all worked together to oppose Jesus.

In summary, the Herodians (also called Boethusians) were an important group in Jesus's time. They shared religious beliefs with the Sadducees but were especially known for supporting King Herod's family as rulers. While the Pharisees hoped for a chosen leader from God (the Messiah) to create a new kingdom, the Herodians worked hard to keep Herod's family in power.

See also Herod, Herodian Family.

Herodias

The daughter of Aristobulus. Aristobulus was the son of Herod the Great and Berenice. Herodias was born between 9 and 7 BC. Her older brother was Herod Agrippa I. In 6 BC, while she was still a baby, her grandfather, Herod the Great, made plans for her to marry his son by Mariamne II, Herod Philip. Later, Herodias became a mother to a daughter named Salome, who was born between AD 15 and 19.

Herodias and Herod Philip lived on the seacoast of Judea. They possibly lived at Azotus or Caesarea. In AD 29, Herod Antipas visited his niece, Herodias, at her house on his way to Rome. They liked each other and Herodias agreed to marry him if he would divorce his current wife.

At that time, Antipas was married to the daughter of Aretas IV, the Nabatean king of Petra. Herodias came from the Hasmonean royal family and did not want to live with an Arab wife. The Hasmoneans and Arabs had been enemies for a long time. When Aretas's daughter learned about Herodias and Antipas's plan, she secretly ran away to her father. Herodias and Antipas got married, which made Aretas very angry. This created serious problems between them. In AD 36, Aretas went to war against Antipas and defeated him.

John the Baptist spoke out strongly against this marriage. He publicly criticized Herodias and Antipas for getting married, saying their relationship was wrong ([Matthew 14:3-12](#); [Mark 6:17-29](#); [Luke 3:19-20](#)). Jewish law said people could not marry their brother's wife ([Leviticus 18:16](#); [20:21](#)). The only exception was a special type of marriage where a man would have children for his brother if the brother had died without having children. This was known as a levirate marriage ([Deuteronomy 25:5](#); [Mark 12:19](#)).

In this case, Herod Philip (Antipas's brother) was still alive and had a daughter, Salome. Antipas put John the Baptist in prison around AD 30 or 31 because John has spoken out strongly against the marriage. Herodias wanted John to be punished even more. Herodias arranged, possibly on Herod Antipas's birthday, to have her daughter dance before him and his officials. Herod Antipas was so happy that he promised Salome up to half of his kingdom. Herodias asked Salome to ask for John the Baptist's head on a plate.

Herodias last appears in history involved in a plan between her brother, Agrippa I, who had been named "king" by the emperor Caligula, and her husband, Antipas. Antipas had wanted the title "king" for himself for a long time. Antipas's wife told him to travel to Rome to ask for this title for himself. Caligula said no and made Antipas move away to another country instead. Herodias, however, stayed loyal to Antipas and went with him. Caligula would not have punished her because she was Agrippa's sister.

See also Herod, Herodian Family.

Herodion

Christian of Jewish ancestry to whom Paul sent greetings at the conclusion of his Epistle to the Romans ([Rom 16:11](#)).

Heron

A heron is a wading bird (genus *Ardea*) with a long, thin neck and long legs. It has a comblike growth on the inside of its third toe.

Herons are usually white, blue, green, or gray. The white heron can grow nearly a meter long (more than 3 feet). The dwarf heron is smaller, about 55.9 centimeters (22 inches) long.

Herons often live and nest in large groups called rookeries. Both parents feed the young. They eat fish, small reptiles, and insects, swallowing them whole. In late fall, adults and young migrate to warmer southern areas.

At least seven kinds of heron have been seen in the Holy Land. The white ibis, also called the buff-backed heron (*Buphus russatus*), was likely the most common. The purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*) breeds in summer wherever there is standing water. The blue-gray heron (*Ardea cinerea*) spends winter in southern Europe and North Africa. It migrates to northern Europe in early spring. In Israel, it builds winter nests near swamps and riverbanks. It can stand still in water for hours, then strike quickly with its long beak to catch prey. It often nests in tall trees and may return to the same nest year after year.

[Leviticus 11:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 14:18](#) list the heron as an unclean bird for the Israelites. Some scholars think these verses may refer to the

cormorant, but most think they mean one of the herons.

See also Birds; Cormorant.

Hesed

Part of the name Ben-hesed ([1 Kings 4:10](#)).

See Ben-hesed.

Heshbon

An important city across the Jordan River (Transjordan). It was about 80 kilometers (50 miles) east of Jerusalem. At first, it belonged to the Moabites. Later, the Amorite king Sihon conquered Heshbon. Then it became the capital of his kingdom ([Numbers 21:25–30](#)). Israel captured the city when they advanced into Canaan. The tribe of Reuben took control of this portion of the Amorite territory ([Numbers 32:37](#); [Joshua 13:17](#)). Yet, it was on the boundary between Reuben and Gad ([Joshua 13:26](#)). This resulted in the tribe of Gad occupying it. After this, the Moabites fought with Israel over who would control this land.

During the time when judges led Israel, different groups controlled the land at different times. ([Judges 3:12](#); [1 Samuel 12:9–11](#)). Israel controlled Heshbon until around 853 BC. Then Mesha, king of Moab occupied it. The Scriptures mention Heshbon in prophecies before the Israelite exile to Babylon (compare [Isaiah 15:4](#); [16:8–9](#); [Jeremiah 48:2, 33–34](#)). [Jeremiah 49:3](#) seems to indicate the Ammonites later took control of Heshbon.

It was an important Nabatean city in the Greek period. The Jews conquered it during the campaigns of Alexander Janneus. He was a Hasmonean king and high priest who ruled Judea from 103 to 76 BC. In the Roman period, Heshbon became part of the province of Syria.

Heshmon

Town mentioned only in [Joshua 15:27](#). It was located near Beth-pelet in southern Judah. The notion that the Hasmoneans originated there is unsubstantiated.

Heth

Progenitor of the Hittite people and a descendant of Canaan, in Ham's line ([Gn 10:15](#); [1 Chr 1:13](#)). See Hittites.

Hethlon

Site mentioned by Ezekiel ([Ez 47:15](#); [48:1](#)) describing part of the northern boundary of the restored kingdom of Israel.

Hexateuch

Name meaning “the sixfold book,” given to a grouping of the first six books of the Bible. Biblical critics added Joshua to the Pentateuch, the fivefold book (Genesis through Deuteronomy), because the contents and style of Joshua connected it intimately with the literary elements of the Pentateuch, thus creating the Hexateuch.

Hezeki

KJV spelling of Hizki, Elpaal's son, in [1 Chronicles 8:17](#). See Hizki.

Hezekiah

1. King of Judah from 715–686 BC. The account of Hezekiah's reign is in [2 Kings 18:1–20:21](#), [2 Chronicles 29:1–32:33](#), and [Isaiah 36:1–39:8](#).

Chronology

Hezekiah succeeded to Judah's throne at 25 and ruled for 29 years ([2 Kgs 18:2](#); [2 Chr 29:1](#)). His mother was Abi ([2 Kgs 18:2](#); [2 Chr 29:1](#); “Abijah,” a longer form), a daughter of Zechariah. The chronology of Hezekiah's reign is difficult to establish with certainty. The Bible says the Assyrian siege of Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, began in the fourth year of his reign and that Samaria fell in the sixth year ([2 Kgs 18:9–10](#)), which would make his reign begin about 728 BC and end about 699 BC. Assyrian king Sennacherib besieged the fortified Judean cities during Hezekiah's 14th year ([2 Kgs 18:13](#)), which would have been 714 BC. Assyrian records, however, indicate that Sennacherib came to the Assyrian throne in 705 BC and that his Judean

campaign took place in 701 BC. The most generally accepted solution to the discrepancy is that Hezekiah came to the throne in 715 BC, probably after a co-regency with his father, Ahaz, that began in 728 BC. That solution harmonizes with the statement that Sennacherib's siege took place in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign, or 701 BC.

Hezekiah's Religious Reforms

Hezekiah came to the throne at a critical juncture in Judah's history. Sargon II had taken Samaria in 722 BC, and Judah was militarily weakened from wars and raids by surrounding nations during the reign of Ahaz. Perhaps motivated by warnings to the northern kingdom delivered by the prophets Amos and Hosea that punishment would come if Israel did not turn back to God, Hezekiah began his religious reforms soon after becoming king.

In the first month of his reign, Hezekiah opened the temple doors and repaired them. He brought the Levites together and ordered them to sanctify themselves and the temple and to reinstate the religious ceremonies that had long been neglected. Hezekiah brought sacrifices, and the priestly temple service was restored ([2 Chr 29](#)).

Hezekiah then sent invitations throughout Judah and Israel for the Passover celebration in Jerusalem (held a month later than the prescribed time because the priests and people could not be ready earlier). It was hoped that religious unification would be a prelude to political reunification of the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. However, most of the northern tribes mocked the Judean messengers who brought the invitations, and only a few persons from the tribes of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun went to Jerusalem for the celebration ([2 Chr 30](#)).

After the Passover observance, the worshipers set about destroying the high places and altars. They broke the pillars and cut down the Asherim throughout Judah and Benjamin, and also went into Ephraim and Manasseh ([2 Chr 31:1](#)). Hezekiah even smashed the bronze serpent that Moses had made ([Nm 21:6-9](#)), for it had become an object of worship and was identified with a serpent deity, Nehushtan ([2 Kgs 18:4](#)). Because of his sweeping reforms, later generations said of Hezekiah, "There was never another king like him in the land of Judah, either before or after his time" ([2 Kgs 18:5](#), nlt).

The Assyrian Threat

Hezekiah knew that Assyria's growing international dominance was a serious threat to his kingdom, but following his father's policy of submission, Hezekiah did not attempt any resistance at first.

The inscriptions of the Assyrian king Sargon II record his victorious campaign in 711 BC against a revolt by Aziru, king of Ashdod, who requested help from Egypt and Judah. Perhaps a prophecy received by Isaiah warned Hezekiah not to interfere with the Ashdod siege ([Is 20](#)), and so no punitive action was taken against Judah by Assyria. Sargon died in 705, and his son Sennacherib came to the throne. This triggered widespread rebellion throughout the Assyrian provinces. Hezekiah withheld tribute from the new Assyrian ruler and, taking advantage of the confused situation, made raids against the Philistines ([2 Kgs 18:8](#)). After subduing rebellious elements in the East, Sennacherib began his campaign against the "land of Hatti" (the Assyrian name for the western countries) in 701 BC. In preparation Hezekiah repaired Jerusalem's city wall, raised towers on it, built another wall outside it, and strengthened the Millo in the City of David. He also stockpiled abundant quantities of weapons and shields ([2 Chr 32:5](#)). Knowing the necessity of an adequate water supply for a city under siege, Hezekiah had a 1,777-foot (542-meter) tunnel cut through solid rock from the spring of Gihon to the Siloam Pool to bring water into the city and to prevent the Assyrians from gaining access to the spring water outside the city ([2 Kgs 20:20](#); [2 Chr 32:3-4](#)). The Siloam inscription, carved inside the tunnel itself, records the completion of that remarkable conduit and is one of the oldest preserved examples of the Hebrew language.

Sennacherib invaded Palestine and, after an extensive campaign, put down the rebellion there. That campaign is well documented in Assyrian records, including a description of his siege on Jerusalem in 701, and this documentation is supplemented by the biblical account ([2 Kgs 18:13-19:37](#); [2 Chr 32:1-22](#); [Is 36-37](#)). Sidon, the cities of Phoenicia, and the immediate neighbors of Judah (including Byblos, Arnon, Moab, Edom, and Ashdod) submitted to the Assyrians. Resistant Philistine cities were also taken. Sennacherib laid siege against Ekron, whose king, Padi (a loyal subject of Sennacherib), had been taken prisoner by his own subjects and turned over in chains to Hezekiah. A large Egyptian and Ethiopian army

failed to relieve the Ekronites, who were defeated by the Assyrians in the vicinity of Eltekah. Ekron was captured, and Padi was recalled to his throne by Sennacherib.

Sennacherib then turned his attention to the fortified cities of Judah and took them one by one ([2 Kgs 18:13](#)). Assyrian records claim that he captured 46 walled cities and countless villages, including Lachish and Debir (southwest of Jerusalem), 200,150 people, homes, cattle, and flocks without number. While Lachish was still under siege, Hezekiah saw that it was hopeless to resist and sent word to Sennacherib offering to surrender and pay whatever tribute he would impose. The Assyrian ruler demanded an enormous tribute of 300 talents of silver (800 talents according to Assyrian records, either an exaggerated figure or computed by a different standard) and 30 talents of gold. In order to pay that tribute, Hezekiah took all the silver in the temple and the royal treasuries, and stripped the gold from the temple doors and doorposts ([2 Kgs 18:14-16](#)). This treasure was sent to Sennacherib along with other gifts that, according to the Assyrian account, included some of Hezekiah's own daughters as concubines.

The account in [2 Kings 18:17-19:37](#) raises the question of whether there was another invasion of Judah at a later date, or whether this passage gives additional details about the invasion of 701. Although Hezekiah had already submitted and paid tribute, these verses describe further Assyrian demands. Those who believe it was a single invasion suggest that this is an account of the Assyrian deputation sent by Sennacherib to demand Jerusalem's surrender while Lachish was still under siege. The deputation included the Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh (titles of court officials rather than personal names). They warned the citizens that their God was no more able to save them than the gods of other cities defeated by the Assyrians. In distress Hezekiah sent word to the prophet Isaiah, who assured the king that Sennacherib would hear a rumor and return to his own land and there die by the sword ([2 Kgs 19:1-7](#)). Shortly afterward Sennacherib received word of Babylon's revolt in his eastern provinces, so he departed at once without taking Jerusalem. Assyrian records do not claim that Jerusalem was taken but only say that Hezekiah was "shut up in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage." Judah's surrounding neighbors celebrated their deliverance and brought gifts of gratitude to Hezekiah ([2 Chr 32:23](#)).

Later, the Assyrian king heard that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was advancing against him, so he sent another threatening message to Hezekiah, probably to warn him against making an alliance with Tirhakah. Hezekiah took the matter before the Lord and received word from Isaiah that the Assyrian king would return the same way he came and that Jerusalem would be untouched. Soon afterward, in a miraculous intervention by God, 185,000 Assyrian troops were killed, and the Assyrian monarch abandoned his plans to conquer Hezekiah. That embarrassing calamity understandably is not mentioned by the Assyrian records. In 681 Sennacherib was killed by two of his sons as Isaiah had predicted ([2 Kgs 19:7, 37](#)).

Sometime prior to 701, Hezekiah became seriously ill, and Isaiah told him to prepare for death. The king earnestly prayed for an extension of life, and God promised him 15 more years as well as deliverance from the Assyrians. Hezekiah asked Isaiah for a sign that he would be healed, and a shadow cast by the sun moved backward 10 steps contrary to its normal direction ([2 Kgs 20:1-11](#)).

Sometime after his recovery Hezekiah received a delegation with presents from Merodach-baladan of Babylon, ostensibly to congratulate Hezekiah on his return to health. The real object of the visit was probably to enlist Hezekiah as an ally in a conspiracy being formed against Assyria. The king showed the Babylonian envoys all the gold, silver, and other valuables he possessed. This act brought a warning from Isaiah that the day would come when all those treasures would be carried away to Babylon ([2 Kgs 20:12-19](#)).

Hezekiah lived the remainder of his life in peace and prosperity. It may have been during this time that he encouraged literary efforts in Judah, which included copying some of Solomon's proverbs ([Prv 25-29](#)). Upon his death in 686, he was succeeded by his son Manasseh, who probably had become co-regent 10 years earlier.

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

2. KJV form of Hizkiah, Neariah's son, in [1 Chronicles 3:23](#). See Hizkiah #1.
3. Head of a family of exiles (the sons of Ater), 98 of whose descendants returned from the Babylonian exile with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:16](#); [Neh 7:21](#); [10:17](#)).
4. Ancestor of the prophet Zephaniah, possibly King Hezekiah himself ([Zep 1:1](#)).

Hezekiah's Tunnel

See Siloam, Pool of.

Hezion

Tabrimmon's father and the grandfather of Ben-hadad, king of Syria. Ben-hadad formed an alliance with King Asa of Judah (910–869 BC) and opposed Israel's King Baasha (908–886 BC; [1 Kgs 15:18](#)).

Hezir

1. Levite and head of the 17th of 24 divisions of priests for sanctuary service formed during David's reign ([1 Chr 24:15](#)).
2. Israelite leader who set his seal on Ezra's covenant during the postexilic era ([Neh 10:20](#)).

Hezrai, Hezro

One of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:35](#); [1 Chronicles 11:37](#)). He was born in Carmel, a town in Judah.

Hezron (Person)

1. Reuben's son ([Genesis 46:9](#); [Exodus 6:14](#); [1 Chronicles 5:3](#)) and founder of the Hezronite family in the tribe of Reuben ([Numbers 26:6](#)).
2. Perez's son ([Genesis 46:12](#); [Ruth 4:18-19](#); [1 Chronicles 2:5-25](#); [4:1](#)) and founder of the Hezronite family in the tribe of Judah ([Numbers 26:21](#)), An ancestor of Jesus Christ ([Matthew 1:3](#); [Luke 3:33](#)).

See also Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Hezron (Place)

A town on the border of the territory of Judah ([Joshua 15:3](#)). In [Numbers 34:4](#), it is probable that it forms part of the name Hazar-addar.

Hiddai

The name of one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:30](#), see also New Living Translation marginal reading).

See also Gaash #2.

Hiddekel

A Hebrew name for the Tigris River ([Genesis 2:14](#); [Daniel 10:4](#), King James Version). See Tigris River.

Hiel

Bethelite in the days of King Ahab who fulfilled Joshua's curse upon the city of Jericho ([Jos 6:26](#); [1 Kgs 16:34](#)). Joshua had said centuries before that anyone attempting to rebuild the city would suffer the loss of his oldest and youngest sons. It is unclear whether Hiel's sons died a natural death or were killed in a punitive ritual.

Hierapolis

City of southwest Phrygia, strategically located between Colosse to the east and Laodicea to the south. The founding of the city is credited to Eumenes II of Pergamum (197–160 BC). Hierapolis, because of its mineral springs and deep cave known as the Plutonium, came to be a cultic center for the worship of Phrygian gods. Lethal vapors issued from the cave, which was thought to be an entrance to the underworld. Residents believed that a priest was seated deep inside the cave and that on certain occasions prophecies would be uttered for those seeking them. The mineral baths attracted visitors, and gradually the city developed into a leading commercial center. As Roman rule enveloped the city, Hierapolis became part of the province of Asia.

Under Paul's influence, Christianity took hold there during his stay in Ephesus. Paul mentions Hierapolis in connection with the believer Epaphras, who worked diligently for the inhabitants as well as those in Laodicea and Colosse ([Col 4:13](#)). Even though several early Christians were martyred there, the church continued to grow. In the fourth century, Christians closed off the Plutonium with stones.

Hieroglyphics

An early form of writing that uses picture signs. Several civilizations developed hieroglyphics on their own, including the Egyptians, Hittites, Mayans, and Cretans. The most well-known hieroglyphics are Egyptian.

Egyptian hieroglyphics started as pictures of the things they represented. For example, a circle with rays around it meant the sun. This writing began in Egypt around 3000 BC. People usually carved it in stone but sometimes wrote it on papyrus with a reed pen.

As papyrus became more common, the stone symbols were hard to write quickly. So scribes and bookkeepers created an easier-to-write version called hieratic. Later, they made an even shorter version called demotic.

As the writing changed, so did how the signs were used. At first, they were picture-symbols. Later, they represented sounds. For example, we might use a picture of ham for the word "meet" because "ham" and "meet" sound alike. The Egyptians did not turn these signs into an alphabet as many of their neighbors did.

Egyptians used hieroglyphics until the 5th century AD. Then they switched to alphabetic writing using Latin and Greek. During the Middle Ages, people did not know much about hieroglyphics. Interest grew again during the Renaissance, but scholars could not understand the writing.

Hieroglyphics remained a mystery until Napoleon's team found the Rosetta Stone in Egypt in 1779. This stone had writing in Greek, demotic, and hieroglyphic. Twenty-five years later, a Frenchman named Jean-Francois Champollion figured out how to read the hieroglyphics.

Hieronymus

Hellenistic ruler in intertestamental period. Hostile toward Palestinian Jews who refused to accept Greek ways, Antiochus Eupator sent his vice-regent Lysias with 80,000 troops to solicit compliance. Maccabeus and his band, led by an angel, wrecked Lysias's expedition and evoked a settlement that permitted Jews to maintain their ancestral customs. However, Hieronymus and fellow district governors Timothy, Apollonius, and Demophon would not allow the Jews to live in peace and quiet ([2 Macc 12:2](#)).

Higgaion

Musical notation in text of [Psalm 9:16](#), presumably cueing the instrumental accompaniment to play softly. *See Music.*

High Council

See Sanhedrin.

High Place

Phrase commonly translated from the Hebrew bamah, which apparently derived from a word originally meaning "the back (or ridge) of an animal." Thus it came to refer to a height or hill or a stone burial cairn. Usually it was an elevated worship center, such as the ones referred to in [Numbers 33:51–52](#), [1 Samuel 9:13–14](#), [2 Kings 12:3](#), [2 Chronicles 21:11](#), and [Ezekiel 36:1–2](#). But sometimes (as in [2 Kgs 23:8](#)) it was a bamah of the gate, a sanctuary with no special reference to height, located at the city gate as in Dan and Beersheba. It might even have been placed in a declivity ([Jer 7:31](#)).

That a bamah might simply be a burial place with commemorative stelae or memorial stones is clear from such a passage as [Ezekiel 43:7](#). An illustration of such a bamah is the so-called Gezer high place. This Bronze Age center with its 10 huge pillars is now interpreted as a mortuary shrine instead of a sanctuary in the strict sense of the term.

A second word translated "high place" is ramah (elevation), from the Hebrew meaning "to be high." Ezekiel used this term to refer to illicit worship centers ([16:24–25, 31–39](#)) that evidently had no necessary connection with height.

One of the best-known and best-preserved of all high places in the vicinity of Palestine is the great high place at Petra, discovered by George L. Robinson in 1900. Located on a ridge west of the Khazneh, or treasury, it consists of a large rectangular court and adjacent altars. The court is about 47 feet (14.3 meters) long and 21 feet (6.4 meters) wide and is cut into the rock platform to a depth of 18 inches (45.7 centimeters). West of the court stand a square and a round altar, each hewn from the solid rock. South of the court is a pool measuring about eight and a half by nine and a half

feet (2.6 by 2.9 meters) and cut four feet (1.2 meters) into the rock. South of the pool stand two sacred obelisks or pillars, also cut out of the solid rock. This whole complex is reached from a lower terrace by two flights of stairs. At this center the ancient Nabatean inhabitants of Petra evidently engaged in feasts and sacrifices to honor their gods. Though the worship center in its present form does not date before the first century BC, it preserves an ancient tradition of Transjordan and illustrates the pagan and Israelite high places of OT times.

The pagan high place was usually located on a physical height, where one could feel closer to the god. Its first essential was an altar, which might be a heap of earth, unhewn stones, or a unit cut out of the solid rock. Second, there was a stone pillar ([Dt 12:3](#)) or obelisk (matsebah) representing the male deity and having phallic associations; third, a tree or pole (asherah) representing the female deity (a fertility goddess); and fourth, a laver for ceremonial washings. A sanctuary with an image of the deity also required a building of some sort to protect it ([2 Kgs 17:29](#)).

At these pagan high places sacrifices of animals and sometimes of human beings took place, and religious prostitution or homosexual acts were common. It is natural that such practices should develop in a context of sympathetic magic, where promiscuity and breeding among human beings was supposed to influence animals and crops.

The Hebrews had legitimate high places between the time of the destruction of the tabernacle at Shiloh and construction of the temple, though there was little similarity to pagan accoutrements or practices, apart from the presence of an altar and the offering of sacrifices. At one high place the people ate a sacrificial meal before Samuel anointed Saul king ([1 Sm 9:12-10:1](#)). The tabernacle was located at the high place of Gibeon during the reign of David ([1 Chr 16:39; 21:29](#)). Solomon offered sacrifices at several high places ([1 Kgs 3:2-3](#)), and at the high place of Gibeon he met God and was granted the gift of wisdom for his administration (vv [4-15](#)). Once Solomon's temple was completed, high places were eliminated and were off-limits for the Hebrews.

When the Hebrews entered Canaan, they encountered pagan peoples who had long worshiped at high places. God commanded the Israelites to destroy those sanctuaries ([Nm 33:51-52](#)) to avoid contamination by them, but the warning went largely unheeded. At the height of the Hebrew kingdom, after Solomon had

completed the temple, he built high places for the god Chemosh of Moab, Molech of Ammon, and other gods of his pagan wives. For this sin God determined to split the Hebrew kingdom ([1 Kgs 11:7-11](#)).

After the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam established high places at Dan and Bethel, and Ahab and others proliferated their construction. Judgment was prophesied ([1 Kgs 13:2-3; 2 Kgs 17:7-18](#)), and ultimately the kingdom of Israel went into captivity to Assyria for her idolatry.

Rehoboam, the first king of the southern kingdom, spread high places all over his domain ([1 Kgs 14:23-24](#)). Though King Asa launched a revival of true religion, he did not remove the high places ([15:12-14](#)). Jehoshaphat also initiated revival, but again the high places remained ([22:43](#)). On the other hand, his son Jehoram and his wife, Athaliah, encouraged their construction ([2 Chr 21:11](#)). Joash, during his revival, did not eliminate the high places ([2 Kgs 12:3](#)), nor did the good king Uzziah in similar efforts ([15:3-4](#)). Ahaz made no pretense of faithfulness to God, and actively encouraged the idolatry of the pagan sanctuaries ([16:3-4](#)). Finally, Hezekiah launched a campaign against the high places ([2 Chr 31:1](#)), but his policies were reversed during the reign of his wicked son Manasseh ([2 Kgs 21:2-9](#)). Josiah led the last Judean revival and again attacked the high places ([23:5, 8](#)).

The prophets Isaiah ([Is 15:2; 16:12](#)), Jeremiah ([Jer 48:35](#)), Ezekiel ([Ez 6:3](#)), Hosea ([Hos 10:8](#)), and Amos ([Am 7:9](#)) roundly condemned these centers of idolatry. See Canaanite Deities and Religion; Gods and Goddesses; Grove; Idols, Idolatry.

High Priest

The high priest was the same as the chief priest. He was the most important priest in Israel.

See Chief Priest, Priests and Levites.

High Priest

The most important religious leader in ancient Israel. God chose Aaron, Moses' brother, to be the first high priest ([Exodus 28:1-3](#)). Only one person could be high priest at a time. This position was usually passed down within Aaron's family.

The high priest had special duties that other priests could not do. His most important task happened

once a year on the Day of Atonement. The high priest would enter the most holy part of the temple to ask God's forgiveness for all the people ([Leviticus 16:1-19](#)).

The high priest wore special clothes that showed his important role. These included beautiful robes and a breastplate with twelve precious stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel ([Exodus 28:12-15](#)). He also carried special objects called "Urim" and "Thummim" that were used to learn God's will for the people.

See Priests and Levites.

Highway, King's

See King's Highway.

Hilen

Alternate name for Holon, a city assigned to Levites, in [1 Chronicles 6:58](#). *See Holon #1.*

Hilkiah

1. Father of Eliakim, an overseer in King Hezekiah's household ([2 Kgs 18:18, 26; Is 22:20; 36:3, 22](#)).
2. High priest and Shallum's son in the reign of King Josiah who, during the repair of the temple, found the Book of the Law ([2 Kgs 22:3-14; 1 Chr 6:13; 9:11; 2 Chr 34:14-22](#)). According to [Ezra 7:1](#) (cf. [1 Esd 8:1](#)), he was also an ancestor of Ezra. He is an important figure in the events surrounding Josiah's religious reform, not only because he found the Book of the Law, but also because he led the king's messengers to consult Huldah the prophetess regarding God's Word ([2 Kgs 22:14](#)) and later presided over the purification of the temple ([23:4](#)).
3. Merarite Levite, the son of Amzi and Amaziah's father ([1 Chr 6:45](#)).
4. Merarite Levite and Hosah's son, who was appointed as a gatekeeper in the temple by David ([1 Chr 26:11](#)).
5. Companion of Ezra at the public reading of the law ([Neh 8:4](#)). Scholars disagree as to whether he was a layman or a priest.
6. Priest among the returned exiles ([Neh 12:7](#)).

7. Anathoth priest who was the father of Jeremiah ([Jer 1:1](#)).

8. Father of Gemariah whom King Zedekiah sent to Babylon with a letter of assurance from Jeremiah ([Jer 29:3](#)).

Hill Country of the Amalekites

An area near Pirathon in Ephraim, probably about 9.6 kilometers (six miles) west of Shechem ([Judges 12:15](#)). It is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible but not in the Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament. Some scholars find the reference confusing. However, it is possible that an argument based on [Judges 5:14](#) and [12:15](#) can be made that there was a small Amalekite district in Ephraim.

The hill country of the Amalekites is sometimes called the "mount of the Amalekites."

Hill Country of the Amorites

The central mountainous region between the plains of Philistia, Sharon, and Phoenicia on the west and the valley of the Jordan on the east. While the King James Version uses "mount," most modern translations use "hill country." The phrase is not for a single mountain but identifies a range running north and south through Judah and Ephraim ([Deuteronomy 1:7, 19-20](#)).

Hillel

1. Father of Abdon, one of the judges ([Jgs 12:13-15](#)).
2. Jewish teacher and scholar (c. 60 BC-AD 20) who helped to develop the oral law and may have founded rabbinic Judaism. Hillel was called "the Elder," a title that indicates a person holding a position of honor, generally given to those who stood at the head of the community. Born in Babylonia, he moved to Palestine for more advanced studies under two outstanding scholars, Shemaiah and Abtalyon. He first gained recognition when the sons of Bathrya, the chief interpreters of the Law at the time, could not decide on an answer to an important legal problem, namely, whether or not the offering of the paschal lamb overrode the Sabbath prohibitions. Having heard that there was a man living in Jerusalem who had studied under Shemaiah and Abtalyon, they sent for Hillel and

told him the problem. Hillel's answer was that the paschal offering took precedence over the Sabbath, and he argued his point so successfully that his ruling was accepted. He was then appointed to replace the sons of Bathyra. It has been argued, however, that Hillel's appointment can hardly be attributed solely to this one incident.

Hillel was one of the first persons to apply advanced principles of interpretation in determining practical law and action. Thus he is especially important for the development of the Talmud and the oral law. These rules provided the basis for later rabbinic interpretation.

There are many stories describing Hillel's character, picturing him as a man of great humility and extreme patience, pursuing peace even at the expense of truth. He is usually contrasted with his colleague Shammai, who is portrayed as impatient and ill-tempered. The most famous tale tells of a heathen who came to Shammai to be converted on the condition that he teach him the entire Law while he stood on one foot. Shammai snubbed him, and so the heathen went to Hillel. Hillel replied, "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor; this is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary. Now go and learn it." Hillel thus became a model for Jews throughout history.

See also Judaism; Shammai #4; Talmud.

Hin

Liquid measure equal to one-sixth of a bath, or about one gallon (3.8 liters). *See* Weights and Measures.

Hind

Adult female red deer. *See* Animals (Deer).

Hinnom, Valley of

Deep, narrow ravine running south of Jerusalem that marked the boundary between Judah's and Benjamin's territories. *See* Gehenna.

Hippopotamus

A large animal mentioned in the Bible that has been interpreted in different ways. The King James Version translates this term directly as "behemoth." Today, most scholars agree it refers to the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*). This is a large water animal with thick skin, a big head, a heavy hairless body, and short legs. It has toenails that look like small hoofs (similar to the hard feet of horses and cows).

The description in [Job 40:15-24](#) matches the modern hippopotamus closely. The only difference is how the tail is described. Today, hippopotamuses live only in African rivers. However, scientists have found fossil evidence that hippopotamuses once lived in parts of Israel and Palestine, possibly in the wetlands of northern Galilee and the Jordan Valley.

The hippopotamus has well-developed senses. Its eyes, ears, and nostrils are positioned so it can see, hear, and smell while staying mostly underwater. It has a large mouth, big tusks, and a short, thick throat. Its legs are so short that its belly almost touches the ground when walking on land. The hippopotamus eats plants and herbs that grow in rivers. When river food is scarce, it will look for food on land, usually at night. Even though it has a heavy body, the hippopotamus can move surprisingly quickly on land.

Hippos

One of the cities of the Decapolis (a loose confederation of 10 Greek cities) established in Palestine after the death of Alexander the Great (323 BC; also called Susitha); not mentioned in the Bible. Its location is in doubt, but most likely it was eight miles (12.8 kilometers) north of Gadara and four miles (6.4 kilometers) east of the Sea of Galilee near the road to Damascus. Its position was of strategic military importance in the defense of Jerusalem, while its location was also ideal for trading, from which it exported not only its merchandise but also Greek culture.

See also Decapolis.

Hirah

Adullamite and friend of Judah to whose house Judah went after he and his brothers sold Joseph ([Gr 38:1](#)). He accompanied Judah to the

sheepshearing after Judah's wife died (v [12](#)), and he served as the messenger to carry a kid from Judah to Tamar (v [20](#)).

Hiram

1. A king of Tyre who ruled during the time of King David and King Solomon. After David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital, Hiram sent cedarwood, masons, and carpenters to build his palace ([2 Samuel 5:11](#); [1 Chronicles 14:1](#)). Hiram remained David's friend throughout his life ([1 Kings 5:1](#)). After David's death, he continued that friendship with Solomon. When Solomon was ready to build the temple, Hiram provided wood from the forests of Lebanon, gold, and skilled craftsmen to help build and furnish the temple. In return, Solomon gave Hiram wheat and oil for his household. Moreover, Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in Galilee. But the Bible tells us that Hiram was not pleased with them ([1 Kings 5:1-11](#); [9:10-14](#)).

Although the Israelites were not a seafaring people, Solomon kept a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber ([1 Kings 9:26-28](#)). Hiram helped Solomon by providing sailors and perhaps ships to make Solomon's fleet work properly. The Phoenicians were known as excellent sailors who traveled the Mediterranean Sea as far west as Tarshish in Spain.

Hiram was probably the son of Abibal. He ruled in Tyre for 34 years and died at the age of 53. Phoenician historians record that Solomon married Hiram's daughter.

2. A craftsman from Tyre who worked on Solomon's temple. He was said to be the son of a man of Tyre and a woman from the tribe of Naphtali ([1 Kings 7:13-14](#)). But [2 Chronicles 2:14](#) says that his mother was from "the daughters of Dan." It is possible her ancestors were from the tribe of Dan (compare [Exodus 38:23](#)). He created various furnishings for the temple:

- 2 bronze pillars
- the decorative capitals (tops) that adorned the pillars
- the large bronze basin called the "molten sea" and the 12 bronze oxen it stood on
- 2 smaller basins with their stands
- shovels, pots, and other containers

His name is also spelled Huram in [2 Chronicles 4:11](#). He is called Huram-abi (abi meaning "master") in [2 Chronicles 2:13](#) and [4:16](#).

History of Israel

The history of Israel is the story of:

- God's special plan for a group of people. God called these people out of pagan religions and made them witnesses of the true faith among other nations.
- God's power in protecting the Israelites from being destroyed.
- God's justice when dealing with the disobedience of the Israelites.
- God's great kindness in forgiving the sins of the Israelites and restoring them to fellowship with himself by providing a Savior through them for the whole world.

Preview

- The Patriarchal Age: The time when the patriarchs lived, from the birth of Abraham to the arrival of Jacob's family in Egypt.
- The Stay in Egypt: The time when Jacob's family moved to Egypt, grew into a large nation, and was later forced into slavery.
- The Exodus: The time when Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.
- The Wilderness Wanderings: The time when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years before entering the promised land.
- The Conquest: The time when Israel began to take and settle the land of Canaan.
- The Judges: The time when Israel was governed by judges before the establishment of the kingdom of Israel.
- The United Kingdom: The time when the tribes of Israel were united under a single king during the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon.

- The Divided Kingdom: The time when the tribes of Israel were divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. This period ended when Israel was conquered by Assyria and Judah was later taken into exile in Babylon.
- The Restoration: The time when the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylon, rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, and restored their way of life.
- The Intertestamental Period: The time between the Old and New Testaments, marked by foreign rule, cultural changes, and the development of various Jewish groups.
- The Roman Period: The time when the Roman Empire ruled over the land of Israel, including during the life of Jesus and the early church.

The Patriarchal Age

The story of Israel begins with Abraham. God called Abraham first at Ur, and maybe later at Haran ([Acts 7:2-4](#)). God called Abraham to leave Mesopotamia and go to a land that God would show him. When God called Abraham, He made a covenant (agreement) with him ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)). This covenant promised Abraham three things:

- a land,
- special divine favor, and
- the privilege of being a blessing to the whole world.

God said to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." God also promised Abraham, "All the families of the earth will be blessed through you." In [Genesis 12:4-8](#), God confirmed this unconditional covenant (a promise with no conditions attached). He promised Abraham this new land forever and countless descendants.

Later, in [Genesis 15:1-21](#), God confirmed the covenant again. This time, he added an important prediction. The guarantee that Abraham's descendants would always own Canaan did not

mean they would live in the land in every generation. God also described the boundaries of the promised land. It would stretch from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River, about about 804 to 965 kilometers (500 to 600 miles).

Finally, in [Genesis 17:6-8](#), God confirmed the covenant again. This confirmation guaranteed the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants. It also added that kings would come from Abraham's family line. This was a prediction of the future royal family of King David. The covenant was later confirmed to Abraham's son Isaac and his grandson Jacob ([Genesis 26:3-5; 28](#)).

This period in Hebrew history is called the Patriarchal Age. The patriarchs were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are called patriarchs because they were fathers, not only to their immediate families, but also to the extended family of Hebrews. They exercised fatherly control over this extended family.

The patriarchs served as political, legal, and spiritual leaders of their traveling community. They looked after their interests and led them in worship. From time to time, they built altars on which they offered sacrifices.

The patriarchal community was very large. In [Genesis 14:14](#), we read that Abraham had 318 men trained for battle in his camp. Since many of these men were probably married and had children, the whole group could have been more than 1,000 people.

Additional developments in the lives of Abraham and Jacob were particularly important for world history. Abraham was frustrated because he did not have an heir. He accepted Sarah's suggestion to have a child with the slave girl Hagar. This was also a common custom in their culture at that time. The son born to Hagar was named Ishmael. He became the ancestor of the Arab peoples.

Because of this, Abraham is respected by Arabs and Muslims, as well as by Jews and Christians. He is the father of the Jewish people through his son Isaac, who was the child God promised to Abraham and Sarah. Abraham is also important to the Christian faith. Christians see Abraham as an example of Jesus Christ, through whom all Christians obtain their salvation.

Jacob was known for being a trickster and causing trouble when he was young. He spent 20 years in exile in northern Mesopotamia. He lived there with his uncle Laban. There he married Leah and Rachel

and became the father of sons who would become the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

When Jacob returned to Canaan, he met God by the Jabbok River ([Genesis 32](#)). During this meeting, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means "a prince of God."

The patriarchal period in Canaan lasted for 215 years. Some scholars think Abraham arrived in Canaan around 2085 BC, when he was 75 years old. Later, Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt to escape a severe famine in Canaan in about 1870 BC.

During much of the patriarchal period, the Palestine had a small population. People who moved from place to place with their animals (nomadic or seminomadic tribes) were the main groups living there. This made it relatively easy for the Hebrews to enter the land. After 1900 BC, Palestine began to have more settled conditions. Shortly after this, the Hebrews made the journey into Egypt.

The Stay in Egypt

If Jacob and his sons came to Egypt around 1870 BC, it was during the time called the Middle Kingdom. During this period, many other people from Asia were also moving into Egypt. The Hebrews settled in an area called Goshen, in the eastern delta region. They were protected by Joseph, who had a high position in the Egyptian government similar to a prime minister.

As more and more people from Asia called Hyksos came into Egypt, they began to take control of the country, at least in northern Egypt. During this same time, the Hebrew people grew in number. Some scholars who argue for a different timeline think the Hebrews were welcomed into Egypt during the time when the Hyksos ruled (after 1750 BC). By about 1580 BC, native Egyptian rulers took back control of their country and forced many of the people from Asia to leave.

After some time, a new Egyptian king began to rule who "did not know Joseph" ([Exodus 1:8](#)). This likely meant that a native Egyptian family of rulers had taken power. These new rulers were afraid that the growing numbers and wealth of the Hebrew people might threaten their control. But, Egyptians efforts to control the Hebrews and reduce their birthrate had the opposite effect ([Exodus 1:12](#)).

Finally, the Egyptians ordered that all male Hebrew babies be killed at birth. Among those who

disobeyed this order were the parents of Moses. They placed him in a waterproof basket made of reeds and set him afloat in the Nile. A daughter of Pharaoh found Moses and raised him in the Egyptian royal court. There, Moses received an excellent education and became an important official in the Egyptian government.

When Moses was 40 years old, he chose to identify himself with his own people, the Hebrews. When he saw an Egyptian hurting a Hebrew person, Moses killed the Egyptian. He then had to run away to the land of Midian in the northeastern part of the Sinai Peninsula. In Midian, Moses married and lived there for 40 years. During this time, he learned about the land's geography and ways of life in the wilderness. This knowledge would later help him when he led the Hebrew people through this area.

Meanwhile, the Egyptians continued to treat the Hebrew people very harshly. The Hebrews cried out to God for help. God answered by appearing to Moses in a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire. God called Moses to return to Egypt and lead his people back to the land of Canaan ([Exodus 3-4](#)). God also chose Moses's brother, Aaron, to help him with this important task.

The Exodus

Understandably, the pharaoh of Egypt did not want to let the Hebrew people leave permanently. The value of this large workforce was too great to measure. However, after experiencing a series of ten plagues that lasted perhaps a year, the Egyptians finally agreed to let the Hebrew people go ([Exodus 7-12](#)).

These plagues had both a practical and theological purpose. They showed the weakness of Egypt's gods and showed the power of the God of the Hebrews ([Exodus 12:12](#)). Each plague directly challenged specific Egyptian gods:

- The first plague (water turned to blood) challenged Hapi, the god of the Nile River.
- The second plague (frogs) challenged Heqt, a goddess who was pictured as a frog.
- The fifth plague (death of livestock) challenged Ptah, a god who was worshiped in the form of a bull
- The ninth plague (darkness) challenged Amon-Re/Aton, gods associated with the sun

When taken together, all ten plagues showed that the gods of Egypt had no real power compared to the one true God of the Hebrews.

Before the final plague, in which the firstborn sons of Egypt were killed, the Israelites were instructed to observe the first Passover. Each household killed a lamb (unless the household was too small, in which case households could share a lamb). The blood from these lambs was put on the doorposts of their homes. Anyone who did not apply the blood to their doorpost or who rejected this protection from God experienced the same judgment as the Egyptians. After the death of all firstborn throughout Egypt, the Egyptians begged the Hebrew people to leave.

The group of Hebrews that left Egypt included 600,000 men over 20 years of age, as well as women and children. The total number that left was more than 2,500,000 people. They also took their flocks, herds, and personal belongings with them.

The date when the Hebrews left Egypt is still debated by scholars. The traditional date is around 1446 BC for the exodus from Egypt (based on [1 Kings 6:1](#), places the exodus 480 years before King Solomon began building the temple in 966 BC). This would put the conquest of Canaan under Joshua around 1406 BC. Many scholars still accept this timeline, and there are no strong reasons to reject it. But, some scholars prefer a later date of around 1275 BC for various reasons.

The early date of the exodus (around 1446 BC) would place the later years of the Hebrew people's wilderness wanderings and their conquest of Canaan during the time when Amenhotep III and IV ruled Egypt, from 1412 to 1366 BC. During this period, the Egyptian rulers allowed their control of

Canaan to weaken. When the Egyptians finally did reassert their power in the region around 1300 BC, they mainly focused on controlling the coastal areas. This meant they did not have much contact with the Hebrew people, who were living in the hill country regions of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

The Wilderness Wanderings

The wilderness wanderings were an important time between Egypt and the promised land for the Israelites. During these years, God established many basic institutions and practices. At Mount Sinai, Moses gave Israel the law from God, the design for the tabernacle (which later became the model for the temple), and detailed instructions for priests and the sacrificial system of worship.

This wandering period was truly remarkable. God showed his presence through a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. He provided food called manna, created water through miracles when needed, and made sure the people's clothes did not wear out. Despite all this care, the people complained constantly.

At Sinai, God gave the law ([Exodus 19:2-24:18](#)). The people quickly promised to obey it ([Exodus 24:3](#)). Then, God gave detailed instructions for building the tabernacle and its furniture ([Exodus 25-27, 30-31, 35-40](#)). God also established the priesthood (chapters [28-29](#)). But while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's instructions, the people became restless. They demanded gods they could see. Even Aaron joined in this idol worship and helped make a golden calf with an altar in front of it. Their quick return to Egyptian cattle worship shows that pagan practices had deeply affected them during their time in Egypt ([Exodus 32-34](#)). When God announced he would destroy Israel because of this idol worship, Moses pleaded for the people. God then decided to punish only the worst offenders ([Exodus 32:9-14](#)).

Later, God revealed the legal and priestly system ([Leviticus 1:1-27:34](#)). The book of Leviticus describes several special days and festivals appointed by God, including:

- The Sabbath
- Passover
- Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Firstfruits
- Pentecost (also called Feast of Weeks)
- Feast of Trumpets
- Day of Atonement
- Feast of Tabernacles
- The Year of Sabbath
- The Year of Jubilee

After staying at Sinai for about a year, the Israelites were told to move forward ([Numbers 10:11-12](#)). At one point, Miriam (Moses's sister) and Aaron spoke against Moses's leadership and God punished them for this ([Numbers 12](#)). When the people arrived at Kadesh-barnea, the entrance to southern Canaan, they became frightened by the report from most of the spies who had explored the land. They decided not to enter Canaan and even called for a new leader to take them back to Egypt.

God declared that this entire generation would wander in the wilderness until all the adults had died. Only Joshua and Caleb (the two spies who supported entering the land immediately) would be allowed to enter the promised land ([Numbers 14:26-30](#)). Near the end of the wandering period, Moses also lost the privilege of entering the land because of an act of disobedience.

The Conquest

The later chapters of Numbers describe how Moses led the Israelites to victory over the peoples living east of the Jordan River. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh asked to settle there. Moses allowed this only if they promised to help the other Israelites conquer Canaan before settling down. Before these victories east of the Jordan, a new count of adult males was taken. This count helped determine Israel's fighting strength and provided a basis for fairly dividing the land they would enter. The number of males above 20 years of age was 601,730 ([Numbers 26:51](#)). The book of Deuteronomy is mainly a series of speeches given by Moses in a covenant renewal ceremony on the plains of Moab just before his death and the appointment of Joshua as leader.

Joshua moved forward quickly. He sent spies across the Jordan River to Jericho to explore. They reported a situation very different from what the Hebrews had experienced at Kadesh-barnea a generation earlier. Now the people of Canaan were afraid because they had heard about the large numbers and victories of the Hebrews. Apparently the day after the spies returned, Joshua moved the people to the edge of the Jordan River and prepared to cross. The waters parted for them here just as the Red Sea had parted earlier.

The story of conquest in the book of Joshua is not a detailed battle account. It describes three main campaigns:

1. a thrust into the middle of Canaan around Jericho and Ai;
2. a southern campaign against the alliance of Amorite kings; and
3. a northern campaign against Hazor and other towns.

The history in the book of Joshua is very condensed. Joshua's major military actions must have taken about six years. Joshua's friend Caleb was 79 years old when the Conquest began and 85 after the last great battle with Jabin, king of Hazor ([Joshua 14:7-10](#)).

Even after the war, significant strongholds like Jerusalem were still controlled by enemies. But the land west of the Jordan was divided among the nine and a half tribes of Israel. The task of capturing remaining enemy towns was left to the individual tribes in whose territory they were located. The Joshua account was not so much a story of Israel's battle skill as of God's faithfulness and help for his people. For example, at Jericho they did not attack but merely followed God's instructions and watched the walls fall down. At Gibeon, hailstones killed more Amorites than Israelite soldiers did ([Joshua 10:7-11](#)).

The Judges

The judges were leaders whom God appointed to guide the people of Israel after Joshua died. Joshua had led the Hebrew people into Canaan, and he died about 30 years later. After his death, these judges ruled over Israel as a loose group of tribes. Sometimes a judge led all of Israel, and sometimes they led only one or more tribes. These leaders served as judges (people who settled disputes), government officials, and military commanders all at the same time.

The book of Judges shows a pattern that happened again and again:

1. The people turned away from God (this is called apostasy).
2. God punished them by letting neighboring tribes oppress them.
3. The people cried out to God for help.
4. God raised up a judge to lead them to freedom.
5. The people enjoyed a time of peace until the cycle began again.

Determining the exact timeline of the judges is a difficult task. If you add up all the years of oppression and peace mentioned in the book of Judges, it totals 410 years. The book of Acts says there were 450 years between the days of Joshua and Samuel ([Acts 13:19](#)). This difference could be due to the addition of the 40 years of Eli's leadership ([1 Samuel 4:18](#)).

If we use the 410 years for the period of the judges, plus about 30 years for the Conquest before the judges, and 40 years for the wilderness wanderings, we get 480 years. Counting backward from about 1050 BC (when Saul became king), this would put the exodus at around 1530 BC. This is about 100 years earlier than even the earliest suggested date for the exodus.

The most likely explanation is that some periods of oppression and judgeships overlapped. For example, Jephthah was active on the eastern border. Samson battled the Philistines in the southwest. Deborah and Barak fought in the northern region. These judges could have been leading in different areas at the same time.

The United Kingdom

The people of Israel wanted a king because their leaders had become weak and corrupt. Both Eli's and Samuel's sons were not good leaders. This request was actually a rejection of God's plan for them—the rule of God himself (which is called theocracy). God allowed them to have a king but warned them about the problems that would come with having a king ([1 Samuel 8:9–21](#)). The idea of having a king was not new to Israel. It had been hinted at in [Genesis 49:10](#) and [Numbers 24:17](#), and Moses had made some very clear statements about it in [Deuteronomy 17:14–20](#).

The first period of Hebrew kingship is called the united kingdom (or monarchy) because all of Israel was ruled by a single king. This period lasted for 120 years including the 40-year reigns of:

1. Saul ([Acts 13:21](#))
2. David ([2 Samuel 5:5](#))
3. Solomon ([1 Kings 11:42](#))

The people asked for a king, and God gave them one. But their king would not be a king like those of the surrounding nations. Israel's king was expected to:

- Follow God's commands in both his public and private life
- Not interfere with the priests' duties
- Not worship false gods (idolatry)
- Use his influence to keep the people faithful to God

If a king failed in these areas, he might face serious consequences. God might remove him from power, end his family line as rulers, or even allow the people to be captured by enemies. These standards are important to remember when studying the reigns of Saul, David, Solomon, and the kings who came after them during Israel's divided kingdom.

King Saul

Saul started well as king. He won a great victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead. He also showed wisdom in managing the kingdom. But, after about two years, he performed a sacrifice that only priests were allowed to do. Because of this, God said Saul's kingdom would be taken away from him ([1 Samuel 13:8–14](#)). Saul continued to have military success and ruled well until about the middle of his reign.

After Saul disobeyed God to completely destroy the Amalekites, God rejected him as king. God instructed Samuel to anoint David as the future king of Israel. David became famous after defeating the giant Goliath and helping defeat the Philistines. Saul later made David a commander in the army, and the young man soon became more popular than the king himself.

Saul became mentally unstable after his relationship with God was broken. He began to try to kill David. For the last years of Saul's reign, David was as a fugitive (a person who runs away to avoid being captured). Meanwhile, the Philistines gained

control. They killed Saul and most of his sons in the great battle of Mount Gilboa. This battle gave the Philistines control over much of the land west of the Jordan ([1 Samuel 31:1-7](#)).

King David

After Saul's death, David became king in Judah with his capital in Hebron. Saul's son, Ishbosheth, established himself at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River. For seven years the two small kingdoms existed side by side ([2 Samuel 2:2-11](#)). But after assassins killed the Israelite king and his army commander, David became ruler of a united Hebrew kingdom.

Not long after the beginning of his reign (from 1010 to 970 BC), David completely defeated the Philistines. Soon after he captured Jerusalem, making it the capital of the united kingdom. During the following years, David built an empire ([2 Samuel 8:10; 1 Chronicles 18-19](#)). He conquered:

- Moab
- Edom
- Damascus
- Zobah
- Ammon

His territory stretched from the Gulf of Aqaba (a branch of the Red Sea) and the Sinai in the south almost to the Euphrates River in the north. He also built good relations, if not an alliance, with Tyre. David's empire was possible because of an absence of strong leadership in the Middle East. The Egyptians, Mycenaeans, Hittites, and Assyrians were either weak or no longer powerful. The Phoenicians, a peaceful trading people, were also free to expand their business. They were happy to sell cedar to David for his palace and the temple.

Without doubt, David was Israel's greatest king. Jerusalem became known as the city of David. When David wanted to build the temple as God's house, God said that his son should do it instead. But God promised to "build David's house in a different way. He made a covenant with David. He promised that David's royal family line would last forever ([2 Samuel 7](#)). Jesus Christ, who came from David's family line, was the only one who could fulfill this divine promise (see [Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-36; 13:32-39; 15:14-17](#)).

Like other kings in that region, David had many wives. The Bible names 8 wives and 21 children

and mentions other wives and concubines (women who were like secondary wives). This situation created family rivalries and questions about who would be the next king. Two sons, Absalom and Adonijah, tried to make themselves king, but both failed. Solomon, son of David's favorite wife, Bathsheba, became the next king.

King Solomon

Solomon ruled from 970 to 930 BC. He was a man of peace and a builder of palaces, cities, defenses, and the temple. He secured cities throughout his kingdom. He equipped cities for his chariot and cavalry units. With help from the Phoenicians, he built a seaport and kept a fleet at Ezion-geber, near modern Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba.

Solomon expanded Jerusalem by walling off the temple area to the north of David's city and the southwestern hill now known as Zion. His most famous project was the temple, which took seven years to build. It was twice the size of the tabernacle (the portable worship place used earlier) but followed the same basic design. It was 27.4 meters (90 feet) long and 9.1 meters (30 feet) wide. It had magnificent decorations.

Solomon also built a palace complex that took 13 years to complete. This included an armory, a throne room, the king's private home, and a house for the daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh.

Influenced by David's spiritual example and wanting God's blessing on his rule, Solomon made a great sacrifice to God at Gibeon near the beginning of his reign. God met him there and offered to grant whatever he might request. Solomon asked for understanding and wisdom to govern God's people ([1 Kings 3:9](#)). His God-given wisdom was shown in many administrative decisions, official policies, and building plans.

Unfortunately, Solomon did not always show such wisdom in maintaining a harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines. Likewise, he did not show wisdom when spending too much money, which left the kingdom in serious financial trouble. He even built temples for his foreign wives. This supported their idol worship, which angered God.

In fact, Solomon's foreign wives and their idol worship led to his spiritual and political failure. Before Solomon died, God told him that for this reason, God would divide the kingdom after Solomon's death and give most of it to someone other than Solomon's son. But for David's sake, God

would keep Judah and Jerusalem under the control of David's family line ([1 Kings 11:9-13](#)).

The Divided Kingdom

After Solomon's death, the Near East changed completely. Israel was no longer in a safe position without threats from other political powers. A new empire called Assyria came to power in Mesopotamia. It was followed by the Neo-Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires. Egypt was briefly powerful in the south. It would later come under the control of Assyria and Medo-Persia. These empires put great pressure on Israel and eventually took control of one or both of the two Hebrew kingdoms.

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. He had to deal with growing anger over the high taxes and poor economy during Solomon's final years. When Rehoboam refused to lower taxes, all the northern tribes broke away and formed the northern kingdom of Israel. The northern kingdom was ruled by Jeroboam. The southern kingdom of Judah was left with only the territory of Judah and Benjamin.

A total of 20 kings ruled in each of the separate kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom had several dynasties and short reigns. In the south, the dynasty of David continued to rule and the reigns were longer.

The Northern Kingdom

The northern kingdom of Israel existed from the division of Israel in 930 BC until its conquest by Assyria in 722 BC. Jeroboam, the first king, was afraid that people would remain loyal to Jerusalem if they continued to worship there. So he created his own religion with calf worship and built worship places at Dan in the north and Bethel in the south. This idol worship caused God to condemn him and fulfilled the prediction that Jeroboam's family line would end. All the kings who came after him continued this idol worship. The northern kingdom was often at war with Judah, Syria, or Assyria. Jeroboam first set up his capital at Shechem and later moved it to Tirzah.

Four other kings of the north were especially important: Omri, Ahab, Jehu, and Jeroboam II.

- Omri ruled from 885 to 874 BC. He was a powerful ruler. Even generations later, Assyrians still called Israel "the land of Omri." After becoming king, he built a permanent capital city at Samaria and started building a palace complex there. Early in his rule, he conquered Moab. Later, he restored good relations with the city of Tyre, which had existed during the times of David and Solomon. He formed a strong alliance with Tyre and arranged for his son Ahab to marry Jezebel, a princess from Tyre.
- Ahab ruled from 874 to 853 BC. He was one of the most important kings of Israel. He and his wife, Jezebel, promoted the evil idol worship of Baal, which included religious prostitution. This caused strong opposition from the prophet Elijah. Ahab was a powerful military leader who defeated the Syrians in major battles and joined a group that fought the Assyrians to a draw. Archaeological digs show that he also built extensively at Samaria, Hazor, Megiddo, and other towns.
- Jehu ruled from 841 to 814 BC. He was God's chosen agent to punish the house of Omri and end Baal worship in Israel. He did destroy Baal worship and killed many relatives and officials of Ahab's court. But he was so brutal that he killed the people who knew how to run the government, which caused problems later. Jehu was also forced to submit to Assyria's authority, likely paying them taxes or tribute, providing military support when demanded, and following their policies.

- Jeroboam II ruled from 793 to 753 BC. He brought the kingdom to its greatest size and wealth. Along with his southern counterpart King Uzziah, he ruled most of the land that David had once controlled. This was possible because Assyria was weak during most of the 8th century.

Several prophets were active during the history of the northern kingdom: Elijah and Elisha (whose messages were not written down) and the writing prophets Jonah, Amos, and Hosea.

The Southern Kingdom

The southern kingdom of Judah had a different history than the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah had the temple and many Levites (religious leaders) who moved south after the kingdom divided because they opposed the idol worship in the north. Also, Judah had greater political stability and unity. Only two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) shared power. All the kings came from David's family line. Eight of these kings were good rulers. Judah also experienced times of religious revival. God allowed the southern kingdom to exist about 100 years longer than the northern kingdom. However, Judah eventually began worshipping idols and was taken into captivity because of their sins.

1. Rehoboam was the first king of Judah. He is remembered for refusing to listen to wise advice about taxes. This caused the kingdom to divide. After starting well, he allowed the abandonment of the faith to get out of control. In 926 BC, God judged him by invading his kingdom. Shishak I of Egypt plundered it and demanded tribute. Thereafter, he launched an extensive program to fortify the realm. Shishak's invasion did cause a brief spiritual reform. But, Rehoboam's reign mostly declined.
2. Abijam, Rehoboam's son, was the second king of Judah. He is remembered for even worse conditions than when his father was king.

3. Asa ruled from 910 to 869 BC. He began religious reforms that were effective for most of his reign. But when threatened by the northern kingdom in his later years, Asa asked Syria for help instead of trusting God. He seems to have opposed God's prophets until his death.
4. Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, ruled from 872 to 848 BC. He was influenced by his father's early devotion to God. His reign was marked by faithfulness, which pleased God. However, he made a full alliance with King Ahab of Israel, which led to the marriage of his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah. involved Jehoshaphat in dangerous joint ventures with Ahab and later with Ahab's sons when they became kings of Israel. It also was an opportunity for Baal worship to enter Judah when Jehoram became king in the southern kingdom.
5. Jehoram ruled from 853 to 841 BC. He suffered internal rebellion, invasion, and death from a horrible disease as a result of his sin.
6. Ahaziah, Jehoram's son, ruled less than a year. He followed the evil ways of his father. He died in battle.
7. Athaliah, Azahiah's mother, tried to take control and rule as queen. She tried to secure her power by killing all those in line to be king. But she missed Ahaziah's infant son Joash, who was kept hidden in the temple for six years.

8. Joash became king when he was seven. Jehoiada the high priest arranged his coronation and the execution of the murderous and idolatrous Athaliah. During his early years when Joash listened to good counsel, he ruled well. But after the middle of his reign (835–796 BC) he began to listen to princes who wanted to restore idol worship, and conditions became worse. Military defeats brought economic decline and ultimately led to the king being killed.
9. Amaziah, Joash's son, ruled from 796 to 767 BC. He started well with a victory over Edom and faithfulness to God. But he, too, began to worship idols. The northern kingdom defeated him and kept him as a prisoner.
10. Uzziah was king after Amaziah. He ruled from 792 to 740 BC. Uzziah quickly restored Judah's power after his father's defeat by Israel. He then conquered the Philistines in the southwest and the Ammonites across the Jordan River. He also strengthened his control over the Edomites. Throughout his reign, economic conditions improved. But at the height of his power, Uzziah foolishly violated the high priest's rights by offering sacrifice in the temple. For this, he was struck with leprosy. His son Jotham was co-ruler during the years 750 to 740 BC and continued to rule alone for about five more years. Meanwhile, Assyrian power became strong again.
11. Jotham mainly continued the policies of Uzziah.
12. Ahaz, Jotham's son, ruled from 735 to 715 BC. He was greatly affected by the threat from Assyria. Israel and Syria wanted him to join them in war against Assyria. But he refused because he supported Assyria. When Israel and Syria invaded Judah, King Ahaz sent tribute to Assyria. He became their vassal in return for protection. The prophet Isaiah strongly opposed this unwise action. At the same time, the prophet Micah spoke to the common people of Judah. Ahaz's pro-Assyrian policy came with renewed interest in idol worship, which brought God's judgment through invasions by Edomites and Philistines and trouble with Assyria. During this period, Assyria took over the northern kingdom in 722 BC and removed many of its people into captivity.
13. Hezekiah ruled from 715 to 686 BC. He was deeply troubled by the fall of Israel because of their sins. He decided to begin reforms in his kingdom. He was also against Assyria but did not dare to stop paying tribute and declare independence until after Sennacherib became king in Nineveh in 705 BC. At first Sennacherib was too busy to deal with Judah, but finally in 701 BC he invaded. Despite great initial success, he was stopped by a divinely sent plague ([Isaiah 36–39](#)). Isaiah remained with the king to encourage and support him during this emergency.

- 14.** Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, ruled from 697 to 642 BC. He was king longer than any other king of Israel or Judah. Unfortunately, he ignored his father's example and led the people into serious idol worship ([2 Kings 21:9](#)). Taken captive by the Assyrians late in his reign, he repented of his evil, and God restored him to his throne. Afterward, he led some reforms, but the land was too deeply involved in sin to be saved.
- 15.** Amon, Manasseh's son, ruled from 642 to 640 BC. He returned to the idol worship he knew in his youth.
- 16.** Josiah ruled from 640-609 BC. The situation in Judah was different when he was king. Throughout his reign he dedicated himself to reform. He tried to remove idol worship and to restore the temple and its worship. In 622 BC, workers found the Book of the Law while repairing the temple. Its requirements (which had been forgotten) impacted both the king and the people. The prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah ministered during Josiah's reign. Nahum and Habakkuk probably did as well. International conditions were now changing rapidly. Assyria was declining, and Nineveh fell to Babylon and the Medes in 612 BC. Three years later, Pharaoh Neco of Egypt marched north to help his Assyrian ally. When Josiah tried to stop him, he was killed in battle. From this point everything was downhill for Judah. None of the remaining kings was as devoted to God. The kingdom's political power and economy quickly declined.
- 17.** Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, was chosen by the people to be king next. He was only king for three months before Pharaoh Neco replaced him.
- 18.** Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, ruled from 609 to 598 BC. He was chosen by Pharaoh Neco to be king instead of Jehoahaz. In 605, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated Neco. He then invaded Judah and took tribute and hostages from Jehoiakim, including Daniel and his friends ([Daniel 1:1](#)). Jehoiakim rebelled in 600 BC, but Nebuchadnezzar did not come to deal with him personally until 597 BC. Jehoiakim died before the Babylonians arrived.
- 19.** Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, became king in 598 BC. He ruled for only three months before the Babylonians took him away into exile. Ezekiel was among the many captives taken at that time.
- 20.** Zedekiah, the youngest son of Josiah, was made king by the Babylonians in 597 BC. When he rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem and capture the city in 587 BC. He destroyed the city and the temple, and took many people away into exile. The judgment of God had finally fallen on the Jews because of their idol worship.

The Restoration

The Restoration was a time when God showed mercy to the Jewish people after their judgment. This can be seen in the lives of faithful people like Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah. They became important leaders in foreign governments. It can also be seen in how God protected Jewish communities living in foreign lands and helped restore their society in Palestine.

During the exile, Judaism began to develop as a way of life separate from having their own government or temple. The Jewish people finally stopped worshiping idols. Without a temple, priests, a king, or homeland, they centered their community on the Scriptures. During this time, they created the synagogue as a place for gathering, prayer, and studying the Scriptures.

God's plan to restore a Jewish community to Palestine involved Cyrus, whom God called his

"anointed one" ([Isaiah 44:28; 45:1](#)). Cyrus was a Persian prince who rebelled against the ruling dynasty of the Median Empire in 559 BC. After taking control of the empire, he conquered Asia Minor and the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Because he was kind and wise, Cyrus allowed captured peoples to return to their homes and rebuild their communities. His decree allowing the Jews to return appears in [Ezra 1](#). It was probably given in 538 BC. Almost 50,000 people returned to Judah because of this decree ([Ezra 2:64-65](#)).

While trying to reestablish their community, the people built their houses but only managed to lay the foundation of a new temple. Eventually, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah motivated the people to finish building God's house ([Ezra 5:1](#)). They began construction in the second year of King Darius I's reign in 520 BC ([Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1](#)). The temple was completed in his sixth year in 515 BC ([Ezra 6:15](#)).

Darius's son Xerxes ruled from 486 to 465 BC. During this time, someone planned to kill all the Jews in the Persian Empire, which at that time controlled all the lands where Jews lived. Fortunately, Xerxes (called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther), was looking for a new queen. This was during his third year in 483 BC ([Esther 1:3](#)). He chose Esther as queen, who was able to save her people.

Xerxes' son, Artaxerxes I ruled from 465 to 424 BC. He was also important in Jewish history. In his seventh year, 458 BC, Ezra led a second group of Jews back to Jerusalem ([Ezra 7:7](#)). In Artaxerxes' 20th year, 445 BC, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to oversee the rebuilding of the city walls ([Nehemiah 2:1](#)). The prophet Malachi probably wrote his book to the Jews in Jerusalem during the later part of Artaxerxes' reign.

After Samaria fell and Judah was taken captive, some of the Hebrews who remained intermarried with various non-Jewish groups in the area. Their children became the Samaritans, a mixed religious and ethnic group. These people had moved into the empty areas left by the destruction of Judah, and naturally they did not like the Babylonian Jews returning to an area they now considered their own. They did everything they could to stop Nehemiah from rebuilding the walls. Ezra and Nehemiah had to use all their courage, diplomacy, energy, and persuasiveness to prevent the returning Jews from marrying the mixed people of the land. Such marriages would have eventually led

to the absorption and destruction of the Jewish people.

A Samaritan temple was later built on Mount Gerizim (probably during the fifth century BC), and it became the center of Samaritan worship. The hostility between Samaritans and Jews continued into the New Testament period and still exists today ([John 4](#)).

The Intertestamental Period

The Intertestamental Period is the time between the Old Testament and New Testament, from about 400 BC to the time of Jesus.

Greek and Egyptian Rule

Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire very quickly. When the people of Jerusalem opened their gates in 332 BC and surrendered without fighting, Alexander treated them well. After Alexander died in 323 BC, Palestine passed between his generals until Ptolemy I of Egypt took control in 301 BC. The area stayed under Egyptian rule until 198 BC.

The Egyptian rulers (called Ptolemies) allowed the Jews to practice their religion and develop their culture as long as they paid taxes and remained peaceful. Many Jews moved to Alexandria in Egypt and gradually stopped speaking Hebrew in the Greek environment. Because of this, they created a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. While the Egyptian rulers did not force Greek culture on the Jews, many Jews were influenced by Greek ideas.

Syrian Control and Persecution

Ptolemy V became king in 203 BC when he was still a young child. At this time, Antiochus III of Syria took advantage of Egypt's weakness and conquered Palestine in 198 BC. The Jews welcomed the Syrians, hoping for better treatment. But they were disappointed. Antiochus III was defeated badly by Rome at Magnesia in 190 BC. Syria lost much territory and had to pay a huge fine. After this, the Jews suffered heavy taxes along with other people in the empire.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the next Syrian ruler, tried to create unity in his empire by forcing everyone to accept Greek culture and worship the emperor. This was especially difficult for the Jews since they believed in and worshiped only one God. This led to a revolution.

The Maccabean Revolt

In 168 BC, fighting broke out between different Jewish groups in Jerusalem. Antiochus IV saw this as rebellion and sent an army against the city. His forces destroyed part of the city wall and many houses. After this, Antiochus decided to completely suppress Judaism. He dedicated the temple to the Greek god Zeus and sacrificed pigs (which Jews consider ceremonially unclean) on the altar. He banned circumcision, Sabbath observance, and other Jewish religious practices, and forced people to worship pagan gods.

Some Jews obeyed Antiochus's orders or only resisted quietly, but a few decided to fight openly. The main leaders were Mattathias and his five sons. After Mattathias died, his son Judas Maccabeus led his forces to victory over the Syrians, winning back the right to restore Jewish worship. The rededication of the temple on December 25, 164 BC, started the celebration of Hanukkah ([1 Maccabees 4:36–59](#)). Later, Jonathan and Simon (other sons of Mattathias) continued the struggle until independence was gained in 142 BC. This was possible largely because they took advantage of the growing weakness of Syrian rulers and their internal conflicts.

Jewish Independence

Simon ruled the Jewish state until he was killed in 134 BC. His son John Hyrcanus ruled next. John Hyrcanus fought successfully in the east, north, and south. He gained land across the Jordan River. He captured Shechem and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. He also conquered the Idumeans in the south and forced them to adopt Judaism.

His son Aristobulus ruled for only a year, from 104 to 103 BC. But he added part of Galilee to the kingdom. After Aristobulus died, his widow married his brother, Alexander Janneus. Janneus ruled until 76 BC. He fought almost constant wars during his reign. By the time of his death, he had almost recovered the same territory as King Solomon had ruled.

After Janneus died, his widow Alexandra ruled from 76 to 67 BC. Her eldest son, Hyrcanus II, became high priest. Her reign was peaceful and prosperous, but when she died, her sons began fighting each other. They asked for help from Pompey, a Roman general in the area. This led to Roman involvement and the conquest of Palestine in 63 BC.

The Roman Period

After the Romans took control of Palestine, they made Hyrcanus II both high priest and ethnarch (regional governor). Hyrcanus held this position from 63 to 40 BC, but his authority was largely symbolic. Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, was really the one with the power. During many of these years, Hyrcanus could not do much because of the confusion caused by Roman civil wars. Antipater was loyal to Rome and made sure Roman policies were followed. He won the favor of Julius Caesar for Jews living both in Palestine and the Diaspora (Jewish communities living outside their homeland).

Herod the Great

With the support of Mark Antony, Herod was named king of Judea by the Roman senate in 40 BC. However, an invasion from Parthia and Jewish hatred for the Romans allowed Antigonus II, the last king of the Maccabean family, to rule for three years, from 40 to 37 BC. Finally, Herod became king in 37 BC and ruled until 4 BC. From Rome's perspective, Herod was an impressive ruler and earned the title "Great." He brought order to regions east of the Jordan and helped organize the Roman province of Arabia. In addition, he supported Augustus's efforts to spread Greco-Roman culture throughout the empire.

Herod admired Greek culture and paid for building projects in many places outside Palestine, including Rhodes, Antioch, Damascus, and Athens. In Palestine, he rebuilt Samaria and named it Sebaste in honor of Augustus (Sebastos is Greek for "Augustus"). He also built the great port of Caesarea, which was probably about as large as Manhattan Island and became the capital of Roman Palestine. Among his many other building projects, his most famous was remodeling the temple in Jerusalem. This project began in 20 BC but was not finished until just a few years before the temple was destroyed in AD 70.

Despite all the impressive buildings during Herod's reign, the Jews did not like or support him. He also failed to create peace and harmony in his own family, where there were regular outbreaks of treason, unfaithfulness, and murder. Herod worried about any threat to his rule and used harsh methods to destroy such threats. This is clear from his killing of the babies in Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus.

In the end, Herod controlled Idumea, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea, and the area northeast of the Sea of Galilee. In his last will, he divided his kingdom among three sons:

- Archelaus was to rule Idumea, Judea, and Samaria;
- Antipas was to rule Galilee and Perea; and
- Philip was to rule the region northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

After Herod's Death

Archelaus was an unpopular and ineffective ruler. Rome removed him from power in AD 6. His territories were made into a Roman province that remained under direct Roman control from AD 6 to 41. The most famous of these Roman governors was Pontius Pilate, who served from AD 26 to 36. He is best known for ordering the crucifixion of Jesus.

Herod's other sons had varying degrees of success. Antipas was more successful than Archelaus, but he faced challenges. In AD 39, he angered the Roman emperor and was removed from power. Philip was the most effective of Herod's sons, ruling his territory until his death in AD 34. Following Philip's death, his lands were given to Herod Agrippa I in AD 37. By AD 39, Agrippa also gained control of the territories that had been governed by Antipas. In AD 41, he was given the regions of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea.

Herod Agrippa I ruled from AD 37 to 44. He was a descendant of the Maccabees through his grandmother, Mariamne. She was Herod the Great's first wife. This connection won the favor of patriotic Jews and the Pharisees. They appreciated his devotion to Jewish customs and God's law. But when he built a new north wall for Jerusalem and got involved in foreign affairs, the Romans became suspicious. When he died in AD 44, they turned the kingdom into a Roman province.

As we can see in the Gospels, several religious groups had formed in Palestine by Roman times and were active during the first century:

1. The Zealots opposed Roman rule and supported armed rebellion.
2. The Herodians supported the Herodian family and Roman power.

3. The Pharisees were devoted to following religious law and believed in supernatural things like angels and resurrection. They were somewhat willing to support Rome if given religious freedom, and they controlled the synagogues.
4. The Sadducees did not believe in supernatural things, tended to work with the ruling powers, and controlled the temple.

Generally speaking, the writings from the time between the Old and New Testaments and the popular thinking of that time viewed the Messiah as a political leader who would free his people from foreign control and set up a new independent kingdom.

Roman Rule and Jewish Revolts

Roman governors (called prefects) ruled Palestine from AD 44 to 66. However, many of these governors failed to keep the peace. They often offended the religious practices of the Jews and made them angry in other ways. Constant tension arose between Jews and Romans under Felix, who ruled from AD 52 to 60. This led to the first Jewish revolt from AD 66 to 70. During this time, Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea around AD 58 to 60 ([Acts 23:23-24:27](#)). Violent riots broke out between Jews and gentiles (non-Jewish people) in the city.

Festus, who ruled from AD 60 to 62, was capable leader. But the situation in Palestine was becoming more unstable. His death caused a period of chaos until Albinus took over as governor from AD 62 to 64. Albinus was a corrupt and ineffective leader. His replacement, Florus, was even worse. Florus's harsh policies, including open robbery and bribery, added to the growing unrest. By AD 66, the Jews could no longer endure Roman rule.

The event that started the rebellion was an anti-Jewish act by the Greek population of Caesarea in AD 66. Soon riots spread to many cities, and Roman soldiers were killed in several places. But the Jews were not united, and in Jerusalem armed groups of Jews fought each other for control. Vespasian was chosen to lead the Roman army of about 60,000 soldiers to deal with the rebellion.

Vespasian had conquered most of Palestine by the time he became emperor in AD 69 (after the death of Nero). He left his son Titus to complete the task. In August of AD 70, Titus broke through

Jerusalem's walls. Roman forces killed many of the people living in Jerusalem, leveled the city, and destroyed the temple. Masada, the last Jewish stronghold, continued to resist the Romans until AD 73. Palestine had been crushed by Roman power. The loss of life and property was huge and terrible.

Later Jewish Rebellions

The Jews would rise in revolt against Rome two more times. The first was under Emperor Trajan in AD 115. This rebellion started in Cyrenaica and quickly spread to Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. The revolt began as a response to ongoing tensions between Jews and their Greek-speaking neighbors. It soon became a challenge to Roman authority.

The rebellion gained momentum after the Parthians beat Rome on the eastern frontier. This gave Jews hope of ending Roman rule. Where Jews gained the upper hand, they often massacred people. In response, the non-Jewish population retaliated. Trajan crushed the uprising with ruthless efficiency. He restored order throughout the empire, except in Egypt. His successor, Hadrian, brought peace and order to Egypt.

Hadrian faced a new Jewish revolt. It was caused by his ban on circumcision, which he considered inhumane. His plan to rebuild Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, with a temple to Jupiter on the site of the former Jewish temple, also angered them. These actions were deeply offensive to the Jewish people. Simeon Bar-Kochba, who was hailed as the "Son of the Star" and the prince of Israel, led the revolt against Rome. The fighting was brutal on both sides, lasting over three years from AD 132 to 135. The rebellion almost wiped out Judea's Jewish population.

After, the Romans rebuilt Jerusalem as a colony. Jews were forbidden to enter the city on pain of death. Even centuries later, Jews were only allowed to enter once a year on the anniversary of the temple's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. After the Bar-Kochba revolt, Judaism turned inward. It focused on preserving its traditions and distancing itself from the gentiles.

See also Abraham; Timeline of the Bible (Old Testament); Conquest and Allotment of the Land; David; Diaspora of the Jews; Exodus, The; First Jewish Revolt; Jew; Judaism; Moses; Patriarchs, Period of the; Saul #2; Solomon; Postexilic Period; Wilderness Wanderings.

History of Joseph the Carpenter

This ancient document honors the earthly father of Jesus and encourages respect and veneration of Joseph. The story may have been written around the fourth century AD, based on statements found in chapter 18. In that chapter, Jesus tells Mary, "You, too, must expect the same end of life as other mortals." By the fifth century AD, many people believed in the "Assumption of the Virgin."

The History of Joseph the Carpenter is connected to another early Christian text, the Protevangelium of James. It was contaminated by Gnosticism and Egyptian religious beliefs. Complete copies have survived in Coptic and Arabic, as well as fragments in Sahidic.

The History of Joseph the Carpenter claims to tell the story of Joseph's life and his peaceful death at 111 years old. In the story, Jesus tells this story to his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Joseph is a carpenter ([Matthew 13:55](#)) and an elderly widower when he marries 12-year-old Mary. He had six children from a previous marriage. After he dies, Jesus gives a eulogy at his funeral. The burial follows customs similar to the Egyptian ceremonies for the god Osiris.

See also Apocrypha; Arabic History of Joseph the Carpenter; Joseph.

Hittites

Biblical people who figure largely in the promises of a land for the descendants of Abram and the children of Israel. Once unknown to secular history and thought to be a mythical people by some critics of Bible history, information about the Hittites has been uncovered by archaeologists and historians, and they now are known to have had an empire centered in Asia Minor. They were of sufficient military strength to challenge the armies of Egypt under the vainglorious Ramses II and fought him to a standstill at Kadesh on the Orontes.

For the most part, the biblical references do not suggest that the Hittites were more than a minor group, but the association of Hittite kings and Egypt with Solomon's trade in horses and their involvement in the conflicts of Syria and Israel in the divided monarchy indicate that the Hittites were a people of great consequence.

Geography

The Hittite Empire had its center in Anatolia (Asia Minor, modern Turkey), with its capital at Hattusas (modern Baghazkoy) at the bend of the Halys River (present Kizil Irmak). The empire at times extended over a much larger area without definite boundaries since it included city-states that were dependencies of the Anatolian kingdom, related to it by treaties but otherwise not a part of it. Because of their presence in Palestine-Syria, the Hittites made their influence felt in Egypt and are well known from the art and inscriptions of that country. The presence of Hittites in Palestine is widely attested in the Bible, and the power of the Hittites in Palestinian cities like Hebron is indicated in patriarchal times.

History

The Hittites (also known as Hattians) were one of several groups of peoples, thought to be neither Semitic nor Indo-European, who occupied the Anatolian plateau in the third millennium BC. In the late part of this millennium Indo-Europeans overran the area and assumed political power.

History in the true sense, that is, based on written records, begins in Anatolia around 1900 BC with the arrival of Assyrian traders. These merchants established themselves in various cities and corresponded with their homeland using cuneiform tablets. Numbers of these records have been found near Kayseri. These mention the struggle among Hittite principalities for supremacy in Anatolia and refer to a King Anittas, who is known from Hittite sources of later date.

During the 15th century BC, the dominance of the Hurrians was broken by the campaigns of the Egyptian king Thutmose III, but another Hurrian kingdom, Mitanni, soon became prominent in western Asia. Mitanni presented a threat to the Hittites, but with the arrival of an ambitious and energetic monarch, Suppiluliuma I (c. 1380–1340 BC), there came a resurgence of Hittite vitality and the strength of the empire. This was the time of the writing of the Amarna letters, with their testimony of the confused situation in Palestine-Syria.

Suppiluliuma carried out a brilliant military expedition against Mitanni and then, by combining force with diplomatic genius, forged for himself a buffer zone of vassal city-states, which were bound to him by treaties, copies of which were found in the Hittite archives.

During the first half of the 14th century, the languor of Amenhotep III and the religious preoccupation of Akhenaten had allowed the Asiatic empire of Egypt to dwindle away into a memory. But with the beginning of the 19th dynasty, the Egyptians became concerned about regaining what was lost. The contest for Palestine-Syria reached its climax with the famous battle at Kadesh on the Orontes, where the initial advantage was won by Hittite chariots. Ramses II celebrated the battle as a victory, although he barely escaped with his life. The Hittite king, Muwatallis, also claimed a triumph, but in political terms the battle was inconclusive. The next Hittite king after him, Hattusilis III, signed a treaty with Ramses II in the 21st year of the reign of the Egyptian king; the pact was confirmed by the marriage of the daughter of Hattusilis to Ramses II.

Around the middle of the 13th century BC, the Hittites were threatened from the west by the Ahhiyawa, possibly to be associated with the Achaeans and the Sea Peoples (see Philistia, Philistines). It was a wave of the Sea Peoples that brought the Hittite Empire to an end around 1190 BC and surged along the eastern Mediterranean coast until it was finally stopped in the Nile Delta by Ramses III.

In northern Syria, independent city-states continued to be ruled by kings who bore Hittite names and erected monuments inscribed with Hittite hieroglyphs. The Assyrians continued to refer to the area as the Land of Hatti, and the OT speaks of these rulers of principalities as "kings of the Hittites." These little kingdoms were soon placed under Assyrian tribute and became Assyrian provinces in the reigns of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, the rulers who also put an end to the northern kingdom of Israel by conquering Samaria in 721 BC.

Languages and Literature

In the texts found at Boghazkoy, eight different languages were employed. Of these, only two, Hittite and Akkadian, were used for official royal records. Akkadian was the lingua franca of the empire and was also the main language of the Amarna tablets. Hurrian is the only other language in which complete texts were written. The other languages occur mostly in short passages in Hittite religious documents, and one is identified only by some technical terms.

There were eight languages: (1) Hittite, also called Nesite, was recognized by B. Hrozný as having

affinities with Indo-European. This proposal met with skepticism among scholars for a while, but it has been proved beyond question. (2) Hattic (Hattian), the language of the aboriginal people of Anatolia, is used for speeches of the priests in the performance of the cultic ritual relating to the Hittite pantheon. (3) Luwian is another Indo-European language, closely related to Hittite. (4) Palaic, a little-known language, is also Indo-European. (5) Hurrian appears in many ritual texts. Fragments of a Hurrian translation of the Epic of Gilgamesh were found. One of the Amarna tablets, written by Tushratta, king of Mitanni, to Amenhotep III, was in Hurrian. Also represented are (6) the Aryan language of the Mitanni rulers, (7) Akkadian, and (8) Sumerian. In addition to the cuneiform script, the Hittites used hieroglyphs, which have been found inscribed on stone and lead.

The Hittite archives contained texts of official documents, such as treaties, laws, instructions, annals of the kings, letters, and other historical records. There was much religious literature, including myths, legends, epics, incantations, rituals, omens, prayers, and descriptions of festivals and their celebration.

The People

The diversity of language characteristic of Hittite civilization is paralleled by the great mixture of ethnic backgrounds, particularly over the geographic range covered by the empire. The physical appearance of the Hittites is known from their own reliefs and from representation on Egyptian monuments. Their own depictions show the Hittites with unattractive faces, heavy coats, tall pointed caps, and shoes with turned-up toes.

Religion

The Hittites had a pantheon of deities, known by name from the inscriptions and by appearance from the reliefs. Gods may be identified by a weapon or tool carried in the right hand, a symbol in the left hand, wings or similar appurtenances, or the sacred animal on which a divinity may stand.

A principal god was the weather god, whose sacred animal was the bull. Out of the multiplicity of local cults, there arose an official pantheon, headed by the sun goddess, Arinna, who was the supreme deity of the state and of the king. The treaties of the Hittites typically have a long list of divinities who served as witnesses to the treaty and oath.

Hittites and the Bible

The name "Hittite(s)" occurs nearly 50 times in the OT but does not appear in the NT. If one includes the occurrences of the name of Heth, the father of the Hittites, there are more than 60 citations in the Bible. Most have to do with the presence of Hittites in Canaan. Their progenitor and eponym, Heth, is listed second among the sons of Canaan in the "table of nations" ([Gn 10:15](#); cf. [1 Chr 1:13](#)). Most of the references to the "sons of Heth" appear in the narrative of the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham ([Gn 23](#)).

The OT references to Hittites include [Genesis 26:34; 27:46](#) (Hittite women); [49:29–32; 50:13](#) (Ephron); [Exodus 33:2](#); [Numbers 13:29; Deuteronomy 7:1; 20:17](#) (their destruction); [Joshua 11:3; 12:8](#) (occupants of Canaan); [1 Samuel 26:6; 2 Samuel 11–12](#) (Uriah, a warrior under David); [1 Kings 9:20; 10:29](#) (laborers or traders under Solomon); [11:1](#) (wife of Solomon); [Ezra 9:1](#) (foreigners); [Ezekiel 16:3, 45](#) (Jerusalem's ancestors).

Hivites

The Hivites were a group of people who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came.

Archaeologists and historians have not yet found clear evidence of the Hivites outside the Bible. But the Bible says they came from one of the sons of Canaan ([Genesis 10:17](#)). They lived in areas around the Lebanon Mountains and Mount Hermon ([Judges 3:3; 11:3](#)).

The Hivites appear many times in the Bible as a group that Israel drove out of the land ([Joshua 12:8; 24:11; 1 Kings 9:20](#)). But some of them stayed in the land. During the time of the Israelite kingdom, some Hivites still lived near the city of Tyre and in other places ([2 Samuel 24:7](#)).

Some scholars think the name "Hivite" may have come from a mistake in copying. In Hebrew, the letters *resh* (ר) and *waw* (ו) look similar. This mistake may have changed the name "Horite" to "Hivite."

Some scholars think there may have been a mix-up in the names. [Genesis 36:2](#) calls Zibeon a "Hivite." In verses [20](#) and [29](#), he is called a "Horite". In some places, the Septuagint (an early Greek translation of the Old Testament) says "Horite" instead of "Hivite" ([Genesis 34:2; Joshua 9:7](#)). Other passages

in the Septuagint read "Hittite" rather than "Hivite" ([Joshua 11:3](#); [Judges 3:3](#)).

The overlap between the names Hivite and Horite in [Genesis 36](#) may show that the two groups were connected in some way. This is similar to how the Bible sometimes uses the names Ishmaelites and Midianites for the same group ([Genesis 37:27–28, 36](#)). Some scholars think the Hivites and Horites may have been related to the Hurrians. The Hurrians were a well-known group in history and archaeology.

The word "Hivite" appears about 25 times in the Old Testament. Almost one-third of these are in the book of Joshua. This suggests that the Hivites were a real group of people. Most Hivites lived in the land of Canaan, but some also lived in the land of Edom ([Genesis 36:2](#)).

The Bible names several Hivites. These include:

- Hamor ([Genesis 34:2](#)),
- the people of Gibeon ([Joshua 9:7](#)),
- the northern Hivites ([Judges 3:3–8](#)), and
- those who lived near Tyre ([2 Samuel 24:7](#)).

When Solomon was king of Israel, the Hivites and other foreign people who lived in the land were forced to work as slaves ([1 Kings 9:20–21](#); [2 Chronicles 8:7](#)).

Hizki

Elpaal's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:17](#)).

Hizkiah

1. Neariah's son and a descendant of David through Rehoboam's line ([1 Chr 3:23](#)). See Hezekiah #2.
2. KJV spelling of Hezekiah, Zephaniah's forefather, in [Zephaniah 1:1](#). See Hezekiah #4.

Hizkijah

KJV form of Hezekiah, Ater's descendant, in [Nehemiah 10:17](#). See Hezekiah #3.

Hobab

A member of the Midianite people who was connected to Moses's family ([Numbers 10:29](#); [Judges 4:11](#)). He was either Moses's father-in-law or his brother-in-law. If he was Moses's father-in-law, he was also known by two other names. He is usually called Jethro ([Exodus 3:1; 4:18; 18:1–12](#)). But he is also called Reuel ([Exodus 2:18](#)). Jethro served as a priest of Midian ([Exodus 18:1](#)). He was the ancestor of the Kenite people ([Judges 4:11](#)).

Scholars are not sure whether Hobab was Moses's father-in-law or brother-in-law. In [Judges 4:11](#), Hobab seems to be the same person as Jethro. Some ancient copies of the Bible add the name "Hobab" when mentioning "the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law" in [Judges 1:16](#). They also add his name when talking about Reuel in [Exodus 2:18](#). However, [Numbers 10:29a](#) could mean that Hobab was Reuel's son (making him Moses's brother-in-law). In this passage, Moses asks Hobab to help guide the Israelites through the wilderness because he knew the area well.

See also Jethro.

Hobah

Town to which Abraham pursued the armies under Chedorlaomer ([Gn 14:15](#)). Its location is uncertain, but various suggestions have been made. Some equate it with the Hobah about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northwest of Damascus; others, with the territory called Ube in the Amarna letters; and still others, with Tell el-Salihite, 10 miles (16 kilometers) east of Damascus.

Hobaiah

Head of a priestly family who returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel after the exile. He was unable to prove his priestly genealogy and so was not allowed to do priestly service ([Ezr 2:61](#); [Neh 7:63](#)).

Hod

Zophah's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:37](#)).

Hodaiah

KJV spelling of Hodaviah, David's descendant, in [1 Chronicles 3:24](#). See Hodaviah #1.

Hodaviah

1. Postexilic descendant of David ([1 Chr 3:24](#)).
2. Chieftain of Manasseh's half-tribe east of the Jordan ([1 Chr 5:24](#)).
3. Hassenuah's son and the father of Meshullam from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 9:7](#)).
4. Progenitor of a family of Levites who returned with the exiles from Babylon ([Ezr 2:40](#)); alternately called Judah in [Ezra 3:9](#) and Hodevah in [Nehemiah 7:43](#).

Hodesh

Name given to Shaharaim's wife from Benjamin's tribe in [1 Chronicles 8:9](#) (a textually corrupt passage).

Hodevah

Alternate spelling of Hodaviah in [Nehemiah 7:43](#) (see nlt mg). See Hodaviah #4.

Hodiah, Hodijah

1. A man of Judah mentioned in [1 Chronicles 4:19](#).
- 2, 3, 4. Three of the men who signed the covenant of Ezra ([Neh 10:10, 13, 18](#)) bear this name; two of them are perhaps among those who interpreted the covenant to the people at Ezra's public reading of the law ([8:7](#)) and stood upon the stairs of the Levites during the service of covenant renewal ([9:5](#)).

Hoglah

One of the five daughters of Zelophehad ([Numbers 26:33](#); [27:1](#); [Joshua 17:3](#)). Zelophehad was from the tribe of Manasseh. He had no sons, so his inheritance passed to his daughters. They married within their own tribe as God commanded. So their

land remained in the tribe of the family of their father ([Numbers 36:11-12](#)).

Hoham

Amorite king of Hebron, confederate with four other kings in reprisals against Gibeon for making peace with Joshua ([Jos 10:3](#)). They were defeated and put to death at the cave of Makkedah (vv [16-27](#)).

Holiness

Chief attribute of God and a quality to be developed in his people. "Holiness" and the adjective "holy" occur more than 900 times in the Bible. The primary Old Testament word for holiness means "to cut" or "to separate." Fundamentally, holiness is a cutting off or separation from what is unclean and a consecration to what is pure.

In the Old Testament, holiness as applied to God signifies his transcendence over creation and the moral perfection of his character. God is holy in that he is utterly distinct from his creation and exercises sovereign majesty and power over it. His holiness is especially prominent in the Psalms ([47:8](#)) and the Prophets ([Ezekiel 39:7](#)), where "holiness" emerges as a synonym for Israel's God. Thus, Scripture ascribes to God the title "Holy" ([Isaiah 57:15](#)), "Holy One" ([Job 6:10](#); [Isaiah 43:15](#)), and "Holy One of Israel" ([Psalms 89:18](#); [Isaiah 60:14](#); [Jeremiah 50:29](#)).

In the Old Testament God's holiness denotes that the Lord is separate from all that is evil and defiled (compare [Job 34:10](#)). His holy character is the standard of absolute moral perfection ([Isaiah 5:16](#)). God's holiness—his transcendent majesty and the purity of his character—are skillfully balanced in [Psalm 99](#). Verses [1 through 3](#) portray God's distance from the finite and earthbound, whereas verses [4](#) and [5](#) emphasize his separation from sin and evil.

In the Old Testament God demanded holiness in the lives of his people. Through Moses, God said to the congregation of Israel, "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy." ([Leviticus 19:2](#), Revised Standard Version). The holiness enjoined by the Old Testament was twofold: (1) external, or ceremonial; and (2) internal, or moral and spiritual. Old Testament ceremonial holiness, prescribed in the Pentateuch (the first five books of

the Old Testament) included ritual consecration to God's service. Thus priests and Levites were sanctified by a complex process of ritual consecration ([Exodus 29](#)), as were the Hebrew Nazirites, which means "separated ones" ([Numbers 6:1-21](#)). Prophets like Elisha ([2 Kings 4:9](#)) and Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 1:5](#)) were also sanctified for a special prophetic ministry in Israel.

But the Old Testament also draws attention to the inner, moral, and spiritual aspects of holiness. Men and women, created in the image of God, are called to cultivate the holiness of God's own character in their lives ([Leviticus 19:2](#); [Numbers 15:40](#)). In the New Testament, the ceremonial holiness prominent in the Pentateuch recedes to the background. Whereas much of Judaism in Jesus' time sought a ceremonial holiness by works ([Mark 7:1-5](#)), the New Testament stresses the ethical rather than the formal dimension of holiness (verses [6-12](#)). With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the early church perceived that holiness of life was a profound internal reality that should govern an individual's thought and attitudes about people and objects in the external world.

The New Testament Greek equivalent of the common Hebrew word for holiness signifies an inner state of freedom from moral fault and a relative harmony with the moral perfection of God. The word "godlikeness" or "godliness" captures the sense of the primary Greek word for holiness. Another Greek word approximates the dominant Old Testament concept of holiness as external separation from the profane and dedication to the service of the Lord.

Because the New Testament writers assumed the Old Testament portrait of deity, holiness is ascribed to God in relatively few apostolic texts. Jesus affirmed the ethical nature of God when he enjoined his disciples to pray that the Father's name might be esteemed for what it is: "hallowed be Your name" ([Matthew 6:9](#)). In the book of Revelation the Father's moral perfection is extolled with the threefold ascription of holiness borrowed from Isaiah: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" ([Revelation 4:8](#); compare [Isaiah 6:3](#)). Luke, however, contemplated God's holiness in terms of the dominant Old Testament concept of his transcendence and majesty ([Luke 1:49](#)).

Similarly, the holiness of Jesus Christ is asserted in the New Testament. Luke ([Luke 1:35; 4:34](#)), Peter ([Acts 3:14; 4:27-30](#)), the writer of Hebrews

([Hebrews 7:26](#)), and John ([Revelation 3:7](#)) ascribe holiness to both the Father and the Son.

Since the Spirit comes from God, discloses his holy character, and is the instrument of God's holy purposes in the world, he also is absolutely holy ([Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 28:19](#); [Luke 1:15; 4:14](#)). The common title "Holy Spirit" underscores the ethical perfection of the third person of the Godhead ([John 3:5-8; 14:16-17, 26](#)).

In the New Testament, holiness also characterizes Christ's church. The apostle Paul taught that Christ loved the church and died for it "to sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ([Ephesians 5:26](#)). Peter addressed the church as a holy people in language borrowed from the Old Testament. Separated from the unbelieving nations and consecrated to the Lord, the church is "a holy nation" ([1 Peter 2:9](#); compare [Exodus 19:6](#)).

But the New Testament more often discusses holiness in relation to individual Christians. Believers in Christ are frequently designated as "saints," literally meaning "holy ones," since through faith God justifies sinners, pronouncing them "holy" in his sight. A justified sinner is by no means morally perfect, but God does declare believers to be guiltless. Thus, although Christians at Corinth, for example, were plagued with numerous sins, Paul could address his erring friends as those who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy" ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#)). Despite their problems, the Corinthian believers were "holy ones" in Christ.

The New Testament, however, places great stress upon the reality of practical holiness in the Christian's daily experience. The God who freely declares a person righteous through faith in Christ commands that the believer progress in holiness of life. In God's plan, a growth in holiness should accompany believing. God graciously provides the spiritual resources to enable Christians to be "partakers of the divine nature" ([2 Peter 1:4](#)).

See also God, Being and Attributes of.

Holm Tree

Tree mentioned in [Isaiah 44:14](#) (kjv "ash") whose wood was used for fuel and idol construction; its identity is uncertain. *See* Plants (Cypress; Oak; Ash).

Holofernes

According to the book of Judith, the chief Assyrian general under King Nebuchadnezzar ([Jdt 2:4](#)) who was ordered by the king to “go and attack the whole west country” (v [6](#)). He ravaged the nations one after another (vv [21-27](#)) and his huge army spread terror wherever it went (v [28](#)). He destroyed “all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and all their tongues and tribes should call upon him as god” ([3:8](#)). When Holofernes made a determined effort to seize Bethulia ([7:1ff](#)), the forces of Israel rallied and took up their weapons. The desperate Jews were about to surrender when the beautiful widow Judith asked permission of the leaders of the Jews to go to Holofernes ([8:32-34](#)). The permission was given and Judith called upon God to deliver her people ([9:2-14](#)). She “made herself very beautiful” ([10:4](#)) and went to meet Holofernes “to give him a true report” (v [13](#)). Holofernes came under the spell of the beautiful Judith, and on the fourth day of her visit he made a banquet and Judith was invited ([12:10-11](#)). Holofernes became drunk, and when all the servants had left, Judith took his sword and severed his head from his body and carried it back to Bethulia in a bag and showed it to the leaders of Israel. Jubilant Israelites attacked the leaderless Assyrians, who fled in panic. Led by Judith, the Jews joined in celebration and praise and offered thanksgiving in Jerusalem. This story of defeated pride has been a favorite theme of artists, including Donatello and Dante.

Holon

1. Town in the uplands of Judah's inheritance ([Jos 15:51](#)) given to the Levites ([21:15](#)). In [1 Chronicles 6:58](#), the town is called Hilen. Holon may be Khirbet 'Alin, northwest of Hebron. *See Levitical Cities.*
2. City near Heshbon, located in the plain of Moab ([Jer 48:21](#)).

Holy Ghost

KJV rendering of Holy Spirit. *See Spirit of God.*

Holy of Holies

Inner room of the tabernacle and temple in which the ark of the covenant was kept. *See Tabernacle; Temple.*

Holy One of Israel

See God, Names of.

Holy Place

See Tabernacle; Temple.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit and the third person of the Trinity. This divine person is also called the Spirit of God, and in older Bible translations, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit lives in believers, guides them, and helps them understand God's truth.

See Spirit of God.

Holy War

See War, Holy.

Holy War

A type of warfare described in the book of Deuteronomy, especially in chapter [20](#). Holy war was not just fought by kings and their trained soldiers. It is seen as God's war. God is directly involved alongside his covenant people, who are chosen to fight in his name.

The size of the army was not important. Sometimes the numbers were even reduced to show that victory came not from military strength, but from God's action against his enemies. When Israel obeyed God and followed his battle instructions, the war was within God's will. God commanded it, and his people trusted him in battle.

God is called “a man of war,” and the Bible says that “the battle is the LORD's” ([1 Samuel 17:47](#); compare [18:17](#); [25:28](#)). With this faith, it is easy to see how the Israelites understood holy war as a

way God worked through them. They believed their enemies were also God's enemies. They thought God would use them to fulfill his saving purposes for the world.

Examples of Holy War in the Bible

Moses believed that God declared war and sent his people to fight ([Exodus 17:16](#); [Numbers 31:3](#)). At key moments in war, "the terror of the Lord" fell on the enemy. This allowed Israel's smaller army to defeat armies that were much larger ([Joshua 10:10-14](#); [Judges 4:12-16](#); [2 Samuel 5:24-25](#)).

In a time of military crisis, the prophet Elisha was able to see God's heavenly army surrounding Samaria, ready to defeat the powerful Syrian armies. Elisha prayed, and the Syrian soldiers were blinded and became powerless against Israel ([2 Kings 6:15-23](#)).

How Israel Sought God's Guidance in War

Different methods were used to discover God's will and to ensure his active participation in battle. These included:

- messages from prophets ([1 Kings 22:5-23](#)),
- special objects used to determine God's will called Urim and Thummim ([Exodus 28:30](#); [Leviticus 8:8](#)),
- a priestly garment called the ephod ([1 Samuel 30:7](#)), and
- the ark of the covenant.

Israel's leaders sought God's guidance for their military strategies. No steps were taken without God's approval and guidance ([2 Samuel 5:19-23](#)).

Holy War and the Promised Land

Since God promised the land of Canaan to the people of Israel, it was indeed the promised land. The Bible describes it as belonging to them by divine covenant (a binding agreement made by God with his people). The promised land was in that sense "the Holy Land." Defending this land against invaders was considered a holy war. The invading enemy was trespassing on holy territory that belonged to God's people by unchangeable decree. So invading the promised land brought God's judgment upon themselves.

The Complete Destruction of Enemies

From this perspective, the complete destruction of Israel's enemies was necessary. This was especially true for pagan, corrupt enemies. The Hebrew word *herem* originally meant "devoted." It came to mean "devoted to destruction" as something hostile to the rule of God ([Joshua 6:17-18](#)). God's plan must not be hindered, blocked, or stopped by any degrading idolatry or corrupting immorality ([Deuteronomy 7](#)).

Enemy cities within the promised land were to be completely destroyed (a practice known as "the ban"). Only silver, gold, and bronze and iron vessels were to be spared. They were placed in God's treasury as holy items ([Joshua 6:17-21](#); [1 Samuel 15:3](#)).

Holy War and God's Future Peace

There was a distinct forward-looking aspect to the concept of holy war. It looked beyond God's victories in specific battles to the end of all war and conflict. It pointed to a final time of peace that will prove the righteousness and sovereignty of God's saving purposes. It will also show God's concern and goal for his own people.

A final time of peace will come after God defeats all evil. After this, weapons of war will be turned into tools for peace ([Isaiah 2:4](#); [Micah 4:3](#)). This will happen under the rule of the Messiah (God's chosen leader), the Prince of Peace ([Isaiah 9:6](#)). He will triumph over all of God's enemies on the great Day of the Lord ([Psalm 110](#); [Daniel 7](#); [Zechariah 14](#)).

Homam

Alternate spelling of Heman, Lotan's son, in [1 Chronicles 1:39](#) (nlt mg). See Heman #1.

Homer

Dry measure of capacity estimated to be anywhere from four to six and a half bushels. See Weights and Measures.

Homes and Dwellings

Preview

- Middle Bronze Age Houses
- Late Bronze Age Houses
- Israelite Houses of the Iron Age
- Houses in New Testament Times

Middle Bronze Age Houses (c. 1800–1500 BC)

Israel's early ancestors lived mostly in tents or temporary dwellings, but the Canaanites of the middle Bronze Age (into whose land the Israelites came) lived in substantial houses of several rooms built around a courtyard.

The simplest form of this new type of house had a courtyard with a single room on one side, generally on the west of the courtyard, to avoid having the prevailing westerly winds blow smoke into the room. Silos for storing grain were normally in the room rather than in the courtyard. Good examples of such one-roomed houses were found at Tell Nagila, northwest of Beersheba, dating to about 1700 BC. Three such houses had a room 10 by 7 feet (3 by 2.1 meters) and a courtyard 10 by 16 feet (3 by 4.9 meters). Partitions sometimes divided the room. The walls were made of rough stone and mud bricks covered by mud plaster and were hardly thick enough to carry a second story. Houses were set close together to take advantage of a common back wall with entrances to the court on roughly parallel streets. Each house contained a stone and clay bench along the walls.

Sometimes several rooms were built off one side of the courtyard. The grandest of these yet found comes from Tell Beit Mirsim, dating from about 1600 BC, probably the house of a local governor or patrician. There were no less than six rooms on the western side of the courtyard, which was some 35 by 19 feet (10.7 by 5.8 meters) in size. The roofed living space, including both the ground and second floors, was about 1,500 square feet (139 square meters); a second floor is assumed from the thickness of the walls all around. The ground floor may have been multifunctional with two stable rooms and two storage areas. Other less imposing variants of the courtyard house with rooms on one side only come from this same tell in Stratum E (c. 1700 BC).

The second type of house in the middle Bronze Age had a roofed hall with rooms on one or two sides. A good example of such a house with rooms on one side comes from Tell Beit Mirsim, dating from about 1800 BC. The large, roofed, rectangular hall contained three large, flat stones set along the long

axis to serve as foundations for the wooden roof supports. Rafters of wood and a roof of reeds covered with mud were found in the debris. Each of the three rooms on the west was entered from the hall. The stone foundations and mud brick walls were substantial enough to support a second story that could be reached by an exterior wooden staircase or ladder. The floor of earth, ashes, and straw was carefully smoothed over.

A third type of house consisted of an open courtyard with rooms on two adjacent sides of the court. A good example comes from Tell Beit Mirsim, built on the ruins of the house with the roofed hall. The roofed hall became the court. A house at Tell Taanach from the middle Bronze IIB period (c. 1700 BC) was of very strong construction with walls over three feet (.9 meter) thick laid in mortar. The courtyard contained a cistern, and an oven was found in a room on the east side of the house. The ground floors were plastered and covered 2,300 square feet (214 square meters). An interior staircase led to a second story.

In some houses, rooms were placed at opposite sides of the courtyard. Good examples come from Beth Shemesh (Tell er-Rumeilah) and Megiddo. At Beth Shemesh the city wall formed the south wall of the house, and rooms lay east and west of the courtyard. Entrance was from the street into one of the rooms. The other rooms were entered by crossing the courtyard. The outer walls were over three feet (91.4 centimeters) thick and interior walls a foot and a half (45.7 centimeters) thick. Mud and lime plaster coated the walls.

At Megiddo houses were built against the north city wall. In level XII (c. 1750–1700 BC) three well-preserved houses of this kind have been found. The houses were separated by walls at right angles to the city wall. Entrance to each house was through one door on the street, through a room, and into a courtyard paved with small stones and pebbles. The courtyards housed the ovens, and one house had a cistern.

A fourth type of middle Bronze Age house had rooms on three sides of the courtyard. These rooms varied greatly in size and use. A good example dating to about 1600 BC comes from Megiddo, level IX. The house was 42 by 39 feet (12.8 by 11.9 meters) in size and contained nine rooms of varying sizes. The courtyard was plastered with lime and had a large oven in the center. A second oven was found in an eastern room. Each room had a door to the courtyard. This house, like others of the middle Bronze Age, had burials under the floors

(cf. [1 Sm 25:1](#); [1 Kgs 2:34](#) for biblical references in the Iron Age).

The wide variety of Palestinian houses during the middle Bronze Age points to a level of prosperity much higher than that of the early Bronze Age. Both houses and tombs yielded quantities of graceful and well-made household utensils.

Late Bronze Age Houses (c. 1550–1200 BC)

Information is limited for this period, due partly to the accidents of excavation and partly to the severe destruction of many sites at the close of the age from the hands of Israelites, Sea Peoples, Egyptians, and others.

Israelite Houses of the Iron Age (c. 1200–600 BC)

Many examples of domestic buildings come from this period. The Israelite structures were at first rather crude, but the quality improved. Thus at Tell Qasil in the 12th century there were poor homes with a courtyard and single room on one side. At contemporary Beth-shemesh one larger house had a foundation of large uncut stones, a courtyard some 34 by 20 feet (10.4 by 6.1 meters), and three rooms on one side 11 by 10½ feet (3.4 by 3.2 meters). There was rough stone paving in the court and in two of the rooms. At Hazor a house was discovered that had a courtyard and rooms on one side dating to about 900 BC. Half of the courtyard was covered, the roof being supported on stone pillars. These stone pillars are very characteristic of the Iron Age houses in Palestine and have been found in sites all over the country.

The most common type of house in the days of the kings of Judah and Israel was one in which rooms were built on three sides of a courtyard. This type of house has sometimes been called the “four-room house.” A long room was built across the short axis of the courtyard, and two other rooms, one on each side of the court, were constructed on the long axis. The courtyard was divided into three by two rows of pillars that extended down the long axis of the court. These pillars supported the roof and gave support for walls, either half height or full height. Entrance to the house was from the street into the courtyard, where ovens and silos were normally placed, although this varied. Such a framework could be expanded by adding a row of rooms outside the existing rooms on the long axis of the court. There were many ways to divide long rooms into smaller ones. In some cases where the walls were strong enough, a second story was added. An

excellent example of a four-room house that was later enlarged was found at Shechem and dated to the period around 748–724 BC. The courtyard contained a storage bin, a large open hearth, a quern (hand mill), stone grinders, and the bases of pottery jars resting in stone pedestals. In the rooms that had been added there was a device for catching water from the roof and delivering it to an underground water system. A large silo in one room was connected to a kitchen.

There is evidence that larger Iron Age houses served as industrial or commercial buildings. Certain houses at Tell Beit Mirsim contained dye vats and loom weights. In other places the large number of querns suggests a wheat-grinding industry. There is evidence also of wine vats, or potters' equipment, and of shops. Some houses had rooms set apart for religious purposes and contained incense stands, figurines, small altars, and the like.

The excavations of Kathleen Kenyon at Jerusalem brought to light houses from the last days of Judah. They were rather small and irregularly planned but of the same general design as those in the hill country sites of Judah—a courtyard divided by a row of stone pillars that supported the roof.

The contrast between big houses and small houses in some towns probably indicates the social inequality referred to in the prophets. In the 10th and 9th centuries BC there was a fairly uniform picture of many small houses and a few large ones. By the 8th century BC, at a town like Tirzah, there were three or four large houses and a great many flimsy structures.

Houses in New Testament Times

There are references in the NT to houses, roofs, doors, foundations, an upper room, and lamps. One of Jesus' parables refers to good and bad foundations ([Mt 7:25](#)). In one incident friends took a paralyzed man up to the roof, which they took apart to lower him into the room where Jesus was ([Mk 2:4](#)). Jesus referred to proclamations made from the housetops ([Mt 10:27](#); [Lk 12:3](#)), and Peter went up on the roof to pray ([Acts 10:9](#)). Houses were swept to find lost objects ([Lk 15:8](#)) and illuminated by lamps ([Mt 5:15](#)). There are several references to houses of specific individuals ([Mk 8:3](#); [Lk 10:5](#); [16:4](#); [19:9](#); [Jn 11:20](#); [Acts 4:34](#); [9:11](#); [10:32](#)). Some houses had upper rooms on the roof reached by an outside staircase. The Passover meal was prepared in such a large upstairs room ([Mk 14:12–15](#)). The disciples lodged in a similar room

after the death and resurrection of Jesus ([Acts 1:13](#)). In such houses there were sometimes servants ([10:7](#)), and some had a guest room ([Mk 14:14](#)). We conclude from the NT data that there was a variety in the size and elegance of the houses of Jesus' day. A typical street in Judea or Galilee would have houses ranging from the small house (25 to 30 square feet or 2.3 to 2.8 square meters) to the mansion of the upper classes, which could be two or more stories high embellished by rows of pillars and architectural adornment.

For the precise character of these houses, we have to turn to archaeological and literary evidence. The writings of the rabbis and Josephus fill in many details. Excavation in sites of the early Roman (Herodian) period (37 BC–AD 70) have provided more tangible evidence. A rich source of information is the excavation in the old Jewish quarter in Jerusalem. One large house of some 209 square yards in size had a central courtyard where three cooking ovens and a water cistern were found. Large niches set in some of the walls contained broken pottery and must have been cupboards. Traces of mosaic floors and plastered walls give an idea of the beauty of this house. There were several rooms off the courtyard, perhaps as many as ten. The remains of other fine houses of the late second temple period have been found further west, notably in the area of the Armenian cemetery on Mt Zion, in which beautiful frescoes were preserved exhibiting a unique representation of birds. Other houses have yielded mosaic pavements with purely geometric patterns, thus adhering to the injunction against depicting animal forms.

See also Architecture.

Homosexuality

See Sex, Sexuality.

Honey

A sweet, thick liquid produced by bees ([Judges 14:8](#)). Honey can be either wild ([1 Samuel 14:25–26](#)) or farmed (likely so in [2 Chronicles 31:5](#)). Sometimes, however, it may refer to thick grape syrup (as in Arabic) or date syrup (as described by Josephus). Honey was considered one of life's necessities ([Sirach 39:26](#)). However, one must not eat too much ([Proverbs 25:16, 27](#)). It was part of

the diet of John the Baptist ([Mark 1:6](#)) and of Immanuel ([Isaiah 7:15](#)). Its exclusion, along with leaven, from grain offerings ([Leviticus 2:11](#)) is undoubtedly because it is susceptible to fermentation (a process that converts sugars to alcohol). Its sweetness became a familiar metaphor ([Judges 14:18; Psalm 19:10; Revelation 10:9–10](#)).

See also Food and Food Preparation.

Honor

Honor is the respect, good reputation, and high regard that someone receives because of their character or actions. It also means doing what is right and pure.

Honor in the Ancient World

In ancient times, people often connected honor with wealth and possessions. For example, in Greek stories, the hero Odysseus's honor depended on getting his belongings back, and another hero named Achilles gained honor through gifts he received. Later, the word acquired the strong ethical nature with which we now associate it. Plato was one of the first to teach that honor has a personal and moral quality. This is what he called "inward honor." The world distinguishes a person with "outward honors." Plato taught that these honors are not of ultimate value. What distinguishes a person even more is the inner worth gained by practicing a virtuous life. Both the Greeks and Romans believed honor was very important in life.

Honor in the Bible

The Bible gives us the truest understanding of honor. The Old Testament required children to honor their parents ([Exodus 20:12](#)). This command appears again in the ethical teaching of the New Testament ([Ephesians 6:1–2](#)). Even more important is giving honor to God, who deserves our complete obedience ([Revelation 4:11](#)). [Proverbs 3:9](#) teaches us what the law requires: "Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your harvest." This means we should dedicate both our lives and our belongings to serving God.

The Bible tells us that people often fail to honor God properly. Throughout history, only Jesus Christ has perfectly honored God the Father by completely following God's will. This led Jesus to die on the cross, through which God highly honored Him

([Isaiah 52:13–53:12](#)). God the Father raised Jesus to his permanent position as our great High Priest, a very great honor ([Hebrews 5:4–5](#)). Jesus taught that his Father would honor anyone who serves him ([John 12:26](#)). However, those who reject Jesus also reject God the Father ([15:23](#)).

Honor in Christian Life

Christians should honor each other by considering other believers as more important than themselves ([Romans 12:10](#)). This comes from knowing that Christians have received honor from God ([1 Peter 1:7](#)). Showing honor to others should affect the way a person lives their entire life:

- Husbands are to give honor to their wives by treating them with love and respect ([1 Peter 3:7](#)).
- Christian servants should honor their masters to show they follow Jesus's teachings ([1 Timothy 6:1](#)). (It is important to understand that this teaching was written during a time when slavery was common in society. The Bible's instructions about how enslaved people should act do not mean that slavery is right or that Christians should support it. In fact, the Bible's teachings about human dignity and treating everyone with honor helped lead many Christians to fight against slavery. See Slave, Slavery.)
- All Christians should show proper honor to everyone, as the Bible teaches ([Romans 13:7](#); [1 Peter 2:17](#)).

Hoopoe

A hoopoe is one of the most colorful birds in the Holy Land (*Upupa epops*). It has pinkish-brown feathers, black and white bands on its back, tail, and wings, and a crown-shaped crest of feathers that stands up when the bird is alarmed. It has a long, thin, curved bill. The hoopoe is about 28 centimeters (11 inches) long and usually lives in dry areas.

The name "hoopoe" comes from the sound of the bird's call. To make this call, the hoopoe puffs up the feathers on its neck and snaps its head into the

air. On the ground, it uses its bill to hammer into the soil.

The hoopoe arrives in the Holy Land in February, breeds in the summer, and leaves in September. Ancient Egyptians held the bird in religious honor. In the law of Moses, it was listed as ceremonially unclean ([Leviticus 11:19](#); [Deuteronomy 14:18](#)). This was probably because it looks for grubs and insects in unclean places such as piles of dung.

See Birds.

Hope

An expectation or belief that something desired will happen. Present hurts and uncertainty over what will happen in the future create the constant need for hope. Worldwide poverty, hunger, disease, and human potential to generate terror and destruction create a longing for something better. Historically, people have looked to the future with a mixture of longing and fear. Many have concluded that there is no reasonable basis for hope and therefore that to hope is to live with an illusion. Scripture tells us that those who do not have God do not have hope ([Ephesians 2:12](#)).

The modern world has sought hope in human effort and believes in the inevitability of progress that assumed everything would naturally get better and better. The threat and reality of war in the 20th century challenged that optimism and left growing despair in its wake. Though many still find little reason to hope, others have returned to a humanistic basis for hope. It is held that because people are the source of the world's problems, they can also be the solution. This position can be called into question based on present and historical evidence to the contrary.

Christianity has often been considered in discussions concerning hope. Unfortunately, Christianity has not always been viewed positively in this regard. In the early centuries of church history, stress on the disparity between this world and the next seemed to create an attitude of escapism, futility, or indifference toward the problems and pains of human existence. In the 19th century Prussian philosopher Frederick Nietzsche (1844–1900) claimed that Christianity made people cowards because it taught that whatever happened was God's will, thus discouraging efforts to change the world. Karl Marx (1818–83) said that Christianity or religion was the "opiate of the

people" (opium is an addictive drug that dulls the senses). For Marx, religion kept people from rising against those who oppressed them.

Jürgen Moltmann has opposed the tendency of Christianity to be perceived as otherworldly in what has been called "the theology of hope." That theology was the product of the pessimism and despair of post-World War II Europe. Moltmann's theology of hope says that the future is the basis for changing the present, and that Christian service should be an attempt to make otherworldly hopes a present reality. The resurrection brings hope during suffering and encourages humans to overcome it. But trusting in human effort to change the future could lead to a humanistic notion of the resurrection, seeing it as a mere hopeful symbol to motivate action rather than recognizing it as God's historical action in the world through Jesus Christ. Another concern is that the discussion of hope for this world by a transformation of political and social structures could neglect the need for personal transformation of people's lives through conversion and repentance. While critical questions have been raised about the theology of hope, on the positive side that theology has led to examination or reexamination of the biblical doctrine of hope.

Biblical hope is hope in what God will do in the future. At the heart of Christian hope is the resurrection of Jesus. Paul discussed the nature, certainty, and importance of the resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:12-28](#)). By his statement "If we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world" Paul is affirming his certainty that Christian hope points to the future (verse [19](#), New Living Translation). The significance of Christ's resurrection is that it not only points to his victory over death but also extends that victory to those who are his: "Christ the firstfruits; then at His coming, those who belong to Him." (verse [23](#)). The apostle Peter said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" ([1 Peter 1:3](#)). In that passage, Peter attributes living hope to the resurrection of Christ and points to God's future blessing upon those who belong to Christ. That future hope empowers the Christian to live without despair through the struggle and suffering of the present (compare [Romans 8:18](#); [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#)).

Christian hope is securely based upon the words and actions of God. The promises of God have proven to be dependable. The resurrection of Jesus becomes the ultimate basis for hope. Since God has already overcome death through Christ, the Christian can live with confidence in the present. No matter how dark the present age seems, the Christian has seen the light to come. People need to hope, and hope placed in the personal promise of God is secure. This secure hope is full of social significance, however, freeing one from bondage to materialism and its natural selfishness. Christian hope offers both security for the future and loving participation in sharing with others in the present.

Hophni

Brother of Phinehas, with whom he served as a priest at Shiloh ([1 Sm 1:3](#)). He was an evil man who flouted the sacrificial rituals ([2:12-17](#)) and behaved immorally (v [22](#)). Condemned by God, Hophni died during a Philistine attack on Shiloh and its sanctuary ([4:11](#)).

Hophra

Son of Psammis, ruler over Egypt from 589–570 BC during the 26th dynasty. Called Pharaoh Hophra in [Jeremiah 44:30](#), although he is alluded to several other times during the divided kingdom period ([Jer 37:5; 43:8-13; Ez 29:1-3; 31:1-18](#)).

He came to power after the death of his father, and in 589 BC marched into Judah against Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in order to assist Zedekiah. Apparently he retreated before superior forces, Jerusalem was overthrown in 586 ([Jer 37:5-8](#)), and Hophra was killed as prophesied ([Jer 44:30](#)). This occurred in 566 BC, at the hands of Amasis (Ahmose II), who had usurped the throne of Egypt in 569 BC. Both Jeremiah ([Jer 43:9-13; 46:13-26](#)) and Ezekiel ([Ez 29-30](#)) foretold this defeat.

Hopping Locust

A type of locust mentioned in [Joel 1:4](#). It is called a "cankerworm" in the King James Version.

See Animals (Locust).

Hor-Haggidgad

Camping place of the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings ([Nm 33:32–33](#)). It may be the Gudgodah of [Deuteronomy 10:7](#) and has been identified with Wadi Ghadaghed.

See also Wilderness Wanderings.

Hor, Mount

1. Mountain located at the border of the land of Edom ([Nm 20:23; 33:37](#)). Mt Hor was the first place to which the Israelites came ([Nm 20:22](#)) after wandering nearly 40 years ([Dt 2:14](#)). Moses' brother, Aaron, would not be permitted to enter Canaan because he had refused to carry out the Lord's instructions at Meribah ([Nm 20:7–13, 24](#)). Stripped of his priestly garments, which were then put on his son Eleazar, Aaron died on the top of Mt Hor ([Nm 20:25–29](#)) at the age of 123. A similar punishment was later meted out to Moses, whose death on Mt Nebo is compared to Aaron's death on Mt Hor ([Dt 32:49–51](#)). According to [Deuteronomy 10:6](#), Aaron died and was buried at Moserah (probably the Moseroth of [Nm 33:30–31](#)), a place that must have been very close to (or perhaps a part of) Mt Hor.

The location of Mt Hor remains uncertain. The traditional site, Jebel Nebi Harun (which means "the mountain of the prophet Aaron") is almost 4,800 feet (1.5 kilometers) high and is the tallest mountain in Edom. The Muslims claim that a small building on its summit is the tomb of Aaron. But Jebel Nebi Harun is located near Petra—in the middle of Edom—and too far east of Kadesh. A more likely location is Jebel Madeira, situated on the northwest border of Edom about 15 miles (24 kilometers) northeast of Kadesh. In any event, the Hebrew word hor probably means "mount" (as in [Gn 49:26](#)), so that "Mt Hor" perhaps means simply "mountain of mountains" or "high mountain" rather than being a proper name.

2. Another mountain located in the far north ([Nm 34:7–8](#)). Generally identified as either Mt Hermon or Jebel Akkar, it too was perhaps simply an unusually high mountain.

Horam

King of Gezer who, while coming to the aid of Lachish, was defeated and killed by Joshua ([Jos 10:33](#)).

Horeb, Mount

Alternate name for Mt Sinai. *See* Sina, Sinai.

Horem

Town set up for defense purposes in the uplands of Naphtali's territory ([Jos 19:38](#)). Though its exact site is unknown, it must have been in northern Galilee.

Horesh

Hebrew word translated as a place-name in [1 Samuel 23:15–19](#) (part of the wilderness of Ziph). David hid from Saul there, and met secretly with Jonathan. The word is translated simply as "wooded areas" in [2 Chronicles 27:4](#) (nlt). Authorities differ on whether the place-name in 1 Samuel is warranted.

Hori

1. Lotan's first son. Lotan was the founder of a Horite subclan in Edom ([Gn 36:22; 1 Chr 1:39](#)).
2. Shaphat's father and a member of Simeon's tribe. Shaphat was one of the 12 spies ([Nm 13:5](#)).

Horites

Cave dwellers of Mt Seir, according to tradition. These pre-Edomites were called the children of Seir ([Gn 36:20](#)). In the Bible they were defeated by Kedorlaomer and his allies ([14:6](#)). They were governed by chieftains ([36:29–30](#)), and eventually destroyed by the descendants of Esau ([Dt 2:12, 22](#)).

The popular and biblical etymology of "Horite" has been disputed since the discovery of the Hurrians (Khurians) as ethnic predecessors of many Near Eastern tribes. The Hurrians were a non-Semitic people from the mountains. About the second millennium BC, they migrated into north and

northeast Mesopotamia, and later moved into the regions of Syria and Palestine. Since the Hurrian language was prevalent in the western Jordan area, and since phonetically "Horite" is the OT Hebrew equivalent of the extrabiblical "Hurrian," several scholars and translators have substituted "Hurrian" for "Horite." Many have equated the Hivites, who were part of the Hurrian language and cultural group, with the Horites. These critics assumed an early textual corruption of the *r(esh)* in Horite to *w(aw)* in Hivite. A certain Zibeon is called a Horite in [Genesis 36:20–30](#), whereas in verse 2 the man is called a Hivite. The Septuagint of [Joshua 9:7](#) and [Genesis 34:2](#) reads "Horite" instead of "Hivite" as in the Masoretic Text. Some manuscripts of the Septuagint read "Hittite" for the Masoretic Text's "Hivite" ([Jos 11:3](#), [Jgs 3:3](#)). In [Genesis 36:2](#), the extant Hebrew manuscripts erroneously read "Hivite" for "Horite." It appears that the OT references do not fit the Hurrians, nor do the personal names of the Horites correspond to Hurrian examples ([Gn 36:20–30](#)). They seem instead to be Semitic. The Horites were from Transjordan and were the predecessors of the Edomites ([14:6](#)). Later references to Horites may be to western Horites, who were perhaps Hurrians ([Is 17:9](#)) and non-Semitic, but quite distinct from the predecessors of the Edomites, the eastern Horites. The Hebrew of [Genesis 34:2](#) and [Joshua 9:7](#) may be from a different family of manuscripts than those used by the Septuagint translators, preserving its own ethnic traditions. It seems best to think of both Hivites and Horites as ethnic groups connected with the Hurrians by language and culture.

See also Hurrians; Hivites.

Hormah

A town near Beersheba in the Negev. It was on the border of the tribes of Judah and Simeon.

At first, it was a Canaanite settlement. Then it belonged to the tribe of Judah, and then to the tribe of Simeon ([Joshua 15:30](#); [19:4, 9](#)). By the time Israel had its first kings, Judah controlled this area again ([1 Samuel 30:30](#)).

The Canaanite name "Zephath" changed to "Hormah" when the Hebrews first conquered it ([Judges 1:17](#)). Hormah became loyal to David during his ongoing feud with King Saul. David rewarded the town by sending it some of the war spoils of Ziklag ([1 Samuel 30](#)).

[Joshua 15:30](#) describes Hormah as being in the south near Kesil and Ziklag. But its exact location remains unknown. From the reference in [Numbers 14:45](#), it could be south of Kadesh-barnea. This is where the Israelites spent much of the wilderness period.

Horn

1. A musical instrument often made from a ram's horn. See Musical Instruments (Hatzotzrot).
2. A symbol of power in the Bible ([1 Kings 22:11](#)). Horns can represent:
 - dominance over the weak ([Ezekiel 34:21](#)),
 - forces of destruction ([Zechariah 1:18–21](#)), and
 - freedom from oppression ([1 Kings 22:11](#); [2 Chronicles 18:10](#)).

Thus, the horn has two meanings: rescue and force ([2 Samuel 22:3](#); [Psalm 18:2](#)). The growing of the horn referred to in [Psalm 132:17](#) could mean the continuation of the kingly line. [Psalm 75:10](#) says that the horns of the wicked will be cut off, but the horns of the righteous will be exalted. The symbolic imagery in Daniel and Revelation shows that horns represent power and authority ([Daniel 7–8](#); [Revelation 13, 17](#)).

1. A container for liquids. People used ram's horns, goat's horns, and wild ox horns to hold liquids. These horns were also special containers for oil used in ceremonies ([1 Samuel 16:1, 13](#); [1 Kings 1:39](#)). Cow horns were not allowed to be used for any religious or ceremonial use.
2. Four horn-shaped projections that stuck out from the four corners of the tabernacle and temple altars ([Exodus 27:2; 30:2–3](#)). These altar horns were covered with sacrificial blood and marked an area of sanctuary ([Exodus 29:12](#); [Leviticus 4:7, 18](#); [1 Kings 1:50–51](#)).

Hornet, Wasp

Hornets and wasps are stinging insects in the same family (Vespidae). Hornets are a kind of wasp that live together in large groups. They make big nests above the ground. A nest can hold more than 1,000 hornets.

In the Bible, the hornet is often a symbol of God using armies to drive out Israel's enemies ([Exodus 23:28](#); [Deuteronomy 7:20](#); [Joshua 24:12](#)).

See also Animals.

Horonaim

Moabite settlement of uncertain location, listed in prophetic oracles against Moab ([Is 15:5](#); [Jer 48:3-5, 34](#)). It fell to Alexander Janneus, but the Hasmonean rule was subsequently returned to King Aretas by John Hyrcanus (Josephus's *Antiquities* 13.15.4; 14.1.4).

Horonite

Reference to either the residence or birthplace of Sanballat, who opposed Nehemiah's restoration program ([Neh 2:10, 19](#); [13:28](#)). The name probably derives from the two cities of Upper and Lower Beth-horon.

Horse

A horse is a hoofed mammal that has been important throughout history for transportation, warfare, and work, known for its long mane, tail, and strong build.

Types of Horses

A horse is a large four-legged animal used for riding, pulling vehicles, and in war. The domesticated horse (*Equus caballus*) likely came from the tarpan, a wild horse from southern Russia that became extinct in 1851. Another wild horse, Przewalski's horse (*Equus przewalskii*), lived in Mongolia until hunters with modern guns killed most of them after World War I. Horses were first tamed in Turkestan, a region north of Afghanistan and India, now part of Russia. A horse differs from a donkey by having shorter ears, a longer mane with hair on the forehead, a long hairy tail, and a soft, sensitive nose.

Horses in Biblical Times

Horses were used in war not only for riding but also for pulling the heavy, springless war chariots. Two kinds of horses were needed for these different purposes. The Hebrews distinguished between chariot horses and cavalry horses.

The Lord warned early Israelites against collecting too many horses like the Egyptians did ([Deuteronomy 17:14-16](#)). However, David and Solomon, to fulfill the needs of the army, imported and bred horses from Egypt. Solomon increased the kingdom's horse numbers and kept large stables in various cities ([1 Kings 10:26](#)). Key locations included:

- Megiddo
- Hazor
- Gezer

These cities were important for defense ([1 Kings 9:15-19](#)). Ahab's horses are mentioned in [1 Kings 18:5](#). Additionally, Shalmaneser III's records show Ahab provided 2,000 chariots against Assyria.

In early Israel, the horse represented pagan luxury and dependence on physical power rather than God for protection ([Deuteronomy 17:16](#); [1 Samuel 8:11](#); [Psalm 20:7](#); [Isaiah 31:1](#)). Horse trading, mentioned as early as [Genesis 47:17](#), was done by Solomon between Egypt and the Syro-Hittite empires ([1 Kings 10:28-29](#)).

Most biblical mentions of horses describe their use in war. However, they were also used for transport. Cavalry units (soldiers on horseback) were not introduced until the 12th century BC by the Medes (a people from ancient Persia). Joseph rode in Pharaoh's second chariot ([Genesis 41:43](#)). Absalom displayed his importance by riding in a horse-drawn chariot ([2 Samuel 15:1](#)). Naaman traveled by horse and chariot ([2 Kings 5:9](#)).

Later, horses were so common in Jerusalem that the royal palace had a special horse gate ([2 Chronicles 23:15](#)). There was also a city gate named the Horse Gate ([Nehemiah 3:28](#); [Jeremiah 31:40](#)). Mordecai, in a show of honor, rode a royal horse from King Xerxes ([Esther 6:8-11](#)).

Horses as Symbols

Horses often appear as symbols in the Bible:

- A horse represents stubbornness that needs control in [Psalm 32:9](#).
- A mare represents beauty and strength in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).
- Stallions represent uncontrolled passion in [Jeremiah 5:8](#) and [12:5](#).
- Horses often represent God's judgment and power ([Habakkuk 3:8](#); [Zechariah 1:8; 6:1-8](#); [Revelation 6:2-8; 9:17; 19:11-16](#)).

See also Warfare; Travel.

Horse Gate

Gate near the palace in Jerusalem ([Jer 31:40](#)), in the southeast part of the city wall. Here Queen Athaliah was put to death ([2 Kgs 11:16](#); [2 Chr 23:15](#)). The gate was restored under Nehemiah ([Neh 3:28](#)).

See also Jerusalem.

Horus

See Egypt, Egyptian (Religion).

Hosah (Person)

Merarite Levite who guarded the gate of the tent where the sacred ark was kept ([1 Chr 16:38](#)) when David brought it to Jerusalem. His gatekeeping responsibilities were shared by his sons ([26:10-16](#)).

Hosah (Place)

City south of Tyre on Asher's border ([Jos 19:29](#)).

Hosanna

A Hebrew expression that means "Save, please." It comes from [Psalm 118:25](#): "O LORD, save us, we pray."

[Psalm 118](#) is a statement of trust in the Lord's help. People say this when they need it. The whole psalm was part of a longer song called the Hallel. People

sang it on important days. Verse [25](#) was used in the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles or tents. When this verse was read, people would wave branches of myrtle, willow, and palm trees. People may have waved branches at other times too as a way to show joy. This happens in [2 Maccabees 10:6-7](#), at a ceremony to make the temple holy again after it had been misused.

The crowd welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem by shouting "Hosanna" ([Matthew 21:9](#); [Mark 11:9-10](#); [John 12:13](#)). Then they said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD" ([Psalm 118:26](#)). This means the crowd was greeting Jesus as the Messiah (God's chosen one).

Even before Jesus's time, people thought the phrase "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" referred to the Messiah. And it is possible that the word "Hosanna" by itself meant something about the Messiah.

Other things people said when Jesus entered Jerusalem support this idea. In [Matthew 21:9](#), Jesus is called the "Son of David." In [Mark 11:10](#), there is talk about "the coming kingdom of our father David." In [John 12:13](#), Jesus is called "the King of Israel." All of these words suggest Jesus is the Messiah.

We do not need to think that when shouting "Hosanna" the people were thinking about being freed from their rulers. They probably did not know how Jesus would save them. The most we can say is they believed Jesus was sent by God to save them. If there had not been something in their praise that Jesus saw as good worship, he probably would not have accepted it. Only later, when he died and came back to life, would people understand what it really meant for Jesus to be the Messiah.

See also Hallel; Hallelujah; Messiah.

Hosea (Person)

Prophet of ancient Israel whose sphere of activity was the northern kingdom. Little is known of him outside of the prophetic book that bears his name. His prophetic ministry is best placed in the third quarter of the eighth century BC. His name means "help" or "helper," and is based on the Hebrew word for salvation.

The evidence for placing Hosea in the northern kingdom is basically internal. The book is

concerned mainly with the northern tribes, whom he frequently identifies as "Ephraim," a common appellation for the northern kingdom. And the dialect of Hebrew in which the book was written seems to be of a northern cast.

The circumstances surrounding the marriage of Hosea form the catalyst for his prophetic message. He was commanded by God to marry Gomer, who apparently was a harlot; his marriage provided an analogy with Israel, who was guilty of spiritual adultery.

Scholars differ as to the interpretation of this controversial account but there is little reason for doubting that it was a literal event. The act of sacrifice involved in Hosea's obedience to God forms a marvelous picture of God's sacrificial love for man.

See also Hosea, Book of; Prophet, Prophetess.

Hosea, Book of

Hosea is the first of the 12 minor prophets in the traditional order of Old Testament books. It was written in the late eighth century BC.

Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel during its last years. He was the only prophet who lived and preached in the northern kingdom. God chose Hosea to expose the widespread abandonment of faith and corruption there. Hosea urged his fellow citizens to repent (stop doing wrong) and return to God. Through his own life, he showed the faithful, unbreakable love that God had for Israel.

Preview

- Who Wrote the Book of Hosea?
- Is the Book of Hosea Authentic?
- What Is the Story of the Book of Hosea?
- When Was the Book of Hosea Written?
- Where Was the Book of Hosea Written? Who Was It Written For?
- Why Was the Book of Hosea Written?
- What Is the Book of Hosea About?
- What Is the Message of the Book of Hosea?

Who Wrote the Book of Hosea?

Hosea's ministry lasted at least 38 years, from around 753 to 715 BC. He seemed knowledgeable, regardless of whether he was a peasant or from a wealthy class in Israel.

Hosea's marriage to the prostitute Gomer was likely controversial in his time. It has also caused great controversy among Bible students and commentators. It is best to understand that Gomer was a well-known prostitute. Hosea was commanded to marry her as a symbol of Israel's unfaithfulness and God's unwavering covenant love.

Is the Book of Hosea Authentic?

Most scholars agree on the authenticity and unity of Hosea. However, there are two areas of controversy:

1. The passages that mention Judah (for example, [Hosea 1:1, 7, 11; 4:15; 5:5, 10-14; 6:4, 11; 8:14; 11:12; 12:2](#))
2. The sections that talk about future blessings or national deliverance (for example, [Hosea 11:8-11; 14:2-9](#))

Hosea's mentions of Judah are understandable. He was a man of God upset by Israel's split from the rightful Davidic line. The northern kingdom, led by ungodly kings, faced God's judgment. Hosea had received divine insight about God's plans for both Judah and Israel.

The future blessings and deliverance of Israel do not cancel out the condemnation of Israel's sins. This is similar to how Hosea's love and reconciliation with unfaithful Gomer do not erase her wrongdoing. Restoration and forgiveness do not mean ignoring guilt.

What Is the Story of the Book of Hosea?

Hosea lived during the prosperous times of Israel's northern kingdom under King Jeroboam II from 793 to 753 BC. He also witnessed its defeat and the people's deportation after the Assyrian invasion in 722 BC.

[Hosea 1:1](#) mentions these kings from Judah:

- Uzziah
- Jotham
- Ahaz
- Hezekiah

This verse also mentions two kings from Israel:

- Joash
- Jeroboam

Uzziah ruled at the same time as Joash and Jeroboam. Ahaz was the king of Judah when Assyria captured Israel. Hezekiah might have ruled alongside Ahaz during the Assyrian captivity.

Jeroboam ruled Israel for 41 years, following the evil ways of his father, Nebat ([2 Kings 14:23-24](#)). Although Israel was prosperous during Jeroboam's reign, government corruption and spiritual decline set the stage for future turmoil. This paved the way for Israel's fall. The rich landowners, including the king, oppressed the peasants, forcing lower-class landowners to move from farms to cities. These social issues soon led to widespread corruption in Israel. Anarchy resulted from these times ([Hosea 4:1-2; 7:1-7; 8:3-4; 9:15](#)).

When Was the Book of Hosea Written?

Hosea started his work as a God's messenger during the reign of Jeroboam II, from 793 to 753 BC. He continued until the reign of Hezekiah of Judah, from 715 to 686 BC.

Several factors suggest that Hosea continued to prophesy during the reign of Hoshea of Israel, from 732 to 722 BC:

1. "Shalman" ([Hosea 10:14](#)) might be Shalmaneser of Assyria, who invaded Israel early in Hoshea's reign ([2 Kings 17:3](#))
2. "Jareb" ([Hosea 5:13; 10:6](#); both from the Kings James Version) might refer to Sargon II, who ruled from 722 to 705 BC
3. Predictions of the Assyrian invasion seem to describe an event about to happen ([Hosea 10:5-6; 13:15-16](#))
4. Mentions of Egypt and Israel's reliance on that nation appear to match Hoshea's reign ([Hosea 7:11; 11:11](#))

These factors suggest that Hosea's messages were gathered together close to Israel's fall in 722 BC.

Where Was the Book of Hosea Written? Who Was It Written For?

Hosea prophesied while living in Israel. He calls the king in Samaria "our king" ([Hosea 7:5](#)). His descriptions of Israel show he knew the geography of the northern kingdom well. Hosea mentions Gilead as if he had seen the area himself ([Hosea 6:8; 12:11](#)). Hosea was likely the only prophet to the northern kingdom who lived there during his entire ministry.

Why Was the Book of Hosea Written?

Hosea told Israel to repent and return to God. He described the God of Israel as patient and loving, always faithful to his promises. This focus is typical of Hosea (see [Hosea 2:19](#)).

"Loving devotion" is the phrase that best represents Yahweh's faithful love. Hosea's family life was a symbol of this loving devotion.

What Is the Book of Hosea About?

The main sections and topics of the book of Hosea are outlined as follows.

Chapters 1-3

The first three chapters of Hosea focus on Hosea's life. They highlight his faithfulness and love for his unfaithful wife.

God told Hosea to marry the prostitute Gomer and have children with her ([Hosea 1:2-3:5](#)). This

command has puzzled some commentators because priests and prophets in Israel did not marry prostitutes. Medieval Jewish writers saw this story as symbolic but not historical. Some later scholars saw a difference between [Hosea 1](#) and [3](#), viewing the latter as Hosea's personal account of his marriage, while the first chapter was seen as general memories of his early days as a prophet. Other commentators believed both chapters were literal facts, while some scholars thought [Hosea 1](#) was historical and [Hosea 3](#) was Hosea's allegorical (not literal) interpretation of the marriage.

People have widely discussed Gomer's sexual activities. Two main views exist:

1. Gomer was a faithful wife to Hosea in their early marriage. The phrase "a prostitute as your wife" ([Hosea 1:2](#)) refers to her sinful and rebellious nature. God later exposed this to show Israel's idolatry.
2. Gomer was a known harlot whom Hosea was told to marry to show Israel's idolatry and God's faithful love. This second view appeals most to evangelical scholars and is the simplest interpretation within a literal, grammatical, and historical Bible framework.

The reason Hosea needed to ransom her is unclear. It is also unknown why the payment was partly in grain and partly in money. This transaction might symbolize God's future deliverance of Israel from exile. However, the ten northern tribes did not return from exile in Assyria. This interpretation likely does not apply to Judah, since Hosea's message was not for the southern kingdom, although Judah did receive a warning ([Hosea 6:11](#)).

The children born to Hosea and Gomer received symbolic names. The first child was a son named Jezreel ([Hosea 1:4a](#)). This name signified God's judgment on Jehu's family for Jehu's killing of Ahab's family in the valley of Jezreel ([2 Kings 10:1-11, 30](#)).

Lo-ruhamah was the second child ([Hosea 1:6a](#)), and her name means "not shown compassion or pity." This symbolized the judgment of Israel. The spiritual corruption of the northern kingdom had reached its end, and it would be defeated and taken into captivity ([Hosea 1:6b](#)).

Lo-ammi was the third child, a second son, and his name means "not My people" ([Hosea 1:8-9](#)). This rejection of Israel as God's chosen people was temporary ([Hosea 1:10-2:1](#)). God would fulfill His promises to Abraham ([Hosea 1:10](#); [Genesis 22:17](#)) and to Moses ([Exodus 19:1-7](#)) despite the disobedience of any particular generation.

Gomer was not happy with her marriage, so she looked for other lovers. Similarly, Israel sought satisfaction by worshipping false gods. They wrongly credited the good things from their merciful God to these pagan gods ([Hosea 2:8, 12](#)). Once they realized their sins brought no lasting happiness, repentant Israelites would return to their first love.

Hosea's declaration of divorce from Gomer due to her adultery symbolizes Yahweh's divorce from Israel for her unfaithfulness ([Hosea 2:2](#); see also [Jeremiah 3:1-4:2](#)). Their children represent the individual members of the nation of Israel during Hosea's time ([Hosea 2:2-5](#)).

[Hosea 3](#) uses restoration to summarize Israel's history. Israel's slavery to sin and Satan (see [Hebrews 2:14-15](#)) is shown by the price Hosea paid for Gomer ([Hosea 3:2](#)). This price was for a female slave because Gomer was enslaved by her adultery (see [Exodus 21:32](#)). Gomer's isolation, like Israel's exile, was meant for cleansing ([Hosea 3:3](#); see [Deuteronomy 21:13; 30:2](#)).

After the exile in Babylon ("afterward"), and "in the last days," Israel will return to her husband to enjoy the blessings of the renewed relationship. In a reference to the Messiah, "David their king," will be resurrected to lead Israel to the Lord ([Hosea 3:5](#)).

The last major section of Hosea explains in detail what [Hosea 1-3](#) have shown and briefly explained. Hosea prophesies:

- Israel's abandonment of faith ([Hosea 4:1-7:16](#))
- Punishment ([Hosea 8:1-10:15](#))
- Restoration ([Hosea 11:1-14:9](#))

Chapter 4

Israel was deeply involved in ungodly activities and had distanced itself from God ([Hosea 4:1-2](#); compare [Exodus 20:1-17](#)). The people ignored God's word due to their indifference and the priests' deception ([Hosea 4:6-9](#); compare [Isaiah 5:13](#); [Amos 8:11-12](#); [Zephaniah 1:6](#)). Israel

followed corrupt spiritual leaders just as their kings followed the corrupt ways of past rulers ([Hosea 4:9](#)). Instead of God's word, Israel sought guidance from idols and divination ([Hosea 4:12–13](#)). Eventually, Israel lost its priestly identity ([Hosea 4:6](#); compare [Exodus 19:6](#)) because the priests were mainly responsible for the nation's departure from faith ([Hosea 5:1](#)).

Chapters 5–6

After presenting his case against the northern kingdom, God gives a warning ([Hosea 5:8–14](#)). The trumpet will sound in the hills of Benjamin ([Hosea 5:8](#)), the area between Israel and Judah. The alarm there will show that Israel is being invaded and Judah is at risk ([Hosea 5:9–12](#)). The northern kingdom relied on human commands, not God's ([Hosea 5:11](#)). Israel sought help from Assyria but faced betrayal and defeat ([Hosea 5:13](#)). In this prophecy about Israel's fall to the Assyrians in 722 BC, Hosea portrays God as the ultimate disciplinarian ([Hosea 5:14](#)).

God calls for repentance right after revealing punishment ([Hosea 5:15–6:3](#)). (The chapter division here is not ideal as [Hosea 6:1–3](#) belongs with [5:15](#).) The call to return to Yahweh might reflect Hosea's personal response to the revelation. However, it is better to see [Hosea 6:1–3](#) as the words of the future returning remnant. Assyria did not offer healing, nor would any other nation, but God will heal Israel spiritually, politically, and physically ([Hosea 6:1](#); see also [Exodus 15:26](#); [Deuteronomy 32:39](#); [Isaiah 53:5](#); [Ezekiel 37:1–14](#); [Malachi 4:2](#)).

After calling for repentance, God focuses again on Israel ([Hosea 6:4–11](#); see also [4:15](#)). Israel has turned away from its Creator and disobeyed His message ([Hosea 6:7](#)). Gilead is just one example of Israel's violent nature ([Hosea 6:8](#)). Even the priests are known for their violence ([Hosea 6:9](#); see also [1 Samuel 2:12–17](#); [Jeremiah 5:31](#)). Israel's sin is "horrible" ([Hosea 6:10](#)).

Chapter 7

[Hosea 7](#) shows God's final thoughts about Israel. Every effort by God to make Israel repent only highlights their sin more ([Hosea 7:1](#)). They think they can sin without God noticing ([Hosea 7:2](#); see also [Psalm 90:8](#); [Matthew 12:36–37](#)). Their leaders are happy that the people are as wicked as the king and princes ([Hosea 7:3](#)). All of Israel is known for constant adultery ([Hosea 7:4](#)). Israel has not separated itself from non-believers ([Hosea 7:8](#); see

also [Exodus 34:12–16](#); [2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1](#)). Like an "unturned cake" ([Hosea 7:8](#)), Israel is not balanced spiritually or politically, with one side overdone and the other side raw.

In foreign affairs, Israel moved between Egypt and Assyria "like a silly, senseless dove" without understanding ([Hosea 7:11](#)). They did not seek the Lord's advice when needed but relied on worldly powers. Their lack of faith in Yahweh and failure to separate from sin will lead to God's discipline ([Hosea 7:12](#); see also [1 Corinthians 11:32](#); [Hebrews 12:5–15](#)).

Chapter 8

[Hosea 8](#) discusses Israel facing judgment (see [Hosea 8:7](#)). An alarm warns the people about the approaching Assyrians ([Hosea 8:1](#); see also [Ezekiel 17:2–21](#)). The Assyrians would attack Israel ([Hosea 8:1](#)) because Israel broke the Sinai covenant (see [Deuteronomy 27:9–29:29](#)) and disobeyed the law of Moses. Israel falsely cries to God for help against punishment (see [Isaiah 10:5](#)), but God does not answer, and Assyria continues to pursue the ten tribes ([Hosea 8:2–3](#)). Other reasons for God's judgment include appointing kings without God's guidance ([Hosea 8:4a](#)) and practicing idolatry ([Hosea 4b–6](#)). Israel's sacrifices were unacceptable due to the nation's disobedience (see [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [Isaiah 1:11–15](#)). Therefore, they would go into exile, similar to the earlier exile in Egypt ([Hosea 8:13](#)).

Chapter 9

[Hosea 9](#) continues the theme of exile. Israel will find no joy ([Hosea 9:1](#)). The land's produce will not sustain them because they will not live there anymore ([Hosea 9:2–3](#)). Some Israelites will flee to Egypt, while others will be taken captive to Assyria. All sacrifices will stop, and they will consume the sacrificial wines and meats for their own needs ([Hosea 9:4–5](#)). The Egyptians will kill those Israelites who flee to Egypt ([Hosea 9:6](#)).

Chapter 10

[Hosea 10](#) further describes the consequences of Israel's wrongdoing. Israel is like a lush vine ([Hosea 10:1](#)), but its abundance is misused for sacrifices on pagan altars. They are guilty before God, who is about to destroy their altars and remove their king ([Hosea 10:2–3](#)). Gibeah is mentioned again ([Hosea 9:9](#)), reminding Israel that turning away from God is both contagious and permanent ([Hosea 10:9](#)). The "double

transgression" in [Hosea 10:10](#) may refer to the two calf idols in Bethel and Dan, which brought God's punishment. The penalty will be hard labor under a heavy burden ([Hosea 10:11](#)).

Chapters 11–14

Chapters 11 through 14 conclude Hosea's prophecies with a message about Israel's future restoration. The Father's unwavering love is the basis for this future restoration ([Hosea 11:1–12](#)). As a nation, Israel was called out of Egypt as Yahweh's son ([Hosea 11:1](#); see also [Exodus 4:22–23](#)). However, Israel did not return the Father's love and instead sought alliances with pagans ([Hosea 11:5](#)), which would lead to judgment ([Hosea 11:5–7](#)). Yahweh's words show his unchangeable judgment due to his complete holiness and righteousness ([Hosea 12:1–13:16](#)). Israel's sins demand fair punishment ([Hosea 12:1–2](#)). Israel is responsible for the northern kingdom's destruction. Despite Israel's sin, God can still be her help ([Hosea 13:9](#)).

Israel should have repented quickly, but she did not ([Hosea 13:13](#)). However, Yahweh's mercy would eventually end death itself, allowing Israel to live spiritually, politically, and possibly physically ([Hosea 13:14](#); see also [Ezra 37:1–14](#); [Daniel 12:1–2, 13](#)).

[Hosea 14](#) of Hosea presents God's loving invitation for Israel to repent and return to him through confession, prayer, and praise ([Hosea 14:2](#)). The phrase "fruit of our lips" ([Hosea 14:2](#)) refers to a thank offering, which usually included young bulls ([Exodus 24:5](#); [Leviticus 7:11–15](#); see also [Psalms 51:17–19](#); [69:30–31](#); [Hebrews 13:15–16](#)). Part of Israel's confession will involve acknowledging that salvation does not come from Assyria (in political alliances) or idols ([Hosea 14:3](#)).

God repeatedly promises blessings to Israel during their restoration (note "I will," in [Hosea 14:4–5](#)). Yahweh will heal Israel spiritually, love them freely, help them prosper completely, and protect them fully ([Hosea 14:4–7](#)). Israel will be as beautiful as the lily, as strong as the cedar, and as fruitful as the olive tree.

What Is the Message of the Book of Hosea?

The main focus of Hosea is in the last verse ([Hosea 14:9](#)). Wise people will live godly lives, while foolish people will live ungodly lives. Those who live godly lives will experience:

- Restoration
- Triumph over death ([Hosea 13:14](#))
- Blessings ([Hosea 14:4–7](#))

Idolatry is anything that takes God's place in the human heart. Israel did not seek God's:

- Guidance
- Help
- Blessing
- Salvation

Instead, Israel turned to:

- Foreign gods ([Hosea 4:12–19](#))
- National pride ([Hosea 5:5](#))
- Religious rituals ([Hosea 6:6](#))
- Political convenience ([Hosea 7:3](#))
- Political alliances ([Hosea 7:11](#))
- Civil government ([Hosea 8:4](#))
- Construction projects ([Hosea 8:14](#))
- Selfish wealth ([Hosea 10:1](#))
- Idol worship ([Hosea 13:2](#))

They could find true blessing and security only in God ([Hosea 13:4, 9; 14:4–7](#)).

Hosea describes apostasy (abandoning one's faith) as contagious. It can start with either spiritual leaders or the people and then spread between them ([Hosea 4:9](#)). The punishment for apostasy depends on how much responsibility someone has ([Hosea 5:1; 13:9; 14:4](#)).

See also Hosea (Person); Israel, History of; Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess.

Hoshaiah

1. Prince of Judah who led a contingent of princes in procession at the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem after they were rebuilt ([Neh 12:32](#)).

2. Father of Azariah ([Jer 42:1; 43:2](#)). Azariah was a leader of the people of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem.

Hoshama

Jeconiah's descendant ([1 Chronicles 3:18](#)).

Hoshea

1. The original name of Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua later became Moses's successor as leader of the Israelites. Moses changed Joshua's name from Hoshea to Joshua ([Numbers 13:8, 16](#)).
See Joshua (Person) #1.

2. The son of Elah and the last of the 20 kings of the northern kingdom of Israel ([2 Kings 17:1–6](#)). King Hoshea ruled for nine years, from 732 to 723 BC. Then the Assyrians took him captive. In the later years of the northern kingdom, Assyria had gained control of most of the Middle East. This happened under the rule of Tiglath-pileser III. Assyria had reduced the northern kingdom to just three tribal areas. All that remained was Ephraim, Issachar, and the half of Manasseh west of the Jordan River.
Earlier, the northern kingdom had formed an alliance with Rezin of Damascus (Syria). This happened under the rule of Pekah, who ruled from 740 to 732 BC. Ahaz was king of Judah during this time. Ahaz ruled from 735 to 715 BC. King Pekah of Israel attempted to coerce King Ahaz of Judah to join them against Tiglath-pileser ([2 Kings 16:5; Isaiah 7:1–6](#)).
Assyria came to the aid of Judah. During this time, Hoshea was part of a group who killed Pekah ([2 Kings 15:30](#)). Tiglath-pileser rewarded Hoshea by making him king over what remained of the northern kingdom. Hoshea ruled only as a servant king under Assyria and paid large tribute taxes. He remained loyal to Assyria until the death of Tiglath-pileser in 727 BC. When Shalmaneser V became the new king of Assyria, he did not trust Hoshea. Shalmaneser marched against Hosea, continuing to demand yearly tribute ([2 Kings 17:3](#)).
Soon after, Hoshea attempted to assert independence. He stopped paying tribute taxes and entered into negotiations with King So of Egypt (verse 4). Egypt was willing to support Hoshea because they feared Assyria controlling Palestine. Egypt hoped that Samaria (Israel's capital) would remain a buffer zone between Egypt and Assyria.

Shalmaneser then sent his army against Samaria in 724 BC. Hoshea discovered that his alliance with Egypt was of little value. The Assyrians captured Hoshea. They surrounded Samaria for three years. The city fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Sargon II, who had replaced Shalmaneser around 726 BC, moved many Israelites to various places in Assyria. This ended the northern kingdom.

3. The son of Azaziah. He was one of the officers of King David. He was in charge of the Ephraimites ([1 Chronicles 27:20](#)).
4. One who put his seal on the covenant of Ezra ([Nehemiah 10:23](#)).
5. An eighth-century prophet of Israel. He is better known as Hosea.
See Hosea (Person); Hosea, Book of.

Hospitality

A biblical concept often used with the terms "guest," "stranger," and "sojourner." It is useful to limit the meaning of "hospitality" to kindness done to those outside one's normal group of friends. This is implied in the literal meaning of the Greek word meaning "love of strangers." Although the concept is thoroughly endorsed in the Bible, it is clearly found in nonbiblical cultures as well. It is especially found among the nomadic peoples (who travel from place to place). Definite obligations to provide food, shelter, and protection are recognized in these cultures.

The normal exercise of hospitality in the Old Testament can be seen in these examples:

- Abraham and the three visitors ([Genesis 18:2-8, 16](#))
- Laban's reception of Abraham's servant ([Genesis 24:15-61](#))
- Manoah's treatment of the angel ([Judges 13:15](#))

But there are also cases in which the host felt compelled to take extreme steps to protect his

guest, even to the harm of his own family ([Genesis 19:1-8](#); [Judges 19:14-24](#)). The hospitality of the Shunammite family is also notable, although Elisha was no stranger to them ([2 Kings 4:10](#)).

According to the New Testament, Jesus relied on the general practice of hospitality in sending out the disciples ([Luke 10:7](#)), as well as in his own travels. As the gospel was spread by traveling missionaries, Christians were commended for entertaining them in their homes ([Hebrews 13:2](#); [1 Peter 4:9](#); [3 John 1:5-8](#)). Church leaders must not exempt themselves from this ministry ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:8](#)). To do so is cause for judgment ([Matthew 25:43-46](#)).

See also Foreigner.

Host, Host of Heaven

Hebrew expressions found frequently in the Old Testament. These expressions literally mean "army" and "army of the skies." "Host" is basically a military term, occurring nearly 500 times in the Old Testament. It can mean "army" ([2 Kings 18:17](#)), "angels," "heavenly bodies," or "creation."

The phrase "host of heaven" has various applications in the Bible. Ancient writers sometimes referred symbolically to the sun, moon, and stars as an army ([Deuteronomy 4:19](#); [Judges 5:20](#)). In the astrological cults of antiquity, it was believed that celestial bodies were animated by spirits and thus constituted a living army that controlled heavenly destiny. The worship of the host of heaven was one of the earliest forms of idolatry. It was common among the Israelites in their times of regression from serving God ([Jeremiah 19:13](#); [Acts 7:42](#)). Although warned against such pagan beliefs ([Deuteronomy 4:19](#); [17:3](#)), the Israelites fell into the practice of worshiping heavenly bodies. This was particularly true during the Assyrian and Babylonian periods ([2 Kings 17:16](#); [21:3-5](#); [2 Chronicles 33:3-5](#); [Jeremiah 8:2](#); [Zephaniah 1:5](#)). The corrective to this pagan practice is belief in the Lord as the Creator of heaven and earth. The Lord is the Almighty, the one who marshaled the heavenly bodies at his command and ordained them to perform a special function ([Genesis 1:14-19](#); [2:1](#); [Nehemiah 9:6](#); [Psalms 33:6](#); [103:21](#); [148:2](#); [Isaiah 40:26](#); [45:12](#)).

God is frequently called "the Lord God of hosts," that is, of the celestial armies ([Jeremiah 5:14](#); [38:17](#); [44:7](#); [Hosea 12:5](#)). The heavenly host

includes angels or messengers who are associated with the Lord's work in heaven and on earth. God presides over a heavenly council composed of angels or "sons of God" ([Genesis 1:26](#); [1 Kings 22:19](#); [Job 1:6](#); [Psalm 82](#); [Is 6](#)). Messengers are sent from the Lord's council to accomplish his purpose ([Genesis 28:12–15](#); [Luke 2:13](#)).

Though the hosts are sometimes understood as the stars or angels, the tribes of Israel are also called "the host of the Lord." The "host of heaven" in [Daniel 8:10–11](#) appears to be figurative language referring to Israel, "the holy people," and God, the King of Israel, is called "the Prince of the host."

The Greek words translated "host" occur only twice in the New Testament ([Luke 2:13](#); [Acts 7:42](#)). "Lord of hosts" is used by Paul and James as a title for the Lord ([Romans 9:29](#); [James 5:4](#)). The term expresses God's sovereign might and majesty in history, but the precise identification of the "hosts" that stand at his command is uncertain.

See also Hosts, Lord of.

Hosts, Lord of

Old Testament name for God found mostly in the prophets. The hosts are the heavenly powers and angels that act at the Lord's command. *See* God, Names of; Host, Host of Heaven.

Hotham

1. Another form of Helem in [1 Chronicles 7:32](#). *See* Helem #1.
2. Shama and Jeiel's father. Shama and Jeiel were two of David's mighty men ([1 Chronicles 11:44](#)).

Hothan

The King James Version's spelling of Hotham in [1 Chronicles 11:44](#).

See Hotham #2.

Hothir

Levite and the head of the 21st of 24 divisions of priests for sanctuary service, formed during David's reign ([1 Chr 25:4, 28](#)).

Hour

An hour is a unit of time equal to 60 minutes or 1/24th of a day. In biblical times, people divided daylight into 12 hours, measured from sunrise to sunset. Because this system was based on the sun's movement, the length of an hour varied with the seasons. An hour was longer in summer and shorter in winter.

See Day.

House

See Homes and Dwellings.

House of God

A common name for religious structures and buildings in the ancient Near Eastern world. These were places where people worshipped their gods or where religious leaders served. In the Old Testament, this term was used to describe several types of buildings:

1. The tabernacle, which was a portable temple ([Deuteronomy 23:18](#); [1 Chronicles 6:31–32](#))
2. Solomon's temple in Jerusalem ([1 Kings 8:11–20](#); [12:27](#); [Jeremiah 20:1](#))
3. Temples of other religions ([Judges 9:4](#); [2 Kings 10:21](#)).

In New Testament times, people still called the temple the "house of God" ([Matthew 12:4](#); [Mark 2:26](#); [11:17](#); [Luke 6:4](#); [John 2:16–17](#)). However, this meaning changed in an important way. After Jesus returned to heaven, his followers (the church) began to see themselves as God's house ([1 Corinthians 3:9](#); [Hebrews 3:6](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#); [4:17](#)). God no longer lived in buildings made by human hands but in the lives of those who confess Jesus as Lord.

See also Tabernacle; Temple.

House of the Archives

Building used for storage of records, annals, and decrees; a common structure in Near Eastern nations in the second millennium BC ([Ezr 5:17-6:1](#)). In the archives at Ecbatana, a summer resort for Persian kings, King Darius (521–486 BC) found an edict of Cyrus (559–530 BC) that entitled the Jews to begin reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple following the exile ([Ezr 6:2](#)). On the basis of that edict, Darius gave his support to renewed reconstruction efforts, which had been halted for 16 years due to local opposition (cf. [Hg 1:1](#); [Zec 1:1](#)).

House of the Forest of Lebanon

See Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

Household

A household is a group of people who live together as a family. In biblical times, a household was much larger than what we might think of as a family today. It included a father, mother or mothers, children, grandparents, servants, concubines (women who lived with a man but had fewer rights than wives), and sojourners (people staying temporarily with the family).

For example, the household of the patriarch Jacob included 66 people. This was not counting the wives of his sons ([Genesis 46:26](#)). The household was treated as one unit, and all members shared responsibility for protecting the family's honor. In [2 Samuel 3:27](#), we see an example of a household seeking revenge to defend their family's honor.

In the Old Testament, all the males in Abraham's household were circumcised as a sign of the covenant God made with him ([Genesis 17:23](#)). In the New Testament era, there are instances where entire households were baptized ([Acts 11:14](#)).

See also Family Life and Relations.

Hozai

Author of annals describing the life of Manasseh, king of Judah, and included in the "Chronicles of the Seers" ([2 Chr 33:18-19](#)). The Septuagint renders

Hozai as "seers," which is preferred by many commentators and the nlt (see [2 Chr 33:19 mg](#)).

Hubbah

Alternative spelling for Shomer's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:34](#)).

Hukkok

Town near Naphtali and Zebulun's boundary, listed next to Aznoth-tabor ([Jos 19:34](#)). It has been identified with Yaquaq, northwest of Gennesaret.

Hukok

Alternate form of the Asherite town Helkath in [1 Chronicles 6:75](#). *See* Helkath.

Hul

Son of Aram and grandson of Shem ([Gn 10:23](#); [1 Chr 1:17](#)).

Huldah

Prophetess living in Jerusalem; a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah. Huldah is introduced as the wife of Shallum, the wardrobe keeper in King Josiah's court ([2 Kgs 22:14](#); [2 Chr 34:22](#)). Josiah sent his officers to ask Huldah's counsel concerning the book of the Mosaic law that had been found during the temple repair. She prophesied that disaster would strike the nation ([2 Kgs 22:16](#)), but that Josiah would be spared because he was penitent and had humbled himself before the Lord (vv [18-19](#)). She declared the destruction would come after his death and that he would be buried in peace (v [20](#)). Although Josiah later died in battle, he was properly entombed ([23:30](#)), avoiding the indignity of becoming prey for carrion feeders. It was after receiving Huldah's advice that Josiah carried out his religious reform ([2 Chr 35:1-25](#)).

Humility

Humility is a state of being lowly or having little power and influence. It often means experiencing difficult situations that make other people think someone is less important. While many people may see humility as weakness, both Jewish and Christian traditions teach that humility is the right way to relate to God. Humility means being thankful and knowing that life is a gift. It shows itself as an honest recognition that we depend completely on God.

Humility in the Old Testament

The Bible does not distinguish clearly between humility and being gentle or patient. In Israel's early history, humble people were the poor, the suffering, and those without power. God helps the humble but brings down the proud ([1 Samuel 2:7](#); [2 Samuel 22:28](#)). When Abraham experienced God's power and glory, Abraham said humbly he was just "dust and ashes" ([Genesis 18:27](#)).

Israel started as a nation of slaves. They knew God chose them not because they were big or rich but because of God's love ([Deuteronomy 7:7-8](#)). By saying all wealth and power came from God, two main sources of human pride are controlled ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)).

God always cares for humble poor people ([Exodus 23:6, 11](#); [Deuteronomy 15:4, 7](#)). Over time, the humility of the poor became a symbol of someone who truly followed God ([Numbers 12:3](#)). The Old Testament links humility with doing what is right. God requires His people to be humble, just, and merciful ([Micah 6:8](#)). In the Psalms particularly, "the afflicted" is almost a technical term for the righteous ([Psalms 22:26](#); [25:9](#); [147:6](#)).

Also, humility is how sinners should act when faced with God's holiness. When the prophet Isaiah saw God's glory in the temple, he said, "I am ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips" ([Isaiah 6:5](#)). So humility became more about character than just being poor or suffering. It became a key part of being religious and good, expected of all people who follow God.

Humility in the New Testament

In the New Testament, humility rarely means just being poor, suffering, or without power. The idea of humility is linked to Jesus as the Messiah (God's chosen one). The Old Testament said the coming king would be humble, and this described Jesus

perfectly ([Zechariah 9:9](#); [Matthew 21:4-5](#)). As God's Son, Jesus did not think about himself but lived a life of obeying and trusting God the Father. The apostle Paul said that Jesus, as God's Son, "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness" ([Philippians 2:5-8](#)). Jesus never showed pride or tried to make himself seem important.

Jesus spoke strongly against false religion, but he was "gentle and humble in heart" ([Matthew 11:29](#)). He warned against seeking status and criticized religious leaders who hurt poor and weak people ([Luke 14:11](#); [Matthew 23:12](#)). At the same time, he was humble before those he came to serve and help ([Luke 22:27](#); [Mark 10:45](#); [Matthew 20:28](#)).

Jesus's highest honor was his willingness to accept death on the cross in obedience to God the Father's will. So, his teaching about being poor in spirit matched his own life. He gave all glory to his Father and lived completely depending on him ([John 5:19](#); [6:38](#); [7:15](#); [8:28, 50](#); [14:10, 24](#)). By washing his disciples' feet, he acted as a servant without losing his dignity or self-worth. He set this service as an example of a life that finds happiness in putting others first ([John 13:1-20](#); [Philippians 2:1-4](#)).

So, followers of Jesus are called to live humbly. Instead of seeking status, safety, or success, Christians should look for ways to serve others. Humility becomes the guiding principle for showing love which fulfills God's law (compare [Romans 12:10](#); [13:8-10](#)).

Humtah

Settlement in the Judean uplands near Hebron, according to [Joshua 15:54](#).

Hunchback

A hunchback is a physical condition where a person has an abnormally curved spine that creates a rounded or humped shape on their back.

See Deformity.

Hundred-Weight

Measure equal to about 1 talent or 75 pounds (34 kilograms), mentioned only in [Revelation 16:21](#). *See Weights and Measures.*

Hundred, Tower of the

Tower at the northernmost part of the Jerusalem wall (near where the wall crosses over the Tyropeon Valley). It stood west of the Sheep Gate near the Tower of Hananel ([Neh 3:1; 12:39](#); kjv “tower of Meah”). See also Jerusalem.

Hunting

Hunting is the practice of tracking and pursuing animals for food, animal products, or sport. People have hunted since the beginning of human life. In Bible times, hunting was common in many places.

[Genesis 10:9](#) refers to a man named Nimrod who was “a mighty hunter before the LORD.” This was long before the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In earliest human history, people hunted to stay alive. They used animal meat for food. They used skins for clothing. They made tools from bones and horns. Later, people began to grow crops and raise animals. But they still hunted wild animals to add to their food.

Hunting in Neighboring Lands

People in the lands around Israel also hunted often. Paintings and stone carvings show this clearly.

In ancient Egypt, hunting became a sport. Egyptians hunted birds and wild animals. They often used dogs and cats to help them. Hunters would drive animals into traps or closed areas.

In Mesopotamia, people also hunted many animals. Stone carvings show deer and other animals caught in nets.

In Assyria, hunting wild animals (like lions) was common. Carvings from Nineveh show the skill of Assyrian hunters.

Hunting in Palestine

People hunted in Palestine from very early times. Bones from hunted animals have been found in old towns and villages. By the middle Bronze Age (around 1800–1500 BC), hunting was common. This was during the time of the patriarchs.

The Bible says Esau was a skillful hunter ([Genesis 25:27](#)). This fits with a time when people both farmed and hunted. An old Egyptian story called

the “Tale of Sinuhe”, from the 20th century BC, also talks about hunting with dogs.

Animals That People Hunted

The Bible tells us what kinds of birds and animals people hunted. [Deuteronomy 14:4–6](#) provides a list of animals that were “clean” and could be eaten. Many were farm animals, but people also hunted wild animals. These included:

- goats,
- hares,
- gazelles,
- roebucks (compare [1 Kings 4:23](#)),
- wild goats,
- ibexes,
- antelopes, and
- mountain sheep.

Hunters had to pour out the blood of the animal after killing it.

People also hunted different kinds of birds. [1 Samuel 26:20](#) mentions the partridge (compare [Deuteronomy 14:11–18](#)). [Proverbs 12:27](#) speaks about a lazy person. It says he does not even cook the animal he caught.

Some Old Testament passages show people killing animals to protect themselves ([Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 17:34–37; 2 Samuel 23:20](#)). Shepherds often carried a club and a sling. They used these weapons to protect their sheep from wild animals ([1 Samuel 17:40; Psalm 23:4](#)).

Hunting Tools

The Bible also mentions tools and traps used for hunting. Hunters used:

- bows and arrows ([Genesis 27:3](#)),
- clubs ([Job 41:29](#)),
- sling stones ([1 Samuel 17:40](#)),
- nets ([Job 19:6](#)), and
- bird snares ([Psalm 91:3](#)).

Some traps were pits covered with leaves or branches to hide them ([Psalms 7:15; 35:7; Proverbs 22:14; 26:27; Isaiah 24:17–18](#)). Others were spring traps that jumped up when touched

([Amos 3:5](#); [Psalm 69:22](#); [Hosea 9:8](#)). Some traps worked when a hunter pulled a cord ([Psalm 140:5](#); [Jeremiah 5:26](#)). Sometimes hunters would drive animals toward a trap ([Jeremiah 16:16](#); [Ezekiel 19:8](#)).

Hupham, Huphamite

Benjamite and the founder of the Huphamite family ([Nm 26:39](#)); he is perhaps identifiable with Huppim ([Gn 46:21](#); [1 Chr 7:12, 15](#)) and Huram ([1 Chr 8:5](#)).

See also Huppim; Huram #1.

Hupphah

One of the chief men appointed in charge of the 13th division of priests in the time of David and Solomon ([1 Chr 24:13](#)).

Huppim

Perhaps the son of Ir (Iri) and a descendant of Benjamin through Bela's line ([Gn 46:21](#); [1 Chr 7:12, 15](#)). Huppim is probably an alternate spelling of Hupham, the father of the Huphamite family from Benjamin's tribe ([Nm 26:39](#)). His precise lineage is difficult to determine.

Hur

1. Aaron's assistant who helped lift Moses's hands until the Amalekites were defeated at Rephidim ([Exodus 17:8-13](#)). He is mentioned again as helping Aaron Watch over Israel while Moses was on Mount Sinai ([24:14](#)). According to Josephus, Hur was the husband of Miriam, the sister of Moses (*Antiquities* 3.2.4).
2. The fourth of the five kings of Midian who was killed with Balaam by the Israelites under Moses ([Numbers 31:8](#)). He is also referred to as one of the "princes of Midian" and "Sihon" ([Joshua 13:21](#)).

3. The father of one of the 12 officers that Solomon chose to provide food for the king's household ([1 Kings 4:8](#), "Ben-hur" in Berean Standard Bible).
4. The son of Caleb and Ephrath and the grandfather of Bezalel ([1 Chronicles 2:19-20](#); compare [Exodus 31:2](#); [38:22](#)). Some interpreters regard the Hur in #1 as Bezalel's grandfather. Others think the Hur who assisted Moses was a different man.
5. The father (or perhaps family name) of Rephaiah, a leader after the exile in Babylon who helped Nehemiah rebuild the Jerusalem wall ([Nehemiah 3:9](#)).

Hurai

Alternate form of Hiddai in [1 Chronicles 11:32](#). See Hiddai.

Huram

1. A son of Bela from the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:5](#)). He may be the same person as Hupham ([Numbers 26:39](#)).
2. Another spelling of Hiram, the Phoenician king of Tyre who was an ally of David and Solomon. Hiram supplied materials for the building of the temple ([2 Chronicles 2:3, 11-12](#); [8:2, 18](#); [9:10, 21](#)).
See Hiram #1.
3. Another spelling of Hiram, a craftsman from Tyre who worked on the temple of Solomon ([2 Chronicles 4:11](#)).
See Hiram #2.

Huram-Abi

Alternate name for Hiram, Solomon's temple craftsman, in [2 Chronicles 2:13](#) and [4:16](#). See Hiram #2.

Huri

Abihail's father from Gad's tribe who inhabited Gilead in Bashan ([1 Chr 5:14](#)).

Hurrians

People (also called Mitannians) who spoke a language different from Semitic and Indo-European and yet played a significant cultural role in the Near East during the second millennium BC, particularly in transmitting the culture of Sumer and Babylon to western Asia and to the Hittites. That the Hurrians were in an area can be inferred from the presence of Hurrian texts, the presence of people with Hurrian names (or Indo-Iranian as explained below), and from statements in other ancient literature, including the OT.

At the beginning of the second millennium, and even somewhat before, Hurrians are found in the northernmost parts of Mesopotamia, having come there presumably from still farther north. They are found in the 18th century BC at Mari and Alalakh, and in the 15th and 14th centuries BC at Nuzi, Ugarit, Alalakh, a few cities in Palestine, and especially in their political center of Mitanni. During this latter period, their rulers were actually an aristocracy of Indo-Iranian extraction, who often retained their Indo-Iranian names, but who in other respects had adopted Hurrian language, religion, and general culture, and so were for all practical purposes Hurrians.

The main question concerning Hurrian presence is the extent to which they were influential in Palestine, and here the evidence is not clear. The Amarna letters, written by the Mitannian/Hurrian kings and by petty kings of Palestine to the Egyptian pharaohs during the 14th century BC, refer to a few Palestinian kings with Hurrian (some Indo-Iranian) names such as Abdikhepa of Jerusalem. However, the letters, written in Akkadian by the scribes of these Palestinian kings, betray a local Canaanite rather than Hurrian speech. Interestingly, the Egyptians referred to Palestine as the land of the Hurrians, and indeed one pharaoh claimed to have captured 36,000 Hurrians there, but this could mean inhabitants of Palestine rather than ethnic Hurrians. In view of the evidence of the Amarna letters, it is likely that Palestine was only nominally Hurrian.

See also Hittites; Hivites; Horites.

Husband

See Family Life and Relations.

Husbandman, Husbandry

Occupation and practice of farming and animal production; kJV rendering of farmer, tenant farmer, plowman, tiller, and vinedresser. *See Agriculture.*

Hushah, Hushathites

A son of Ezer ([1 Chronicles 4:4](#)) or possibly a town that Ezer founded. The Bible describes the warriors Sibbecai and Mebunnai as Hushathites ([2 Samuel 21:18](#); [1 Chronicles 11:29](#); [20:4](#); [27:11](#); [2 Samuel 23:27](#)). It is not clear if this title refers to their family ancestry, where they came from, or perhaps both.

Hushai

Hushai was a friend and adviser of King David. Hushai remained loyal to King David when Absalom, David's son, rebelled against him. Hushai's fellow adviser, Ahithophel, left David and joined Absalom's rebellion.

Following David's instructions, Hushai pretended to be loyal to Absalom. This allowed him to secretly send information to David about Absalom's plans. Ahithophel urged Absalom to attack David before he could gather more soldiers. However, Absalom chose to follow Hushai's advice instead. Hushai's advice gave David time to escape across the Jordan River and eventually defeat Absalom's forces.

When Ahithophel saw that Absalom did not follow his advice, he hanged himself. He probably knew that Absalom would lose the battle ([2 Samuel 15:32-37](#); [16:15-17:23](#)).

Hushai belonged to the Archite family from Ataroth, a town on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin ([Joshua 16:2,7](#)).

Husham

Temanite who succeeded Jobab as king of Edom ([Gn 36:34–35; 1 Chr 1:45–46](#)).

Hushim

1. Dan's son ([Gn 46:23](#)), alternately called Shuham in [Numbers 26:42](#), where he is mentioned as the founder of the Shuhamite family.
2. Benjamite descendant of Aher ([1 Chr 7:12](#)).
3. One of the Benjamite Shaharaim's three wives ([1 Chr 8:8–11](#)).

Huz

KJV rendering of Uz, Nahor's son, in [Genesis 22:21](#).
See Uz (Person) #2.

Huzzab

Obscure Hebrew word found only in [Nahum 2:7](#) (kjv). Scholars are uncertain whether the word is a verb meaning "it is decreed," a noun personifying Nineveh, or a reference to an Assyrian queen. The problem is perhaps due to textual error, but thus far neither textual scholarship nor archaeology has been able to resolve the question.

Hyacinth

The hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) is a plant native to Israel and the surrounding areas. It produces blue, fragrant flowers. Many scholars believe that the lily mentioned in several verses in Song of Songs ([2:1–2, 16; 4:5](#); and [6:2–4](#)) may actually be the garden hyacinth.

This plant grows naturally in fields and rocky areas throughout Israel and the surrounding areas, Lebanon, and regions to the north. In its wild form, the hyacinth always has deep blue flowers that give off a very pleasant smell.

See also Lily.

Hyena

A hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) is a dog-like wild animal with rough fur and a stiff mane along its neck and back. They have long hairs on their neck and back. These animals live in holes among rocks and banks. Mainly, they are active at night. Usually, they are quiet and not aggressive. However, their cry is a strange, unpleasant sound.

Hyenas are scavengers that mainly feed on dead animals left behind by other predators. They use their strong jaws to crush bones. If there are few dead animals around, they will hunt small animals like sheep and goats. When threatened, they growl and raise their mane. But, they rarely engage in fights. Hyenas are sturdy, with longer forelegs than hind legs.

In Africa, hyenas are called scavengers. They eat village waste. In Palestine, the striped hyena hunts in rocky areas and tombs. Known for raiding graves, hyenas prompted Israelites to protect their tombs with heavy stones. This was to keep hyenas away. Absalom, King David's son, was killed by Joab. To protect his body, he was buried under a large pile of stones ([2 Samuel 18:17](#)).

Hyksos

A term used by the Egyptian historian Manetho (who lived around 280 BC). "Hyksos" referred to the foreign rulers of Egypt's 15th and 16th dynasties (around 1730 to 1570 BC). They were once called the "shepherd kings." But scholars now think this name came from a mistaken translation of an Egyptian text.

Who Were the Hyksos?

The Hyksos were Semites (people related to ancient Hebrews), probably entering Egypt from Syria and Palestine. Their exact origin is uncertain. They gradually moved into Egypt during the 18th century BC. Some may have even married Egyptians. This movement was made easier because Egypt was weak due to internal power struggles. Some Hyksos may have worked in Egypt government positions before they took over. Their takeover was probably more of a quick political move than a big military conquest.

How Did the Hyksos Rule Egypt?

The Hyksos likely set up their capital at Qantir, in northeastern Egypt's delta region. This location

allowed them to maintain connections with Palestine and Syria. Qantir was near Goshen, where the Israelites lived during their time in Egypt.

The Hyksos introduced war chariots to Egypt. The Egyptians later used this new military tool to drive the Hyksos out of Egypt. Horse and chariot warfare became common in the following centuries. The Hyksos presence also forced Egyptians to pay attention to the wider Middle Eastern world. Before this, Egyptians generally viewed other peoples as uncivilized. They saw themselves as the cultural center of the world. When the Hyksos were forced out by Ahmose around 1570 BC, Egypt began a period of conquests. This was the start of its empire, which lasted from the 16th to the 12th century BC. No monuments from the Hyksos period have been found. Any monuments that did exist were probably destroyed when Egyptian rule returned.

What is the Hyksos' Connection to the Bible?

The connection between the Hyksos and Israel's history is debated. The key issue lies in understanding [Exodus 1:8](#): "Then a new king, who did not know Joseph, came to power in Egypt." There are two main views:

- Joseph lived before the Hyksos ruled Egypt.
- Joseph lived during the Hyksos rule of Egypt.

Did Joseph Live Before the Hyksos Ruled Egypt?

If Joseph died just before 1800 BC, and if the Hyksos took over Egypt around 1730 BC, then the "new king" was a Hyksos ruler who did not know about Joseph. Or perhaps he had no reason to respect Joseph's descendants even if he had known about Joseph. The harsh slavery described in [Exodus 1:9-14](#) would, according to this view, have been started by the Hyksos. The Hyksos may have been fewer in number than the Hebrews and feared an uprising (verse [9](#)). Or the Hyksos may have feared the Hebrews would join with the Egyptians to overthrow them (verse [10](#)). In this view, the pharaoh who ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill newborn Hebrew boys (verse [15](#)) ruled Egypt after the Hyksos were overthrown. This would mean there is a gap of at least 150 years between verses [14](#) and [15](#).

Did Joseph Live During the Hyksos Rule of Egypt?

Joseph arrived in Egypt during the Hyksos rule, not before it. This view assumes that Semitic rulers like the Hyksos would welcome another Semite in their government. They also would not oppose Jacob's family settling in Egypt. Also, the fact that Jacob's family lived in Goshen fits with what we know about the Hyksos controlling that region. This view might also explain why Egyptian records do not mention Joseph. His name might have been removed to avoid offending later Egyptian national pride. If this reasoning is correct, the "new king who did not know Joseph" came to power after the Hyksos had been overthrown. After the Egyptians defeated the Hyksos, they would also have enslaved the Hebrews, another Semitic group.

Did the Hyksos Worship the Same God as the Hebrews?

In either case, it is clear that the Hyksos and the Hebrews had different religious beliefs. The Hyksos worshiped the Canaanite gods, especially Baal, in their homeland. When they ruled Egypt, they combined this worship with Egyptian sun-god worship.

Hymenaeus

A Christian who probably was from Ephesus. Paul wrote about him in two letters as someone who turned away from true Christian teaching. Paul first mentioned that Hymenaeus and Alexander had rejected their conscience and damaged their faith ([1 Timothy 1:19-20](#)). Paul says Hymenaeus "deviated from the truth" ([2 Timothy 2:18](#)). The passage in 1 Timothy mentions Hymenaeus with Alexander. They are viewed as having rejected faith and shipwrecked their faith. That his offense was serious is evident.

Paul took strong action against Hymenaeus by "delivering him over to Satan." While we are not completely sure what this means, it might have included both physical suffering and being separated from other Christians. Paul did not do this to destroy Hymenaeus, but to help him learn not to speak against God's truth (compare [1 Corinthians 5:5](#)).

However, it seems this correction did not work. In [2 Timothy 2:17-18](#), Hymenaeus appears as one who is "undermining the faith of some." He and

Philetus taught that the resurrection had already taken place. It seems that he taught that the resurrection happens when a person becomes a Christian and is baptized. This false teaching likely came from misunderstanding [Romans 6:1-11](#) and [Colossians 3:1](#). Hymenaeus claimed that the resurrection was only a spiritual event that happened when a person's soul awakens from sin, rather than a future physical reality.

See also Philetus.

Hymn, Hymnody

See Music; Poetry, Biblical.

Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is pretending to be something you are not, especially pretending to be religious or good. Our modern understanding of the word "hypocrisy" comes from how it is used in the New Testament, especially by Jesus. In both the New Testament and later meanings, the word usually meant lying, not telling the truth, or claiming to have good qualities you do not have.

Original Meaning

Hypocrisy has a consistently negative meaning in the Bible. However, when it was first used by the Greeks, it did not mean something bad. It meant "to explain" or "to interpret." A person called a "hypocrite" was usually an actor in plays who helped explain stories to the audience.

Originally, a hypocrite could be a speaker or actor who interpreted the words of a poet or the music of a composer. The actor, or hypocrite, tried to make the poet's or composer's work clear for the audience.

On a bigger scale, the hypocrite could be one actor among others in a play performed on a stage. A good hypocrite played their assigned role, while a bad hypocrite played their role poorly. Because the word itself did not have a positive or negative meaning, other words were needed to show how it was being used.

In Hellenistic times (about 325–125 BC), the world was often seen as a stage and all human behavior as acting. A person's role and script were written for them by family, culture, and religious background and could be performed either well or

poorly. When used this way, hypocrisy does not mean pretending or faking.

However, there are times when "hypocrite" was used to describe a person who acted out their life role in a false way. The image shown to the public was like a mask hiding the true and different self.

Jesus's Teaching About Hypocrisy

The Gospels often use the terms "hypocrisy" and "hypocrite" to record the conflict between Jesus and those who opposed him (for "hypocrisy" see [Matthew 23:28](#); [Mark 12:15b](#); [Luke 12:1](#); for "hypocrite" see [Matthew 7:5](#); [24:51](#); [Luke 6:42](#); [13:15](#)). He saw that these leaders (the Pharisees and Sadducees) acted one way in public but failed to live up to God's most important commands. They made a show of following religious rules, but they did not practice what really matters to God:

- Being kind to others
- Treating people fairly
- Being humble
- Forgiving others
- Showing love to people who are hard to love ([Luke 11:38, 42](#)).

But Jesus knew they were hiding their true nature behind religious acts ([Mark 7:1-13](#)). Inside, they were full of greed and evil ([Luke 11:39](#)). Jesus taught that a hypocrite is someone who looks good on the outside but is bad on the inside ([Matthew 23:28](#)).

Jesus spoke strongly against hypocrisy because it twisted God's good commands. Instead of trying to be truly good inside, hypocrites made goodness into strict rules they could show off to others ([Matthew 23:2-7](#)). Their way of being "good" showed they did not understand how God makes peace with sinners ([Luke 16:15](#)). The hypocrites, who claimed to explain God to people, actually misrepresented him. Their false teaching led people away from God instead of helping them make peace with him ([Luke 11:52](#)). Hypocrites not only keep others from entering God's kingdom, but they also do not go in themselves ([Matthew 23:13](#)).

Hyrcanus

1. John Hyrcanus, Hasmonean ruler. *See* Hasmoneans.

2. Tobias's son who had a large amount of money deposited in the temple during the time of Heliodorus ([2 Macc 3:11](#)).

Hyssop

A woody plant that originally comes from Asia. It has small blue flowers that grow in spikes and leaves with a strong, pleasant smell. People use hyssop as a flavoring in food and to make perfume.

Bible scholars do not agree about exactly what plant "hyssop" refers to in the Bible. Some have suggested that it might be *Hyssopus officinalis*, which is the hyssop grown in gardens. However, this plant does not naturally grow in Israel and the surrounding areas or Egypt. It is only found naturally in southern Europe. Also, this plant does not match the description of hyssop that we find in the Bible.

Many scholars believe the Old Testament "hyssop" is likely the Syrian or Egyptian marjoram (*Origanum maru*). This plant is referred to in [Exodus 12:22](#); [Leviticus 14:4–6, 52](#); [Numbers 19:6, 18](#); [1 Kings 4:33](#); [Psalm 51:7](#); and [Hebrews 9:19](#).

Marjoram plants are part of the mint family. Under good growing conditions, they can grow about 0.6 to 0.9 meter (2 or 3 feet) tall. However, they often stay smaller when growing in rock cracks and walls ([1 Kings 4:33](#)). The crushed and dried leaves of marjoram produce an aromatic substance. When gathered together in a bunch with leaves and flowers, the hairy stems would hold liquid well, making it useful as a sprinkler for rituals.

The hyssop mentioned in [John 19:29](#) during Jesus's death on the cross is probably different from the Old Testament plant. Scholars think this might be sorghum, a tall cereal plant that was grown for food but also used to make brushes and mops. This plant would have been long enough to lift a sponge to Jesus on the cross.