

Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary

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Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

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Taanach, Taanath-Shiloh, Tabaliah, Tabbaoth, Tabbath, Tabeal, Tabeel, Taberah, Tabernacle, Tabitha, Table, Table of Showbread, Tablet, Tabor (Place), Tabor, Mount, Tabor, Oak of, Tabret, Tabrimmon, Tabrimon, Tachmonite, Tacitus, Cornelius, Tadmor, Tahan, Tahanite, Tahapanes, Tahash, Tahath (Person), Tahath (Place), Tahkemonite, Tahpanhes, Tahpenes, Tahrea, Tahtim-hodshi, Talent, Talitha Cumi, Talmai, Talmon, Talmud, Tamah, Tamar (Person), Tamar (Place), Tamarisk, Tambourine, Tammuz, Tanach, Tanhumeth, Tannaim, Tanned, Tanner, Tanning, Taphath, Tappuah (Person), Tappuah (Place), Tarah, Taralah, Tarea, Tares, Targum, Tarpel, Tarpelites, Tarshish (Person), Tarshish (Place), Tarsus, Tartak, Tartan, Taskmaster, Tatian, Tattenai, Tax Collector, Tax, Taxation, Teacher, Teacher of Righteousness, Teachings of Jesus, Teachings of Silvanus, Tebah (Person), Tebah (Place), Tebaliah, Tebeth, Tehaphnehes, Tehinnah, Teil, Tekel, Tekoa, Tekoites, Tel-Abib, Tel-Assar, Tel-Harsha, Tel-Melah, Telah, Telaim, Telem (Person), Telem (Place), Tell, Tema (Person), Tema (Place), Temah, Teman (Person), Teman (Place), Temeni, Temple, Temple Assistants, Temple Servants, Tempt, Temptation, Tempter, Ten Commandments, the, Tent of Meeting, Tentmaker, Terah (Person), Terah (Place), Teraphim, Terebinth, Teresh, Tertius, Tertullus, Test, Testament, Testament of Abraham, Testament of Job, Testament of Solomon, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testimony, Tetragrammaton, Tetrarch, Textus Receptus, Thaddaeus, the Apostle, Thahash, Thamah, Thamar, Thank Offering, Thanksgiving, Thara, Tharshish, The Book of Elchasai, The Broad Wall, The Caesars, The Destroyer, The Egyptian, The Great Sea, The Lord's Day, The New Covenant, The Paltite, The Revelation of John, The Story of Andrew, The Twelve, The Way, Theater, Thebes, Thebez, Thelasar, Theocracy, Theophany, Theophilus, Thessalonians, First Letter to the, Thessalonica, Theudas, Third Corinthians, Thistle, Thorn, Thomas, the Apostle, Thorn, Three Taverns, Thresher, Threshing, Threshing Floor, Throne, Thummim, Thunder, Sons of, Thutmose, Thyatira, Thyine, Tiberias, Tiberias, Sea of, Tiberius, Tibhath, Tibni, Tidal, Tiglath-Pileser, Tigris River, Tikvah, Tikvath, Tilgath-Pilneser, Tilon, Timaeus, Timbrel, Time, Timeus, Timna (Person), Timnah (Place), Timnath, Timnath-Heres, Timnath-Serah, Timnite, Timon, Timotheus, Timothy (Person), Timothy, First Letter to, Timothy, Second Letter to, Tin, Tiphsah, Tiras, Tirathites, Tirhakah, Tirhanah, Tiria, Tirshatha, Tirzah (Person), Tirzah (Place), Tishbe, Tishri, Tithe, Tithing, Titus Justus, Tittle, Titus (Person), Titus Caesar, Titus, Letter to, Tiz, Toah, Tob, Tob-Adonijah, Tobiah, Tobias, Tobijah, Tobit (Person), Togarmah, Tohu, Toi, Token, Tokhath, Tola, Tolad, Tolaite, Tomb, Tongues of Fire, Tongues, Speaking in, Topaz, Tophel, Topheth, Torah, Tortoise, Tou, Tower, Tower of Babel, Tower of Shechem, Tower of Siloam, Tower of the Furnaces, Tower of the Hundred, Town Clerk, Trachonitis, Traconitis, Trade Routes, Tradition, Tradition, Oral, Trajan, Transfiguration, Transformation, Transgression, Transjordan, Travel, Treasurer, Tree, Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Tree of Life, Trespass, Trespass Offering, Tribe of Levi, Tribes, Territories of the, Tribulation, Tribune, Tributary, Tribute, Trichotomy, Trigon, Trinity, Triumphal Entry, Troas, Trogylgium, Trophimus, Trumpet, Truth, Tryphaena, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Tubal, Tubal-Cain, Tulip, Tumbleweed, Tumor, Tunic, Turtledove, Twin Brothers, Tychicus, Type, Tyrannus, Hall of, Tyre

Taanach

One of the Canaanite fortress cities bordering the plain of Esraelon and the valley of Jezreel, including Jokneam, Megiddo, Ibleam, and Beth-shan. The modern site, about five miles (8 kilometers) southeast of Megiddo, retains the ancient name, Tell Taanak. Excavations reveal a 14th-century BC wall made of huge, irregularly shaped rocks, with smaller stones set in the chinks, along with ruins of a local king's palace. Some 40

cuneiform tablets of the 15th and 14th centuries BC were unearthed, and from a later period, brick houses possibly of Israelite construction. A terracotta incense altar was found in a house of Israelite date.

Taanach is first mentioned in the Bible in a list of kings conquered by the Israelites on the west side of the Jordan ([Jos 12:21](#)). In the tribal division of Palestine, Manasseh received Taanach ([21:25](#)), which was also named as a Levitical city. Manasseh, however, was not able to capture Taanach or any of the other strong cities in its inheritance ([Igs 1:27](#)).

After the defeat of Sisera, Deborah and Barak sang a song in which it was said that the fighting took place at Taanach near the waters of Megiddo ([Jgs 5:19](#)). In the time of Solomon, Taanach was one of the towns mentioned in the enumeration of the administrative districts responsible for supplying monthly provisions for the king's household ([1 Kgs 4:12](#)). The last mention of Taanach in the Bible is in a genealogical list ([1 Chr 7:29](#)), where the city is said to have belonged to Ephraim, along the borders of the Manassites.

Taanath-Shiloh

City on the northeast border of the territory allotted to Ephraim's tribe for an inheritance, positioned between Micmethath and Janoah ([Jos 16:6](#)).

Tabaliah

Another way of spelling the name Tebaliah.

See Tebaliah.

Tabbaoth

Ancestor of a family of temple servants who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:43](#); [Neh 7:46](#)).

Tabbath

Town on the outskirts of Abel-meholah on the east side of the Jordan River in the hill country of Gilead, to which Gideon and his small army chased the fleeing Midianites ([Jgs 7:22](#)).

Tabeal, Tabeel

1. Ruler in Samaria who, with his associates, wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes I of Persia (464–424 BC) protesting Zerubbabel's rebuilding of the Jerusalem wall ([Ezr 4:7](#)).

2. Father of the man whom King Pekah of Israel and King Rezin of Syria wanted to put on the throne of Jerusalem after they conquered it and subdued Ahaz, king of Judah (735–715 BC; [Is 7:6](#)).

Taberah

Temporary stopping place for Israel in the wilderness of Paran, listed with Massah and Kibroth-hattaavah as places where Israel complained against the Lord. Taberah was named for the fire that God used to judge the grumbling Israelites ([Nm 11:3](#); [Dt 9:22](#)).

Tabernacle

Place of worship during the earliest years of the history of Israel.

Preview

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Introduction

The tabernacle was the precursor of the temple during most of the period between the formation of Israel at Sinai and its final establishment in the Promised Land in the early period of the monarchy. A portable sanctuary in keeping with the demand for easy mobility, it was the symbol of God's presence with his people and, therefore, of his availability, as well as a place where his will was communicated. At an early period it was anticipated that, when peace and security had been secured, a permanent national shrine would be established ([Dt 12:10–11](#)). This was not realized until the time of Solomon, when the temple was erected ([2 Sm 7:10–13](#); [1 Kgs 5:1–5](#)). Historical events, as well as the similarities in construction and underlying theology, illustrate the close connection between the tabernacle and temple.

Names for the Tabernacle

Several words and descriptive phrases are used:

1. "Sacred residence," "sanctuary," or "holy place" ([Ex 25:8; Lv 10:17–18](#)) derive from the verb "to be holy."
2. "The tent" occurs 19 times and is also found in expressions such as "the tent of the testimony" ([Nm 9:15](#)), "the tent of the Lord" ([1 Kgs 2:28–30](#)), "the house of the tent" ([1 Chr 9:23](#)), and "the tent of meeting" (e.g., [Ex 33:7](#)). The last name appears approximately 130 times. The word involves the concept of meeting by appointment and designates the tabernacle as the place where God met with Moses and his people to make known his will.
3. "Dwelling place" is the literal meaning of "tabernacle." In [Exodus 25:9](#) the word indicates the whole tabernacle (including the outer court), but in [Exodus 26:1](#) it refers to the tabernacle proper (that included the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies). A variant of this is "the tabernacle of the testimony" ([Ex 38:21](#); nlt "Tabernacle of the Covenant"), which, with other expressions like "the tent of the testimony," stresses the presence of the two tablets of the law.
4. "The house of the Lord" ([Ex 23:19](#)).

Background

The three-part construction of the tabernacle, composed of a general area and two restricted areas, was not unique. In other developed religions that included an organized priesthood there were three main levels of approach: one for all members of the community; one for the priests generally; and one for the chief religious leaders, which was an inner sanctuary, conceived as the dwelling place of the deity. Excavations of heathen sanctuaries in Palestine and Syria in the pre-Israelite period have revealed this type of divided sanctuary.

There is also widespread evidence of the use of portable, often complex, prefabricated structures during the second millennium BC, usually as either staterooms for kings and other high dignitaries, or as sanctuaries. Rulers of settled communities used these structures when traveling to other areas within their kingdoms (e.g., Egypt and, to a lesser extent, Canaan). Also, nomadic or seminomadic peoples, such as the Midianites, used portable sanctuaries. In pre-Mosaic Egypt, craftsmen used techniques similar to those used in the construction of the tabernacle.

The Tabernacle and Its Furniture

The book of Exodus ([Ex 25–40](#)) describes the tabernacle and its furnishings in detail. The

materials used included items ranging from precious to common materials. Three metals are mentioned in descending order of importance: gold, copper, and silver. Gold alone was employed in the principal sanctuary furnishings. The total amount of metals used was approximately one ton (.9 metric ton) of gold, three of copper, and four of silver ([38:24–31](#)). The relatively large amount of silver came from an offering ([30:11–16](#)), which augmented the silver and gold already given by the Egyptians ([12:35](#)).

Significantly, in God's building specifications, the starting point was the furniture of the inner sanctuary (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies). In the actual construction, this furniture was made after the tabernacle itself, presumably so that it could be immediately and adequately housed ([Ex 25:9–27:19](#); cf. [36:8–37:28](#)).

The first item listed was the ark, the only furniture in the Holy of Holies. It was a wooden box sheathed in gold, approximately three and three-quarters feet (1.1 meters) long, with a width and height of two and a quarter feet (.7 meter). The supreme symbol of the covenant relationship between God and Israel, it was often called "the ark of the covenant of the Lord" ([Dt 10:8](#)). Unlike contemporary arks in some neighboring countries, it contained no representation of the deity, only the Ten Commandments ([Ex 25:16](#)), a jar of manna ([16:33](#)), and Aaron's rod ([Nm 17:10](#))—all symbolic of various aspects of God's provision (see [Heb 9:4](#)).

The ark was transported by two poles that passed through rings attached to each lower corner ([Ex 25:13–15](#)). These poles, left in place, projected underneath the veil into the Holy Place, serving as a reminder of the presence of the unseen ark.

Resting upon the ark was the mercy seat (nlt "atonement cover"), a rectangular slab of solid gold, to which were attached two cherubim. The inward-looking cherubim and the mercy seat formed a throne for the invisible God ([Ex 25:22](#)), who is frequently described as enthroned above or upon the cherubim ([Pss 80:1; 99:1](#)). The noun "mercy seat" comes from a verb meaning "to make atonement." The mercy seat was sprinkled with blood at the climax of the annual Day of Atonement ([Lv 16:14](#)). The fact that the ark was placed *under* the mercy seat ([Ex 25:21](#)) signifies that the law was under God's protection and explains the references to the ark as his footstool (e.g., [Ps 132:7](#)). Like the cherubim in the Garden of Eden ([Gn 3:24](#)), those in the Holy of Holies probably had a similar protective function. In the ancient world, symbolic winged

creatures like the cherubim were frequently placed as guardians of thrones and important buildings.

Like the ark, the portable table of the bread of the Presence ([Ex 25:30](#)) was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was marginally smaller, with a length of three feet (.9 meter), a width of one and a half feet (.5 meter) and a height of two and a quarter feet (.7 meter). The various auxiliary vessels and implements are detailed (v [29](#)); presumably the dishes would be used for carrying the bread. On each Sabbath day, 12 loaves, symbolizing God's provision for the 12 tribes of Israel, were placed in two rows on the table ([Lv 24:5-9](#)). The table was located in the Holy Place, on the north side.

On the south side was the seven-branched golden lampstand ([Ex 25:31-39; 37:17-24; 40:24](#)). It was the most impressive item of furniture in the Holy Place; like the cherubim and the mercy seat, it was made of pure gold. Six golden branches, three on either side, extended from a central shaft, and the whole lampstand was ornamented with almond flowers. From the biblical evidence, it is not clear whether the lampstand gave continuous illumination ([Ex 27:20; Lv 24:2](#)) or night light only ([1 Sm 3:3](#) in most versions). [Leviticus 24:4](#) strongly supports the former, and the reference in 1 Samuel probably reflects the laxity that had crept in during the period of the judges. In Scripture, the golden lampstand symbolizes the continuing witness of the covenant community ([Zec 4:1-7; Rv 2:1](#)). The precise attention to the smallest detail is well illustrated in the listing of the supplementary items, all made of pure gold, required for the servicing of the lamps. Without this precise attention, the light would soon grow dim, and the sanctuary itself be defiled by carbon deposits ([Ex 25:38](#)). Moreover, only the best-quality olive oil was used, thus ensuring the brightest possible light ([27:20](#)).

The altar of incense ([Ex 30:1-10](#)) may have been deliberately played down to give greater prominence to the sacrificial altar in the outer court, which is frequently referred to as "*the* altar." In order to distinguish the altar of incense from the bronze altar of sacrifice, the former was called "the golden altar" ([40:5](#)). The altar of incense was located in the Holy Place, immediately opposite the ark in the Holy of Holies but just outside the veil, between the table of the bread of the Presence and the lampstand. Made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, it was 18 inches (45.7 centimeters) square and 3 feet (.9 meter) high, with horns and a golden

molding around the four sides. Like the ark, it was made readily portable by the provision of rings and carrying poles. The altar was used for the offering of incense every morning and evening and for anointing the horns for the yearly atonement ([30:7-10](#)). The incense from a special recipe was forbidden for secular use. Originally, incense indicated something that ascended from a sacrifice, a pleasing aroma to God. Incense acknowledged God in worship ([Mal 1:11](#)) and at an early date signified the prayers of the godly ([Ps 141:2](#)). It also concealed God from human eyes ([Lv 16:13](#)).

The Tabernacle Proper

The tabernacle was fundamentally a tent structure supported on a rigid framework. As with most of the other items, a triplication of detail underlines the importance of the tabernacle proper. The specifications are given in [Exodus 26](#), the construction in [Exodus 36:8-38](#), and the final erection in [Exodus 40:16-19](#). The overall dimensions were approximately 45 feet (13.7 meters) long, 15 feet (4.6 meters) wide, and 15 feet high.

The basic framework was a series of upright supports, each 15 feet (4.6 meters) high and 2½ feet (.7 meters) wide, and each standing on two silver bases ([Ex 26:15-25](#)). Scholars used to think these supports or frames were solid planks of acacia wood, but most modern scholars accept that each comprised two upright sides connected by horizontal pieces like a ladder. Such sections would be considerably stronger, would keep their shape better, and would allow a view of the beautiful inner layer of curtains from within the sanctuary. On the south and north sides were 20 such frames, with 6 more at the western end. In addition, on the western side were two corner pieces to which all the walls were attached by clasps (vv [23-25](#)). A series of bars, which passed through gold rings attached to each upright frame, provided further security and alignment (vv [26-29](#)). There were five such bars on each of the three sides. The central one on both the south and the north sides extended the entire length; the other four probably extended halfway, so that each frame was effectively secured by three bars. All the wooden sections were sheathed in gold.

Over this framework several layers of coverings formed the top, sides, and back of the tabernacle. The first layer of ten linen curtains was dyed blue, purple, and scarlet, and embroidered with cherubim ([Ex 26:1-6; 36:8-13](#)). Each measured 42

feet by 6 feet (12.8 meters by 1.8 meters). Pairs joined along their length formed five sets of curtains. The two large curtains were themselves attached with 50 golden clasps that passed through a similar number of loops in each. Probably the curtains were stretched over the structure like a tablecloth.

Eleven curtains or tarpaulins of goat hair, each 45 feet by 6 feet (13.7 meters by 1.8 meters), formed the next layer. These were divided into two sets by joining together five and six curtains respectively, and were linked using a similar method as the under curtain, except that bronze clasps instead of gold were used. The extra length of the goat-hair tarpaulins provided an overlap to protect the under curtain, and the larger tarpaulin overlapped at both the front and the rear of the tabernacle ([Ex 26:7-9, 12-13](#)). Two further layers ensured complete weatherproofing, one of ram's skins dyed red and one of goatskins.

A veil made of the same material as the under curtaining divided the sanctuary and hung under the golden clasps that joined the two curtains, supported by four pillars of acacia wood plated with gold and resting in silver bases. The cherubim on both the veil and the curtains were symbolic guardians of the sanctuary. The positioning of the veil made the Holy of Holies a perfect cube of 15 feet (4.6 meters). The layers of overlapping material and the attention given to the joints emphasizes the darkness of the innermost shrine. God was surrounded by darkness, carefully isolated from any unauthorized sight ([Ps 97:2](#)). The Holy Place occupied an area 30 feet by 15 feet (9.1 meters by 4.6 meters), exactly twice the area of the Holy of Holies. A screen made from the same fabric as the main curtain stood between the Holy Place and the outer court and hung from golden hooks on five posts of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and resting on bronze sockets. There is no mention of embroidered seraphim on this section, which formed the tabernacle's eastern wall.

The tabernacle, while probably having a somewhat squat appearance suggestive of strength, could be easily dismantled, transported, and reassembled. By the standards of that age, it was a fit dwelling place for God, constructed by the best human skills and the highest quality materials.

The Outer Court and Its Furnishings

The court of the tabernacle was a rectangle 150 feet (45.7 meters) long on the north and south sides and 75 feet (22.9 meters) wide on the east and west

([Ex 27:9-18; 38:9-19](#)). The tabernacle itself was at the western end. Curtains of fine-twined linen 7½ feet (2.3 meters) high screened the entire tabernacle area. In the eastern section, there was a central entrance, 30 feet (9.1 meters) wide. An embroidered curtain of the same height screened this doorway, which was probably recessed to facilitate entrance on either side. Silver rods supported all the curtains. These rods passed through silver hooks attached to the silver-plated posts that rested on bronze bases ([38:17](#)).

The altar of burnt offering ([Ex 27:1-8; 38:1-7](#)), at the eastern end of the court adjacent to the entrance ([40:29](#)), was a reminder that there could be no approach to God except by the place of sacrifice. Seven feet (2.1 meters) square and four and a half feet (1.4 meters) high, it was small in comparison to the gigantic altar in Solomon's temple ([2 Chr 4:1](#)). Basically, it was a hollow wooden framework overlaid with bronze, light enough to be carried on bronze-plated poles that passed through bronze rings at each corner. The grating ([Ex 27:4-5](#)) was probably inside the altar at the middle, although some scholars believe that it extended around the lower, outer sides of the altar, to provide draft and to allow the sacrificial blood to flow to the base of the altar. The horns, possibly symbolizing the sacrificial victims, could be used to tether the animals about to be sacrificed. In Israel, a person could claim sanctuary by clinging to the horns of the altar (e.g., [1 Kgs 1:50](#)), with the possible symbolism that he was offering himself as a sacrifice to God and so claiming his protection. The lower part of the altar may have been partly filled with earth to absorb the blood ([Ex 20:24](#)). All the accessories were bronze: ash buckets, shovels for removing the ashes and filling the base with earth, basins for the blood, carcass hooks, and fire pans ([27:3](#)).

No specifications concerning the size of the laver (nlt "washbasin") have survived ([Ex 30:17-20; 38:8](#)). It was made from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the court. The laver stood between the altar of sacrifice and the tabernacle. Failure to wash at the laver prior to ministering was punishable by death—a solemn reminder of the need for cleanliness and obedience before undertaking any task for God. The bronze pedestal may have been merely a support for the laver, but possibly it incorporated a lower basin in which the priests could wash their feet.

The Construction and Consecration of the Tabernacle

The God-given specifications required skills beyond the capabilities of Moses and Aaron. Prominent in the construction were Bezalel and Oholiab ([Ex 30:1-11](#)), with a large supporting group of experts, who must have learned their craftsmanship in Egypt. In a remarkable community effort, the Israelites gave so generously that the flow of gifts had to be stopped ([35:20-24](#); [36:4-7](#)). In addition, many gave of their special skills ([35:25-29](#)).

When all the items had been completed and placed in position ([Ex 40:1-33](#)), every piece except the mercy seat and the cherubim was anointed with special oil ([30:22-33](#); [40:9-11](#)) and symbolically consecrated for its particular function. The climax came when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle ([40:34](#)). He came to be present among his people, and thereafter the cloud by day and fire by night provided reassurance concerning his presence and guidance. Yet there could be no laxity in approaching him, and even Moses was excluded from the Holy of Holies. The tabernacle was erected exactly one year after the deliverance from Egypt and a mere nine months after the Sinai revelation.

Thereafter, when Israel camped, the Levites surrounded the tabernacle on three sides ([Nm 1:53](#)), with the families of Moses and Aaron occupying the remaining eastern side ([Nm 3:14-38](#)). This prevented any unauthorized intrusion into the sacred area. When the tabernacle was moved, the dismantlement was carefully regulated ([4:5-15](#)). The Kohathites were responsible for transporting the more sacred items, using the carrying poles; the Gershonites dealt with all the soft furnishings, the altar of sacrifice, and its accessories; and the Merarites carried the hard furnishings, such as the frames, bars, and bases. Even on the march, the tabernacle remained central, with six tribes preceding and the remaining six following ([Nm 2](#)).

See also Temple.

Tabitha

An Aramaic name meaning "gazelle." The Greek name is Dorcas ([Acts 9:36, 40](#)).

See Dorcas.

Table

See Furniture.

Table of Showbread

A piece of furniture in the tabernacle and temple upon which the bread of the Presence was placed ([Exodus 25:23-30](#)).

See Bread of the Presence.

Tablet

A flat piece of clay, stone, or wood used for writing.

See Writing.

Tabor (Place)

City mentioned in [1 Chronicles 6:77](#) in a list of the towns of Zebulun. In a similar list in [Joshua 19:12](#) the city is named Kisloth-Tabor; if the same city is meant, the Chronicler may have abbreviated the name here.

Tabor, Mount

An important hill in lower Galilee located in the northeast area of the Jezreel Valley. About six miles (9.7 kilometers) east of Nazareth, Tabor rises suddenly from flat land around it. Though not the tallest mountain in the area at 587.9 meters (1,929 feet), Mount Tabor was an important landmark.

Mount Tabor defined the western boundary of Issachar's tribe ([Joshua 19:22](#)). It was a useful navigation tool on the international coastal highway, the Via Maris. The highway passed through Megiddo in Galilee on the way to Hazor. Mount Tabor was sometimes compared with Mount Hermon far to the north ([Psalms 89:12](#); compare [Jeremiah 46:18](#)).

What Important Events Happened at Mount Tabor?

In the Old Testament, Mount Tabor is mentioned in the book of Judges when Deborah and Barak fight the Canaanite army. Sisera, the commander of a Canaanite army from Hazor led the army ([Judges 4:1-24](#)). Barak's troops from the nearby tribes of

Naphtali and Zebulun met on Mount Tabor. At Deborah's command, the Israelites launched a successful campaign against Sisera. Gideon finally confronted Zebah and Zalmunna, the Midanite kings who had killed his brothers, at Mount Tabor ([Judges 8:18](#)).

The peak of Mount Tabor is 1.3 square kilometers (a half-mile square). It was strategically located and easily fortified. During the Old Testament kingdom period, shrines for worship may have been there (see [Hosea 5:1](#)), but by the Greek era, military defenses. The Ptolemies strengthened it, and by the time of Antiochus III (218 BC), Tabor may have become the administrative center of the Jezreel Valley. Various conflicts took place on Mount Tabor during the Roman era. In the major Jewish war of AD 66, Josephus fortified the hill with a large wall, which is still visible.

Did the Transfiguration of Jesus Happen on Mount Tabor?

Since the fourth century, people have believed Mount Tabor is where a miraculous event called the Transfiguration took place—when Jesus's appearance suddenly changed and became bright with heavenly light ([Mark 9:2–13](#)). This is uncertain since the New Testament does not mention Mount Tabor by name. Helena, the mother of emperor Constantine, claimed many places as historical sites in Israel and Palestine. She was certain the Transfiguration occurred on Mount Tabor, and in AD 326 she built a church on the site. Shrines, monasteries, and churches were built up on the hill until Arab conquerer Saladin destroyed them at the end of the 12th century. Today a Greek Orthodox monastery and a Latin basilica dating from the 19th century can be seen on the mountain.

Tabor, Oak of

Place near Bethel and perhaps in Benjamin's tribal territory where Saul was to meet three men ([1 Sm 10:3](#)). This encounter was the second of four signs given to Saul to confirm his appointment as king.

Tabret

KJV rendering of tambourine in [Genesis 31:27](#) and [1 Samuel 10:5](#), and timbrel in [1 Samuel 18:6](#), [Job 17:6](#), [Isaiah 5:12](#), [24:8](#), [30:32](#), and [Jeremiah 31:4](#). See Musical Instruments (Toph).

Tabrimmon, Tabrimon

Hezion's son and the father of Ben-hadad I, king of Syria ([1 Kings 15:18](#)).

Tachmonite

The King James Version form of Tahkemonite. It was a title for one of the mighty men of King David in [2 Samuel 23:8](#).

See Tahkemonite.

Tacitus, Cornelius

A Roman historian who lived from around AD 55 to 120.

His Life and Writings

We do not know much about Tacitus's personal life. However, his writings give us important information about life in Rome during the first century AD. His five main works are:

- *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (around AD 77)
- *The Life of Agricola* (about his father-in-law) (around AD 98)
- *Germania* (around AD 98)
- *Histories* (around AD 116)
- *Annals* (around AD 116)

Writing About Christians

In *Annals*, Tacitus referred to the persecution of the Christians in Rome in AD 64. The emperor Nero blamed Christians for the fire that he had ordered set, which destroyed much of Rome. Tacitus believed the Christians to be innocent. However, he referred to their faith as "a detestable superstition." He did not think highly of their beliefs. He named Christ as the founder of this sect. Tacitus stated that Jesus was crucified "in the reign of Emperor Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate."

Tacitus also said that Nero accused the Roman Christians not only of setting fire to Rome but also of "hatred of the human race." Nero had some of them thrown to dogs. He ordered others to be

crucified. He had others burned in the imperial garden. Tacitus's writings are valuable because they confirm some events that we read about in the New Testament, including Jesus's death on the cross.

Tadmor

Ancient city whose name appears in a list of Solomon's building achievements in [2 Chronicles 8:4](#). The parallel verse in [1 Kings 9:18](#) reads "Tamar" in some Hebrew manuscripts and it is uncertain if the same city was intended.

Solomon built or rebuilt a number of cities, including store cities and cities for his horses and chariots. Among the cities mentioned is "Tadmor in the desert." Tadmor, situated some 140 miles (225.3 kilometers) northeast of Damascus, is mentioned in the records of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (c. 1114–c. 1076 BC).

In Greek and Roman times, the city was known as Palmyra, whose ruins may be seen today. The oasis city was an important stopping place on the caravan route, and therefore could have been valuable to Solomon in his extensive trading ventures. It gained its greatest prominence during the reign of Queen Zenobia. The Roman Aurelian destroyed it in AD 273. Though rebuilt, it never regained its former position.

Tahan

1. Son of Ephraim and the father of the Tahanite clan ([Numbers 26:35](#)).
2. Son of Telah and a descendant of Ephraim ([1 Chronicles 7:25](#)).

Tahanite

Any descendant of Tahan from the tribe of Ephraim ([Numbers 26:35](#)).

See Tahan #1.

Tahapanes

KJV alternate spelling of Tahpanhes, an Egyptian city, in [Jeremiah 2:16](#). *See* Tahpanhes.

Tahash

Son of Nahor and Reumah his concubine; Abraham's brother ([Gn 22:24](#)).

Tahath (Person)

1. Son of Assir and a descendant of Levi through Kohath's line. He was an ancestor of Heman, one of David's musicians, and the father of Uriel and Zephaniah ([1 Chr 6:24, 37](#)).
2. Ephraimite, the son of Bered and the father of Eleadah ([1 Chr 7:20](#)).
3. Ephraimite, the son of Eleadah and the father of Zabad ([1 Chr 7:20](#)).

Tahath (Place)

A temporary camping place for the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. It was located between Makheloth and Terah ([Numbers 33:26–27](#)).

Tahkemonite

Variant reading for Hacmonite in [1 Chronicles 11:11](#). There was probably an error in copying where the Hebrew letter "h" was confused for a "t." *See* Hacmonite.

Tahpanhes

Important Egyptian center in the eastern Delta. Listed with Memphis among Israel's enemies ([Jer 2:16](#)), it is the place to which Jews fled after the murder of Gedaliah in 586 BC when Jeremiah was taken to Egypt ([43:7–9](#); [44:1](#); [46:14](#)). Ezekiel prophesied doom against this city (alternately spelled Tehaphnehes in [Ez 30:18](#), rsv).

Today the site is identified with Tell Defenneh (Defenneh), 26 miles (41.8 kilometers) southwest of Port Said. There is little evidence of occupation here before the time of Psammetichus I (664–610 BC), who established a fortress at the site and left a garrison of Greek mercenaries. Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes, where Jeremiah buried stones as a promise of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion ([Jer 43:9](#)),

has been identified with the fortress of Psammetichus. A fragmentary Neo-Babylonian text of the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar refers to operations against Pharaoh Amasis and a Greek garrison.

Tahpenes

Egyptian queen who lived during the reigns of David (1000–961 BC) and Solomon (970–930 BC). Pharaoh gave her sister to Hadad the Edomite in marriage. Tahpenes's sister bore to Hadad a son named Genubath ([1 Kgs 11:19–20](#)).

Tahrea

A descendant of King Saul ([1 Chronicles 8:35; 9:41](#)). Another spelling of the name is Tarea.

Tahtim-hodshi

A place mentioned in the Bible during King David's census of Israel. Tahtim-hodshi is listed between Gilead and Dan-jaan ([2 Samuel 24:6](#)). The exact location of this place is unknown today. David's officials counted the people living in this area as part of his census of Israel.

Talent

A unit of measure used in weighing gold or silver ([Matthew 25:14–30](#)).

See Coins; Weights and Measures.

Talitha Cumi

Jesus spoke these Aramaic words as recorded by Mark in his Gospel ([Mark 5:41](#)). Jairus, a synagogue official in the Galilean region, called on Jesus to heal his sick daughter. The girl died before Jesus arrived. When he arrived, Jesus took the girl's hand and said, "Talitha cumi," meaning "Little girl, arise." "Talitha" is a term of affection meaning "lamb" or "youth." "Cumi" is a command to rise up. Mark translated the word as "I say to you, arise!"

In his Gospel, Mark includes other Aramaic phrases Jesus spoke ([Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 11:9–10; 14:36; 15:22, 34](#)). Matthew only records two

Aramaic phrases ([Matthew 27:33, 46](#)). Luke's gospel includes none of these phrases.

Talmai

3. A son of Anak and brother of Ahiman and Sheshai. The 12 Israelite spies saw Talmai and his people when they explored the land of Canaan ([Numbers 13:22](#)). Later, Caleb was successful in defeating Talmai and his brothers. They were living in Hebron ([Joshua 15:14](#); [Judges 1:10](#)).
4. A son of Ammihud and father of Maacah. Maacah was the wife of King David. She gave birth to Absalom, the third son of David ([2 Samuel 3:3; 1 Chronicles 3:2](#)). After Absalom killed his half-brother Amnon, he ran away to his grandfather Talmai's small kingdom of Geshur for safety. ([2 Samuel 13:37](#)).

Talmon

Head of a Levite family who served as temple gatekeepers ([1 Chr 9:17](#)). His descendants returned from the exile with Zerubbabel and served as gatekeepers in the rebuilt temple ([Ezr 2:42; Neh 7:45; 11:19; 12:25](#)).

Talmud

The word "Talmud" means "to study" or "to learn." The Talmud is a collection of literature written in Hebrew and Aramaic. It includes interpretations of the Old Testament's legal sections and wise sayings from many rabbinical sources (Jewish texts and traditions that originate from the teachings of rabbis throughout history). It covers a period from shortly after Ezra, around 400 BC, to about the 500s AD.

Origin and Development of the Oral Law

Traditional Jews believe that Moses received a second law orally, in addition to the written one. This oral law was passed down through generations. The Talmud claims an early origin for

this oral law, with *Pirke Abot* 1:1 attributing it to Moses. However, some scholars argue that this oral law developed after Ezra. For example, the prophets who lived before the exile never mentioned people failing to follow an oral law. However, these prophets often warned people about ignoring the written laws given to Moses. This suggests that there was no set of oral traditions before the Babylonian exile.

After Ezra ("a scribe skilled in the law of Moses," [Ezra 7:6](#)), teachers in synagogues and schools taught the Old Testament, and their teachings were memorized. Over many years, people used different ways to memorize and remember the growing number of teachings and explanations.

As more teachings were added, not even the best memory could retain all the material. It became necessary to create a summary of all the important teachings from past generations to make it easier for future generations to access the vast knowledge, religious insights, and wisdom for guidance and inspiration. This summary is called the Talmud, the main collection of the oral law. Jewish people regard it as second to the Scriptures. The Talmud, seen as a remarkable achievement of national and religious thought, has deeply shaped the Jewish worldview.

Reasons for an Oral Law

After the post-exilic prophets stopped speaking, life in Israel became complex. It was necessary to expand on the laws of the Pentateuch. The oral law, at first, was intended to be helpful so that people could obey the written Word of God.

The oral law contained in the Talmud had two purposes:

5. It provided an interpretation of the written Law. According to the rabbis, the oral law makes it possible to observe the written Law. Without the oral law, it would be impossible to observe the written Law. A good example of this is found in the biblical Sabbath law. Everyone knew that people should not work on the Sabbath. However, the rabbis say that the oral law was needed to explain what "work" actually meant.

6. The second purpose of the oral law is to update and adjust the written Law to fit new situations. The oral law is meant to keep the written Law useful for each new generation. Without the oral law, people might think the written Law was out of date.

So, the oral law helps people understand both what not to do and what good Jewish faith and loyalty look like.

Each generation faces new social, political, and economic situations. This means the Word of God needs to be applied in new ways. However, the Word of God itself should not be changed just to fit what people want or to solve new problems. We see an example of this in the first century AD. Jesus criticized the Jewish leaders for putting their oral traditions above God's Word ([Mark 7:9-13](#)).

Early Forms of the Talmud

One of the earliest ways to teach oral law was through Midrash, which means "to explain." Midrash was a form of commentary (explanations or observations) on the Bible text. There were two types:

7. **Midrash Halakah:** This explained the legal parts of the Old Testament. It focused on how to live.
8. **Midrash Haggadah:** This explained the non-legal parts, like ethics and devotion. It means "narration."

Ezra and his trained associates used Midrash when the Jerusalem wall was finished in 444 BC. They "instructed the people in the Law as they stood in their places. So they read from the Book of the Law of God, explaining it and giving insight so that the people could understand what was being read" ([Nehemiah 8:7-8](#)).

After Ezra, many teachers used this Midrash method. These religious leaders were called Soferim ("bookmen" or "scribes") until about 200 BC. They were sometimes called the "Great Synagogue." They taught to keep Israel from worshiping false gods or forgetting God's laws.

The Soferim were followed by the Hasidim ("pious ones"), who tried to encourage religious commitment. The Hasidim were followed by the Pharisees ("separated ones") in 128 BC. All these groups added to the Midrash method.

As time went on, there was more and more material to remember. People learned it through constant repetition. This new method was called Mishnah, which means "repetition." The teachers of the Mishnah were called Tannaim, meaning "those who handed down orally."

Both Midrash and Mishnah continued to be used together for many generations. The oral law eventually grew so large that people found it difficult to learn and remember. Because of this, it was written down. Later rabbis discussed and explained the Mishnah in great detail. These discussions became known as the Gemara (meaning "completion"). Like the original oral law, the Gemara was first passed on orally before being written down. The Gemara and Mishnah together form the Talmud.

See also Gemara; Haggadah; Halakah; Law, Biblical Concept of; Midrash; Mishnah; Pharisees; Torah; Tradition; Tradition, Oral.

Tamah

KJV spelling of Temah in [Nehemiah 7:55](#). *See* Temah.

Tamar (Person)

9. The wife of Er, the firstborn son of Judah by a Canaanitess. Later, as a widow, Tamar bore two sons to Judah named Perez and Zerah ([Genesis 38:6-24](#); [1 Chronicles 2:4](#)). Tamar continued the line of Judah through Perez ([Ruth 4:12](#)), and her name is recorded in the family list of Christ ([Matthew 1:3](#)).

See also Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

10. Sister of Absalom and the daughter of David by his wife Maacah, the Geshurite. Through deceit, Tamar was seduced by Amnon, her half-brother. Her full brother, Absalom, got revenge and had Amnon murdered at Baal-hazor ([2 Samuel 13](#); [1 Chronicles 3:9](#)).

11. Daughter of Absalom, who was noted for her beauty ([2 Samuel 14:27](#)). She perhaps married Uriel of Gibeah and became the mother of Maacah.

See Maacah, Maachah (Person) #4.

Tamar (Place)

City located southwest of the Dead Sea in Judah's tribe ([Ez 47:19](#); [48:28](#)). Tamar is listed in some Hebrew manuscripts of [1 Kings 9:18](#) as one of the places built up by Solomon in his campaign to increase the might and grandeur of the Jewish empire. It may have been carefully fortified to safeguard the important trade route between the Elath seaport and southern Arabia.

See also Tadmor.

Tamarisk

A tamarisk is a small, fast-growing tree or shrub with strong, durable wood. These plants grow well in harsh places like deserts, sand dunes, and salty marshes. The Bible mentions tamarisk trees in [Genesis 21:33](#) and [1 Samuel 22:6](#) and [31:13](#).

Tamarisk plants often provide welcome green foliage and cooling shade for travelers in hot, dry regions. One type of tamarisk, *Tamarix aphylla*, has small, scale-like leaves and produces small white flowers. These tiny leaves help the tree conserve water in dry climates. *Tamarix aphylla* can survive in harsh environments and grows well in areas where water is scarce.

The manna tamarisk (*Tamarix mannifera*) is a shrub or small tree that grows from 2.7 to 4.6 meters (9 to 15 feet) tall and has tiny pink flowers. It is found in deserts from Israel and surrounding areas to Arabia and the Sinai. On hot days, tiny insects that live on the plant make a sweet, sticky substance on its branches. This substance dries into small white lumps that can be collected and eaten. Some people have suggested that this is the kind of "manna" the Israelites ate in the wilderness ([Exodus 16](#)), but it does not match all the Bible's descriptions of manna.

In regions where trees are scarce, people value the larger tamarisk trees for their wood. This wood was used for building structures and for making high-quality charcoal for fires.

Tambourine

Percussion instrument consisting of a shallow one-headed drum with small metal discs attached on the side, which jingle when the instrument is tapped or shaken ([1 Sm 10:5](#)). See Musical Instruments (Toph).

Tammuz

Chief Sumerian deity whose name derived from the Sumerian *dumuzi*. He is the god of fertility, of vegetation and agriculture, and of death and resurrection, and he is the patron deity of shepherds. The son and consort of Ashtar (Inanna), Tammuz represented the annual vegetation cycle of death during the heat of summer and the rebirth of life with the coming of the fall and spring rains, as mythically recounted in the Akkadian poem "Inanna's Descent into the Netherworld." This rejuvenation of life and defeat of death was annually celebrated during the Babylonian New Year Festival. In the OT, the prophet Ezekiel sees in a vision women weeping for Tammuz at the north gate of the temple; this is a prophetic description of coming desecrations of the Lord's house ([Ez 8:14](#)).

In subsequent cultures following the Sumerian civilization (third millennium BC), the Tammuz cult was carried on. It undoubtedly embodied the worship of Marduk of Babylon, Ashur of Assyria, Baal of Canaan, Attis of Phrygia, and Adonis of Syria (Aram) and Greece. Numerous liturgies and dirges have been found detailing Tammuz worship in ancient Mesopotamian culture. During the postexilic era, the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar was named Tammuz.

See also Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

Tanach

KJV spelling of Taanach, a Levitical town, in [Joshua 21:25](#). See Taanach.

Tanhumeth

Seraiah's father from the town of Netophah in Judah. Seraiah was the captain of an army of Netophathite men, who served under Gedaliah

during the Babylonian suzerainty ([2 Kgs 25:23](#); [Jer 40:8](#)).

Tannaim

Teachers of the Jewish oral law mentioned in the Mishnah. This was during the time beginning with the students of Shammai and Hillel in AD 10. It ended with the pupils of Judah HaNasi I in AD 220.

See Mishnah; Talmud.

Tanned, Tanner, Tanning

A tanner is a worker who changes animal skins into leather. In New Testament times, tanners soaked animal skins in lime and plant materials to make leather (this process is called tanning). Because this process created strong, bad smells, tanners had to live and work outside of towns.

The coverings for the tabernacle (the holy tent) were made from tanned ram and goat skins, or possibly sea cow skins. These leather coverings were red, either because they were dyed or because of how they were tanned ([Exodus 25:5](#); [26:14](#); [35:7, 23](#); [36:19](#); [39:34](#)).

The Bible mentions only one tanner by name, Simon. He lived in Joppa. The apostle Peter stayed at Simon's house ([Acts 9:43](#); [10:6, 32](#)).

See also Leather.

Taphath

Solomon's daughter and the wife of Ben-abinadab ([1 Kings 4:11](#)). Ben-abinadab was Solomon's officer in Naphoth-dor.

Tappuah (Person)

Hebron's son and a descendant of Caleb from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:43](#)).

Tappuah (Place)

- One of 14 cities located in the Shephelah assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance, mentioned between En-gannim and Enam ([Jos 15:34](#)). This locality is not to be mistaken for the

land of Tappuah in Manasseh ([17:8](#)) or the town of Beth-tappuah at Hebron ([15:53](#)). See Beth-tappuah.

2. City situated in the hill country of Palestine defining part of the northern boundary of the territory allotted to Ephraim's tribe for an inheritance. From Tappuah the northern border ran westward to Kanah Brook, then followed its course to the Mediterranean Sea ([Jos 16:8](#)). The land of Tappuah was a district within the territory given to the tribe of Manasseh; however, the city of Tappuah, located on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the Ephraimites ([17:8](#)).

Tarah

The King James Version spelling of Terah. This was one of the places the Israelites stopped at during their journey through the wilderness ([Numbers 33:27–28](#)).

See Terah (Place).

Taralah

One of 26 cities in the land assigned to Benjamin's tribe for an inheritance, listed between Irpeel and Zelah ([Jos 18:27](#)). Taralah was possibly situated to the northwest of Jerusalem.

Tarea

Another way of spelling the name Tahrea.

See Tahrea.

Tares

The King James Version spelling of "weeds" (darnels) in [Matthew 13:25–30](#).

See Plants (Darnel Grass).

Targum

An Aramaic translation of the Old Testament. While the word "targum" can mean any translation, it usually means an Aramaic version that explains or interprets part of the Old Testament. Targums were very important in the history of ancient

Judaism. Some Jewish traditions say that oral targums existed as far back as the time of Ezra. [Nehemiah 8:8](#) is evidence of this.

During the Babylonian exile (seven hundred years before Christ), the Jewish people spoke Hebrew. But when they were taken as captives to Babylon, they started speaking Aramaic, the language of the Babylonians. Over time, most Jewish people spoke Aramaic instead of Hebrew. This meant they needed the Scriptures translated into Aramaic so they could understand them. In Jewish places of worship, someone would read a part of the Law in Hebrew. Then, they would immediately give an oral translation in Aramaic. Later, people wrote down these translations. Many of these written Targums still exist today.

The earliest known Targum is of the book of Job. It was found in a cave of the Qumran community. It was written 100 years before the time of Christ. The most important Targums are Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathon, which were used by the fifth century AD. Targum Onkelos was a literal translation of the Pentateuch, and Targum Jonathon is a freer interpretive version of the Prophets.

Tarpel, Tarpelites

KJV rendering of "officials" in [Ezra 4:9](#). Its precise meaning is uncertain but possibly is a Persian title or an ethnic name.

Tarshish (Person)

- 12.** One of Javan's four sons and a descendant of Noah through Japheth's family line ([1 Chronicles 1:7](#)).
- 13.** The sixth of Bilhan's seven sons. He was a capable leader in the tribe of Benjamin and was among those able to go to war ([1 Chronicles 7:10](#)).
- 14.** One of the seven princes of Persia and Media. These men had personal access to King Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes). Their positions of honor were second only to the king's ([Esther 1:14](#)).

Tarshish (Place)

Place regarded as being very distant from Israel. Many countries have been proposed as the site for Tarshish, from Sardinia to Great Britain. The most commonly accepted identification is Spain, where the name Tartessus hints at Tarshish.

The Phoenicians, who were great sea voyagers, are often associated with Tarshish. Solomon used the sailors of Hiram, king of Tyre, for his fleet (cf. [2 Chr 9:21](#)). They used sailing vessels that were called Tarshish ships ([1 Kgs 10:22; 22:48](#)); apparently they were a distinctive type used to journey to that place or were typical of Tarshish ([Ps 48:7; Is 2:16; 23:1-14](#)).

The most famous reference to Tarshish in the Bible is in the account of Jonah, who attempted to flee to Tarshish to escape doing the will of God ([Jon 1:3; 4:2](#)).

Tarsus

Birthplace and hometown of Saul (Paul) and the capital and chief city of the Roman province of Cilicia in Asia Minor. The city is mentioned only five times in the Bible, all in the book of Acts. After Saul's conversion, the Lord directed Ananias to visit Saul; Ananias was told to ask for "a man of Tarsus named Saul" ([Acts 9:11](#)). Then, when Saul returned to Jerusalem and a plot against his life was discovered, the Christians sent him to Tarsus (v [30](#)). When Barnabas was serving in Syrian Antioch and needed help, he went to Tarsus to get Saul to work with him ([11:25](#)). On the occasion of Paul's rescue from the Jewish mob in the temple, the Roman tribune was concerned with Paul's identity. Paul identified himself: "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia" ([21:39](#)). In the defense he made before that angry multitude, speaking in Hebrew, he declared, "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia" ([22:3](#)).

Tarsus was situated on the Cydnus River, 12 miles (19.3 kilometers) upstream from the Mediterranean Sea. The plain on which the city was built was very fertile, composed of alluvium carried down from the Taurus Mountains by the Cydnus and several other streams.

Although the river was navigable by small boats as far as Tarsus, the overland trade routes were the most important. Asia Minor was interlaced with roads long before the Romans came into the area. From the east there were two main routes, one of which began in northern Mesopotamia and went

on to Carchemish or Aleppo, across the Amanus Pass. The other ran from Nineveh through Malatya and Antioch to the Syrian Gates. These two routes converged near Caesarea, 50 miles (80.5 kilometers) east of Tarsus. During the Roman Empire, "the Old Way to the East" ended at Babylon; coming westward it reached Aleppo, Syrian Antioch, Adana, Tarsus, the Cilician Gates, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, Hierapolis, Colosse, Laodicea, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Troas, most of which are well known from the writings of Paul and from the book of Revelation.

Tarsus was an educational center; the university of Tarsus was famous for its scholarship, and Strabo indicated that Tarsus surpassed Athens, Alexandria, and other cities as a seat of learning. The university offered instruction in a wide range of studies; one of its specializations was the philosophy known as Stoicism, with which Paul was familiar. Although Paul does not say that he attended this institution, it has often been suggested that he studied there.

Tarsus was also a center for tent making, a vocation in which Paul had been trained (cf. [Acts 18:3](#)). The goats of the cold, snow-swept Taurus Mountains produced long hair that was made into a fabric particularly well suited for tents.

Tarsus has been described as "the heart of the Greco-Roman world" and "a meeting place of East and West." From such an environment, a man like Saul of Tarsus, at home with Greek and Roman culture and educated at the feet of Gamaliel, was singularly well equipped to bring the gospel to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

See also Paul, The Apostle.

Tartak

Deity worshiped by the Avvites in Samaria ([2 Kgs 17:31](#)). This deity may be a union of the deities Athtar and Anath, and thus a fertility god.

Tartan

Title of the highest-ranking Assyrian official, second in command only to the king. The tartan was the commander in chief of the Assyrian army. The position is mentioned in two Old Testament passages:

- 15.** King Sargon II of Assyria (722–705 BC) ordered his commander to subdue and capture the Philistine city of Ashdod ([Isaiah 20:1](#)).
- 16.** In [2 Kings 8:17](#) the tartan was one of three officials whom King Sennacherib of Assyria (705–681 BC) posted over the Assyrian army sent from Lachish to Jerusalem to confront King Hezekiah of Judah (715–687 BC).

Taskmaster

A taskmaster was a person who supervised workers and forced them to work hard. Egyptian stone carvings show taskmasters holding whips, which they used to punish workers who did not work fast enough ([Exodus 1:11](#); [3:7](#); [5:6–14](#); [Job 3:18](#)). The Hebrew word used for taskmaster in the Bible means "to oppress," showing how badly they treated their workers. Kings David and Solomon had taskmasters. A man named Adoram was in charge of forced labor during their time ([2 Samuel 20:24](#); [1 Kings 4:6](#); [12:18](#); [2 Chronicles 10:18](#)). The cruel treatment by these taskmasters became one of the reasons why the northern tribes of Israel separated from the southern tribes after Solomon died ([1 Kings 12:3–14](#)).

Tatian

Tatian was a person who defended Christian beliefs (an apologist) but later taught ideas that went against traditional Christian teachings (a heretic). He was the creator of the *Diatessaron* (a book that combined the four gospels into one story). See *Bible, Versions of the (Ancient)*.

Tattenai

Persian governor of a province west of the Euphrates River who opposed the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and walls under Zerubbabel during the postexilic period ([Ezr 5:3, 6](#); [6:6, 13](#)).

Tax Collector

A person who collected taxes for the government. In New Testament times the Romans collected a variety of taxes. Their own officers handled some of this work. Romans also delegated some tax collection to private individuals.

Individuals from the community could collect taxes and return an agreed sum to the authorities under contract. Dishonest individual collectors sometimes gathered far more than they had to pay. These individuals were much despised, especially the Jews who cheated fellow Jews.

Zacchaeus, a Jew, was a "chief tax collector" who amassed considerable wealth in the Jericho area ([Luke 19:2–10](#)). Such men were regarded as sinners and were often linked in the phrase "tax collectors and sinners" ([Matthew 9:10–11](#); [11:19](#); [Mark 2:15–16](#); [Luke 5:30](#); [19:2–10](#)).

Tax, Taxation

Tax is money or goods that powerful nations took from the people who lived in them. This payment, also called tribute, usually included gold, silver, animals, crops, or forced work. Rulers and priests also collected taxes to maintain the temple.

The term "tribute" first appears in [Genesis 49:15](#) (sometimes translated as "forced labor"). In [Numbers 31:28](#) battle spoils were divided to include a tribute for the priests. Initially, the Hebrews gave temple tribute as a voluntary offering to the Lord ([Deuteronomy 16:10](#)). Later, it became a required tax ([Matthew 17:24](#)).

Taxes in the Ancient World

As early as 2500 BC, taxes affected many aspects of life in the city of Lagash, including income, marriage, divorce, and death. The Sumerians believed the land belonged to the god and the king, so they paid rent or a levy.

Taxes in Ancient Israel

In Egypt, Joseph collected 20 percent of the grain during the seven years of plenty to prepare for the seven years of famine ([Genesis 41:25–42:5](#)). Later, during the famine, the people sold their land to Pharaoh, making him the owner of most of Egypt's land. From then on, the people farmed the land and gave Pharaoh a 20-percent tax on their harvests ([Genesis 47:13–26](#)).

Warrior kings like David kept their treasury full without taxing their own people. Conquered people, such as the Canaanites, contributed wealth to the treasury ([2 Samuel 8:6–14](#); [1 Chronicles 27:25–31](#)). This included silver, gold, bronze, 1,700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers. David and his successors often forced labor from foreigners within Israel's borders ([2 Samuel 20:24](#); [1 Kings 9:20–21](#)).

Israel was probably first taxed during Solomon's reign. During this time, income came from tribute but not from the spoils of war. To support the court and large building projects, Solomon divided Israel into 12 areas. An officer was placed over each area. The officers provided food and support for the king's household for one month per year ([1 Kings 4:7](#)).

Solomon also earned income by taxing trading caravans passing through his kingdom. Additionally, both foreigners and Israelites were forced to work on major projects, especially the temple ([1 Kings 5:13; 9:20–21](#); [2 Chronicles 8:7–8](#)). Archaeologists have found jar handles from jars stamped with the Hebrew phrase "to the king." These likely came from large jars used for collecting goods as part of a royal levy ([2 Chronicles 2:10](#)).

Jehoshaphat successfully taxed people at home ([2 Chronicles 17:5](#)). He also maintained the tribute from abroad, including silver and gold from the Philistines and 7,700 rams and 7,700 he-goats from the Arabs ([2 Chronicles 17:11–12](#)). As neighboring empires grew stronger, Judah paid tribute. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, demanded 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, requiring removal of gold from the temple doors ([2 Kings 18:14–16](#)). Later, Pharaoh Neco demanded 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold from Judah ([2 Kings 23:33](#)). Soon after, Nebuchadnezzar took all treasures from the temple and palace, 10,000 captives, craftsmen, and smiths, leaving few in Jerusalem except the poor ([2 Kings 24:13–16](#)).

Foreign Taxation

The Persians established a regular tax system. In this system, satraps (provincial governors) were required to pay fixed sums to the royal treasury ([Esther 10:1](#)). Artaxerxes I exempted priests, Levites, and temple workers from taxes ([Ezra 7:24](#)). An additional tax for the governor's household included food, wine, and 40 shekels of silver ([Nehemiah 5:14–15](#)). As governor, Nehemiah did not claim this allowance of food

because he considered the taxes already burdensome. People had to borrow money against their fields, vineyards, and houses to pay "for the king's tax." This means they risked losing their property if they could not repay the loans. Darius allowed Jews to use royal tax money for rebuilding the temple ([Ezra 6:7–10](#)).

Under the Seleucids, Ptolemies, and Romans, tax collection changed. The office of tax collector was sold to the highest bidder, who then extracted maximum payments from people to build personal wealth. Jews paid tithes for temple maintenance and taxes up to one-third of grain and half of fruit grown. They also paid excise, sales, and poll taxes.

Taxation in Jewish Law and Practice

In addition to foreign taxes, Jews worldwide aged 20 and older ([Exodus 30:11–16](#)) paid a half-shekel annually to support the Jerusalem temple ([Matthew 17:24](#)), even after the temple's destruction in AD 70. Jesus was questioned about this tax ([Matthew 17:25](#)) and the lawfulness of paying taxes to Rome ([Matthew 22:17](#); [Mark 12:14–15](#); [Luke 20:22](#)). Despite Jesus' famous reply—"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" ([Matthew 22:21](#); [Mark 12:17](#); [Luke 20:25](#))—he was accused before Pilate of forbidding taxes to Caesar ([Luke 23:2](#)). The early church also supported the legality of taxation as a civic duty ([Romans 13:5–7](#)).

See also Money; Banker, Banking; Tax Collector.

Teacher

Teachers conserved the values and education of a nation and passed them on to each new generation. In Old Testament times the first teachers were often parents ([Deuteronomy 6:7, 20–25](#); [11:19–21](#)). Leaders like Moses and Aaron were charged with teaching the people ([Leviticus 10:11](#)). Later the priests and Levites had a teaching function ([Deuteronomy 24:8; 33:8–10](#); [2 Chronicles 17:7–9](#); [Ezra 4:23](#); [Micah 3:11](#)). God himself was thought of as a teacher ([Psalms 25:8, 12](#); [27:11](#); [32:8](#); [86:11](#); [Isaiah 2:3](#)).

In the New Testament, the Greek noun for "teacher" and the verb "to teach" are widely used. John the Baptist was called a teacher ([Luke 3:12](#)). The term is used more than 30 times to refer to Jesus ([Matthew 4:23](#); [5:2](#); [7:29](#); [9:35](#); [11:1](#); [Mark 1:21](#); [2:13](#); [4:1–2](#); [6:2, 6, 34](#); [Luke 4:15, 31](#); [5:3](#); [6:6](#); [John](#)

[6:59](#); [7:14, 28](#); and so on). People recognized his teaching as authoritative ([Matthew 7:29](#); [Mark 1:22](#); [Luke 4:32](#)). Even when Jesus was 12 years old he conversed in a profound way with the teachers of the law in the temple ([Luke 2:46](#)). These men were often associated with the Pharisees ([5:17](#)). Gamaliel was a Pharisee and a teacher of the law ([Acts 5:34](#)). The term “rabbi” was often used to denote teacher. The rabbi was held in great honor. In the early church, the teacher was widely recognized ([Acts 13:1](#); [1 Corinthians 12:28–29](#); [Ephesians 4:11](#); [2 Timothy 1:11](#); [James 3:1](#)).

Teacher of Righteousness

A name for the founder of the Essene community at Qumran. We learn about him from commentaries on Bible books found at Qumran.

The Teacher was a priest who was expected to serve in the Jerusalem temple. However, he separated himself and his followers from the established religion in Jerusalem. He taught a different understanding of the Law and the Prophets than what was practiced in Jerusalem.

It is said that God gave the Teacher special knowledge: “To whom [the Teacher of Righteousness] God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the Prophets” ([1QpHab 2:7–9](#)). Based on this revelation, the Teacher taught a new way of life and worship. Those who joined him were taught so they might be saved from the day of judgment ([1QpMicah 1:5](#)).

The Teacher of Righteousness made exclusive claims. He believed only those who followed him by living apart from corrupt Judaism in the desert were God's chosen people. He felt God called him to establish a faithful group that would inherit God's promise to Abraham. The Teacher believed he knew the mysteries of the future by revelation. He thought people could be saved by faith in him: “This concerns all those who observe the Law in the House of Judah, whom he will deliver from the House of Judgment, because of their suffering and because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness” ([1QpHab 8:1–3](#)).

The priests in Jerusalem were upset with his teachings and exclusive claims. The Teacher was persecuted by someone known as the Wicked Priest. On the Day of Atonement [an important Jewish holy day], which the Qumran community observed on a different day than others, the

Wicked Priest came to Qumran. He tried to force the followers to defend themselves on their day of rest ([1QpHab 11:4–8](#)).

We don't know for sure what happened to the Teacher of Righteousness. After he died, the Essene community continued to follow his teachings. They attracted people who were unhappy with the established religion to their wilderness monastery at Qumran.

Teachings of Jesus

See Jesus Christ, Life and Teachings of.

Teachings of Silvanus

A work of Gnostic (early mystical and philosophical) Christianity attributed to Silvanus, a companion of Peter and Paul. It was discovered at Chenoboskion in Upper Egypt in 1946 as part of the Nag Hammadi collection. The writing includes advice and instruction on living wisely and avoiding evil. It emphasizes the importance of knowing God and practicing self-control. While written from a Gnostic point of view, parts of it sound similar to biblical wisdom literature, such as Proverbs.

See also Apocrypha; Silvanus.

Tebah (Person)

Son of Abraham's brother Nahor ([Gn 22:24](#)). His mother was Reumah, Nahor's concubine.

Tebah (Place)

Tebah was a city that belonged to King Hadadezer. King David took a large amount of bronze from this city during battle ([2 Samuel 8:8](#); [1 Chronicles 18:8](#)). Hadadezer was the king of Zobah, an area located in the Hamath region in Syria. Because of this connection, Tebah was probably located somewhere in that same region.

Tebaliah

Tebaliah was the son of Hosah. Tebaliah was a Merarite Levite and a temple gatekeeper. He served

after the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon ([1 Chronicles 26:11](#)).

Tebeth

One of the months in the Jewish calendar. On our modern calendar, it usually occurs during parts of December and January ([Esther 2:16](#)).

See Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

Tehaphnehes

Another spelling of Tahpanhes, an Egyptian city ([Ezekiel 30:18](#)).

See Tahpanhes.

Tehinnah

Forefather of the people of Ir-nahash in Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:12](#)).

Teil

KJV rendering of terebinth in [Isaiah 6:13](#). *See Plants (Terebinth).*

Tekel

An Aramaic word interpreted as "weighed" in [Daniel 5:25-27](#). *See Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin.*

Tekoa, Tekoites

City about six miles (9.7 kilometers) southeast of Bethlehem on the edge of the Judean desert, and its residents. Tekoa may also be the name of a person, the son of Ashur of Judah's tribe; "father" could mean founder or leader of Tekoa ([1 Chr 2:24; 4:5](#)). Tekoa does not appear on the list of cities given to Judah ([Jos 15](#)). In an oracle predicting the siege of Judah, Jeremiah ([Jer 6:1](#)) makes a pun with the phrase "Sound the trumpet in Tekoa." The Hebrew word for "sound" is spelled with the same consonants (but not vowels) as Tekoa.

Tekoa is located on the high ground between two watersheds, both of which flow eastward to the

Dead Sea. The southern slopes climb off to the upper reaches of the Nahal Arugot, which eventually comes out at En-gedi. The northern slopes are drained by the Nahal Darga. The ridge between them is the Ascent (or Pass) of Ziz ([2 Chr 20:16](#)). Because Tekoa lies between the desert and the town on the marginal land just east of the main north-south watershed, the area around it came to be known as the desert of Tekoa ([2 Chr 20:20](#)), a part of the larger desert of Judea. Tekoa marks the border where farming gives way to herding, explaining why Amos, a native of Tekoa, had two dimensions to his prophetic career: a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees ([Am 1:1; 7:14](#)).

Tel-Abib

Village on the river Kebar where Ezekiel visited the Babylonian exiles ([Ez 3:15](#)). Although the exact location of the site is unknown, it was probably in the delta region of southern Babylonia. The Kebar was likely an irrigation canal that enhanced the fertility of the surrounding soil; hence, the name Tel-abib ("hill of corn").

Tel-Assar

Principal city of the people of Eden who were conquered by Sennacherib of Assyria ([2 Kgs 19:11-12; Is 37:11-12](#)). The conquest is mentioned in Rabshekah's taunt that the Lord would similarly be unable to protect Jerusalem.

Tel-Harsha

One of the Babylonian villages from which some returning exiles could not establish their genealogy ([Ezr 2:59; Neh 7:61](#)). Its precise location is uncertain, though it is likely near the Persian Gulf in the lowland region of Babylonia.

Tel-Melah

One of the Babylonian towns situated in the vicinity of the Kebar River near the city of Nippur from which exiles, who were unable to establish their Israelite descent, returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel following the Babylonian captivity ([Ezr 2:59; Neh 7:61](#)).

Telah

Resheph's son, father of Tahan, and an ancestor of Joshua the son of Nun from Ephraim's tribe ([1 Chr 7:25](#)).

Telaim

Place where Saul organized Israel's army in preparation for war with the Amalekites ([1 Sm 15:4](#)). Telaim is perhaps identifiable with Telem, a city situated near Edom's border in the southern extremity of the territory allotted to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:24](#)).

Telem (Person)

One of the gatekeepers who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife ([Ezr 10:24](#)).

Telem (Place)

Alternate name of the city Telaim in [1 Samuel 15:4](#).
See Telaim.

Tell

Arabic word (Hebrew, tel) meaning an artificial mound composed of many layers of occupational debris, representing the ruins of successive cities, roughly like layers of a cake. The discerning of the strata, or building levels, is one of the biggest challenges of the field archaeologist. The levels are dated primarily by the pottery found in them.

Usually tells bear Arabic names, which sometimes have interesting or amusing meanings. Tell el Ful (Gibeah), the hometown of King Saul, means "the mound of the beans." Tell Beit Mirsim translates into "the mound of the house of the fast camel driver." Other modern names preserve the identity of ancient sites; for example, Tell Taanak is biblical Taanach; Tell Jezer is biblical Gezer.

There are numerous references to tells in the Bible, although in English tell may appear as "mound," "heap," or "heap of ruins." The Lord commanded Israel that a city which practiced abominable idolatry should be burned and "be a heap forever"

([Dt 13:16](#)). [Joshua 11:13](#) states that Israel burned none of the cities that stood on mounds, except Hazor. Joshua burned Ai and made it "a heap of ruins for ever" ([Jos 8:28](#)). In a prophecy against the Ammonites, Jeremiah said that Rabbah "shall become a desolate mound" ([Jer 49:2](#)).

See also Archaeology and the Bible; Pottery.

Tema (Person)

Ninth son of Ishmael who became chief of a powerful nomadic tribe in the north Arabian wilderness ([Gn 25:15](#); [1 Chr 1:30](#); [Jer 25:23](#)). The descendants of Tema were primarily caravan traders who controlled access to important routes across the desert ([Jb 6:19](#)). Tema was also associated with the territory and a town. *See Tema (Place).*

Tema (Place)

Tema was a town generally identified with Teima'. This place was an oasis located 321.8 kilometers (200 miles) north of Medina and 64.4 kilometers (40 miles) south of Dumah. Teima' was on an ancient caravan route that connected the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Aqaba. This means it was an important stop for traders traveling through the desert.

In the writings of the prophets, Tema is mentioned together with Dedan and Buz as Arabian oases that would not escape God's judgment ([Isaiah 21:14](#); [Jeremiah 25:23](#)). The passage in Jeremiah contains a reference to the residents of Dedan, Tema, and Buz being among those who "cut the corners of their hair."

The practice of cutting the corners of the hair would make them different from the Jewish people. Jews left the corners of their hair uncut ([Leviticus 19:27](#)). Like uncircumcision, the practice of cutting the corners of the hair would identify the men of Tema as non-Jewish people who followed other religions.

Temah

Forefather of a family of temple servants who returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem following the exile ([Ezr 2:53](#); [Neh 7:55](#)).

Teman (Person)

One of the chiefs of the Edomites and Eliphaz's firstborn son ([Gn 36:11, 15, 42](#); [1 Chr 1:36, 53](#)). He was likely either the founder or a chief of the Edomite city of Teman.

Teman (Place)

In the prophetic writings, Teman seems to have been considered the principal city of Edom and is often used as a poetic parallel for the entire land of Edom ([Jer 49:7, 20](#); [Am 1:12](#); [Ob 1:9](#)). Since Teman means "south," it is likely that Teman was located in the far south of Edom; however, its precise location remains unknown. The residents of Teman were evidently well known for their wisdom ([Jer 49:7](#); [Ob 1:9](#)). This reputation may well derive from Eliphaz the Temanite, who was one of Job's counselors ([Jb 2:11, 4:1](#); [15:1](#); [22:1](#); [42:7-9](#)).

Temeni

Ashhur's son by his wife Naarah, and a descendant of Judah ([1 Chr 4:6](#)).

Temple

Preview

- Background
- Solomon's Temple
- Zerubbabel's Temple
- Herod's Temple
- Significance of the Temple in the Old Testament
- Significance of the Temple in the New Testament

Background

David captured the city of Jerusalem ([2 Samuel 5:6-9](#)). He made it the capital city for all the people of Israel. Before this, the Jebusites lived there. The city was in neutral territory between the northern

and southern tribes. So it worked well for both groups.

Later, David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem ([2 Samuel 6:1-17](#)). The ark had not been cared for since the Philistines took it. By bringing it back, David made Jerusalem the center of worship. After that, God's choice of David and God's choice of Jerusalem (also called Mount Zion) were closely connected ([Psalms 78:67-72](#)).

David wanted to build a special house for God. At first, the prophet Nathan said this was a good idea ([2 Samuel 7:1-3](#)). But then God gave Nathan a different message for David (verses [4-17](#)). God said David would not build the temple. Instead, God would "build a house" for David. This meant that God would make David's family into a royal line (a dynasty). God did not choose David to build the temple because David had fought many wars ([1 Kings 5:3](#); [1 Chronicles 22:7-8](#); [28:3](#)). Instead David's son, Solomon, would build the temple.

But David still helped with the temple. He gave a large amount of money and materials. He also made plans for how to build its ([1 Chronicles 22:3-5, 14](#); [28:2, 11-19](#)). David also bought the land where the temple would be built ([21:25](#)).

Solomon's Temple

When Was Solomon's Temple Built?

Solomon began building the temple in the fourth year of his reign, around 966 BC ([1 Kings 6:1, 38](#)). It took seven years to finish. David had already prepared everything needed for the temple, including the workers ([1 Chronicles 28:21](#)). Solomon built the temple before he built his own palace, so the temple came first ([1 Kings 7:1](#)).

How Was Solomon's Temple Built?

Hiram (also called Hiram in Hebrew) was the main craftsman who made the bronze items for the temple. His father was a skilled metalworker from Tyre, and his mother was an Israelite ([1 Kings 7:13-14](#)).

The cedar wood for the temple came from Lebanon. Workers from Lebanon cut the trees and brought them to Israel. These workers served under King Hiram of Tyre, who was a political ally of Solomon ([5:5-9](#)).

Solomon also sent 30,000 Israelite men to help in Lebanon. They worked in three groups. Each group worked for one month, then rested for two months.

To prepare the stones, Solomon chose 153,600 foreigners who lived in Israel. These men worked as stone cutters, carriers, and supervisors (verses [15–17](#); [2 Chronicles 2:17–18](#)). Another group, the “men of Gebal,” may have helped with their special skills ([1 Kings 5:18](#)).

Building the temple was obviously a national project of great size and effort. To keep the temple area quiet and holy, workers did the cutting and shaping of stones and wood at other locations ([6:7](#)).

What Did Solomon's Temple Look Like?

The Bible gives enough details to describe the temple with good accuracy. The books of Kings and Chronicles tell the main story. Later, the prophet Ezekiel also described a temple based on what he knew about the temple in Jerusalem ([Ezekiel 40–48](#)).

The Side Rooms

The temple had side rooms built on a separate base or platform ([1 Kings 6:5, 10](#); compare [Ezekiel 41:8–9](#)). These rooms were in three levels. Each level was about 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) high. The rooms went around the temple on all sides except the front porch.

Each level of rooms was half a meter (one and a half feet) wider than the one below. This design matched the thickness of the side wall of the Holy Place:

- The ground level rooms were 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) wide.
- The middle level was 2.7 meters (9 feet) wide.
- The top level was 3.2 meters (10.5 feet) wide.

The Inner and Outer Courts

People used winding stairs to go between levels ([1 Kings 6:8](#)). It is not clear where all the doorways were. There may have been one on each side, but the Bible only names one (verse [8](#)).

Like Ezekiel’s temple ([Ezekiel 40:17, 28](#)), Solomon’s temple had two courtyards—an inner court and an outer court ([1 Kings 6:36; 7:12](#)). The Bible does not tell us how big the courtyards were. The inner court was near the temple. It was also called “the court of the priests” or “the upper court” ([2 Chronicles 4:9; Jeremiah 36:10](#)).

The wall of the inner court was made of three layers of shaped stone held together by a layer of cedar beams ([1 Kings 6:36](#)). The doors of both courts were covered in bronze ([2 Chronicles 4:9](#)).

The palace buildings were within the outer court area. There was likely a private walkway between the palace and the temple. Later, King Ahaz closed this walkway ([2 Chronicles 4:9, 12](#); [2 Kings 16:18](#)).

The Temple Building

The temple building was 27.4 meters (90 feet) long, 9.1 meters (30 feet) wide, and 13.7 meters (45 feet) high ([1 Kings 6:2](#)). At the front, there was a porch (also called a vestibule) that was 4.6 meters (15 feet) deep. This porch was likely on the east side, which matches the direction of the temple in Ezekiel’s vision ([Ezekiel 43:1; 44:1](#)).

The larger part of the main sanctuary, next to the porch, was called the Holy Place. It was 18.3 meters (60 feet) long ([1 Kings 6:17](#)). Behind it was the Most Holy Place, also called the Holy of Holies. This was a perfect cube that measured 9.1 meters (30 feet) long, wide, and high.

Inside, the walls were covered with cedar wood. The wood was carved with flowers, palm trees, and cherubim (angels). None of the stone walls could be seen. Both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place were covered with pure gold (verse [22](#)). The gold decoration may have been pressed into the carvings instead of laid on top, so the carved wood could still be seen.

The floor was made of cypress planks (verse [15](#)). Narrow windows set high in the walls above the level of the three-storied outer chambers let light into the Holy Place (verse [4](#)). The ceiling was made with cedar beams and planks. The Bible does not say what the roof looked like, but builders at that time often used a wooden frame filled with waterproof plaster made from limestone.

The Holy Place

The outer porch was apparently an open space, since the Bible does not mention any doors. The entrance to the Holy Place had double doors made of cypress wood. Each door had panels that folded back. The doors were decorated with the same designs as the walls—carvings of flowers, palm trees, and cherubim (verses [34–35](#)). The doorposts were made of olive wood.

Within the Holy Place was the altar of incense. It was made of cedar and covered with gold. It stood

in front of the Most Holy Place. The Holy Place also had:

- a table for the special bread called the bread of the Presence,
- ten gold lampstands, five on each side, and
- various utensils used by the priests ([1 Kings 7:48-50](#)).

All of these items were made of gold or covered in gold. There were also ten tables, five on each side, probably used to hold the utensils and other items ([2 Chronicles 4:8](#))

Between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was a double door made of olive wood. These doors were carved with cherubim, palm trees, and flower patterns and covered with gold. Inside the doors hung a blue, purple, and crimson curtain, made of the finest fabrics and decorated with cherubim ([2 Chronicles 3:14](#)).

The Most Holy Place

Inside the Most Holy Place were two large cherubim, each 4.6 meters (15 feet) high and made of olive wood covered with gold ([1 Kings 6:23-28](#)). Each wing was 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) long. One wing of each cherub touched the wall, and the other wings touched in the center of the room.

In the earlier tabernacle, the cherubim were smaller. Their wings were part of the lid of the ark, called the mercy seat ([Exodus 25:17-22](#)). But in Solomon's temple, the ark of the covenant sat below these larger, standing cherubim. The cherubim faced forward, as if guarding the ark.

The ark of the covenant was the only major item from the Mosaic tabernacle that remained. It still held the stone tablets of the law. But the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were no longer inside ([1 Kings 8:9](#)).

The Bronze Pillars

Immediately outside the temple, on each side of the front porch, were two hollow bronze pillars ([1 Kings 7:15-20](#); [2 Chronicles 3:15-7](#)). According to the book of Kings, these pillars were 8.2 meters (27 feet) high and 5.5 meters (18 feet) around. The metal itself was about 10.2 centimeters (4 inches) thick.

At the top of each pillar was a bronze capital (top piece) shaped like a lily. These were 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) high and 1.8 meters (6 feet) wide. The capitals

were decorated with a chain-like pattern and had two rows of bronze pomegranates. The pillars were very heavy. The prophet Jeremiah later said that the Babylonians had to break the pillars in pieces before they could be taken to Babylon ([Jeremiah 52:17, 21-23](#)).

The Bronze Altar

The bronze altar for sacrifice is not described in the list of temple items in [1 Kings 7](#). But it is mentioned later during the temple dedication and in other events ([1 Kings 8:22, 54, 64](#); [9:25](#)). It clearly stood in the inner court.

The altar was 9.1 meters (30 feet) square and 4.6 meters (15 feet) high ([2 Chronicles 4:1](#)). Because it was so large and heavy, it was probably made in separate pieces at Solomon's metal workshop in the Jordan Valley (verse [17-18](#)). Workers likely moved the pieces to Jerusalem and put them together at the temple.

The Bronze Sea

One of the most impressive items in the inner court was the "bronze sea." It was also called the "molten sea." This was a large, round tank made of bronze ([1 Kings 7:23-26](#)). The bronze was 8 centimeters (3 inches) thick. The tank was 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) tall and 4.6 meters (15 feet) wide. Its rim was shaped like a lily ([2 Chronicles 4:2-5](#)).

The tank stood on 12 bronze oxen, four on each side. Below the rim were two rows of decorations. These may have been small gourds or pomegranates. The bronze sea could hold about 37,850 to 45,420 liters (10,000 to 12,000 gallons) of water. Priests used it to wash before doing their duties (verse [6](#)). Because it was so tall, there was probably a platform to help them reach the top. It would have been about 4.6 meters (15 feet) above ground level.

Hiram also made ten large bronze wash basins called lavers ([1 Kings 7:27-39](#)). Each laver sat on a moveable bronze stand. Five were placed on the north side of the inner court, and five on the south side.

The stands were bronze boxes about 1.8 meters (6 feet) square and 1.4 meters (4.5 feet) high. Each one had a rim around the top, about 22.9-centimeters (9 inches) wide. The corners of each stand had posts that held axles and wheels. The wheels were about 68.6 centimeters (27 inches) tall and had four spokes.

Each stand held a laver that could carry about 832.7 liters (220 gallons) of water. The basins were used to wash the animals for sacrifice ([2 Chronicles 4:6](#)). Each laver was probably placed near one of the ten tables used to prepare the sacrifices (verse [8](#)).

Other bronze tools were also made, such as pots, shovels, and basins ([1 Kings 7:40, 45](#)).

The Dedication of Solomon's Temple

Eleven months passed between the completion of the temple and the dedication service ([1 Kings 6:38; 8:2](#)). During that time, the furniture and holy items were set in place. The dedication happened in the seventh month, likely during the Feast of Tabernacles and the Day of Atonement ([Leviticus 23:23-36](#)).

The priests brought the ark of God into its final place in the Most Holy Place ([1 Kings 8:3-4](#)). So many animals were sacrificed that the inner court was too small for them all ([1 Kings 8:62-64; 2 Chronicles 7:7](#)).

The temple was built with the finest materials and the best building methods of that time. Solomon spared nothing in its construction or decoration. Still, Solomon said that no building could truly contain the eternal God ([1 Kings 8:27](#)). In his prayer, Solomon admitted that the people of Israel often turned away from God. He also praised God for being just, merciful, and faithful.

The dedication ended with a powerful sign. Fire came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices. Then the glory of the Lord filled the temple ([2 Chronicles 7:1-3](#)).

Later History

Like most ancient temples, Solomon's temple also served as a treasury. It held much of the nation's gold and silver, which made it a target for attack.

Just five years after Solomon died, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took treasures from the temple ([1 Kings 14:25-38](#)).

Soon after, King Asa, who ruled from 910 to 869 BC, used the temple's gold and silver to pay Syria for help in fighting King Baasha of Israel ([15:16-19](#)).

Joash, the king of Judah from 835 to 796 BC, had been hidden in the temple as a child to protect him from Queen Athaliah ([2 Kings 11](#)). Later, as king, he ordered repairs to the temple after the priests were found stealing temple gifts ([12:4-16](#)). But after the

death of high priest Jehoiada, Joash himself was influenced by his nobles and turned away from God ([2 Chronicles 24:15-19](#)). As judgment, God allowed Syria to attack Judah. Joash again gave away the temple treasures to avoid destruction ([2 Kings 12:17-18](#)).

King Jehoash of Israel ruled from 798 to 782 BC. He defeated King Amaziah of Judah, who ruled from 796 to 767 BC. Jehoash took more treasures from the temple ([14:8-14](#)).

King Ahaz was king of Judah from 735 to 715 BC. He used what was left in the temple to pay the Assyrians for help ([16:7-9](#)). He eventually became completely subservient to them.

Hezekiah was king of Judah from 715 to 686 BC. He was one of Judah's great reformers. He repaired the temple and restarted proper worship. During the last years of his father Ahaz's rule, the temple had been neglected ([2 Chronicles 29:1-19; 31:9-21](#)).

Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, was king of Judah from 696 to 642 BC. Manasseh completely reversed his father's policy. He brought Canaanite and Mesopotamian religious practices into the temple, which was against God's commands ([2 Kings 21:3-7](#)).

Later in life, Manasseh had a personal change of heart. After suffering, he turned back to God. He made some changes in the temple as part of his repentance ([2 Chronicles 33:12-19](#)). But his earlier actions had caused great damage. His reign was remembered as one of the worst in Judah's history ([2 Kings 21:10-16](#)).

Manasseh's grandson, Josiah, was king of Judah from 640 to 609 BC. He was the second great reforming king. He organized the repair of the temple in 622 BC. During this time, Hilkiah the priest found the lost Book of the Law ([2 Kings 22:3-13](#)). This was most likely the book of Deuteronomy.

This discovery gave Josiah's reforms new direction and urgency ([22:14-23:3](#)). He removed all signs of idol worship from the temple ([23:4-12](#)). Josiah also restored all of the traditional festivals. Sadly, however, Josiah's reforms ended when he died. Jehoiakim was the next king, ruling from 609 to 598 BC. Under his rule, Israel continued to turn away from God.

It was probably during this time that the prophet Jeremiah gave a powerful sermon at the temple. He warned that the temple would be destroyed ([Jeremiah 7:1-8:3; 26:1-19](#)). The religious leaders were angry with him for this message.

In 601 BC, King Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon. In response, King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem ([2 Kings 24:1-4](#)). In 596 BC, he captured the city and took many temple treasures to Babylon ([2 Chronicles 36:7](#)). The temple itself was not damaged by the Babylonians at that time.

Later, under King Zedekiah, who ruled from 597 to 586 BC, Judah rebelled again. This time, the Babylonians destroyed the temple completely ([2 Kings 25:8-10](#)). They took the remaining temple treasures away.

Zerubbabel's Temple

Although the Babylonians had destroyed the temple, the site still remained special to the Israelites. Some people continued to visit it during the time of the exile ([Jeremiah 41:4-5](#)).

In 538 BC, King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return to their land. His policy was very different from earlier empires. He not only let them go home, but he also gave permission to rebuild the temple. The money for the temple came from the Persian government.

The book of Ezra records two versions of the decree to rebuild the temple. One is a public announcement ([Ezra 1:2-4](#)), and the other is a written order stored in the Persian archives. This second version listed the temple's basic design and the help the Persian king promised to give ([6:1-5](#)).

Even though the offer to return was open to all, most Jews probably chose to stay in Mesopotamia, where life was more comfortable. Only a smaller group (42,360 people plus their servants, see [Ezra 2:64-65](#)) returned to Jerusalem. They were led by Sheshbazzar ([1:8-11](#); [5:14-16](#)) and Zerubbabel ([2:2](#); [3:2, 8](#); [4:2](#)).

The people were excited. They rebuilt the altar and restarted regular worship at the temple site ([Ezra 3:1-6](#)). They used money from Persia, along with their own offerings, to begin planning the new temple and laying its foundation ([2:68-69](#); [3:7-13](#)).

But the work stopped soon after. Local enemies opposed them ([Ezra 4:1-4, 24](#)). The people became distracted by their own concerns. Poor harvests also discouraged them ([Haggai 1:2-11](#)).

In 520 BC, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to start again ([Ezra 4:24](#); [Haggai 1:1](#); [Zechariah 1:1](#)). Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, the work continued—even with suspicion and resistance

from officials. The temple was finished and dedicated in 515 BC ([Ezra 5:1-6:22](#)).

We do not know many details about the structure of the second temple, which was built under Zerubbabel's leadership. Some people thought it was much smaller and less beautiful than Solomon's temple ([Haggai 2:3](#)), but that may have been during the early stages of rebuilding.

In fact, the second temple stood for over 500 years. [Ezra 6:3](#) gives some measurements, but they are no complete. The new temple was likely about the same size as Solomon's temple and probably used the same foundation.

The building method seems to have been similar, using wood to frame sections of stone (verse [4](#)). There were also extra rooms, likely like the side rooms in Solomon's temple ([Ezra 8:29](#); [Nehemiah 12:44](#); [13:4-5](#)). If the Persian government gave full support as promised ([Ezra 6:8-12](#)), then the second temple was probably stronger and more beautiful than many people think.

Later History

Some writings outside the Bible give more information about the second temple. These include books from:

- the Apocrypha,
- the pseudepigrapha,
- Jewish rabbinic writings, and
- the historian Josephus.

These sources help to show the history of the temple and give more detail on its structure and furnishings. Josephus quotes from Hecateus of Abdera (fourth century BC). Josephus, a Jewish historian, quoted a Greek writer named Hecateus of Abdera (from the 4th century BC). He said the temple was a large building inside a walled area about 152.4 meters by 45.7 meters (500 feet by 150 feet). The temple had a stone wall around it. There was an altar made of uncut stones, about the same size as Solomon's bronze altar (compare [2 Chronicles 4:1](#)). Within the sanctuary was a golden altar for incense and a lampstand with continually burning flame.

Josephus also said that Antiochus III (who ruled from 223 to 187 BC) gave money to help support the temple after the Seleucids took control of Jerusalem from the Ptolemies.

In the early second century BC, Ben Sirach praised Simon, the son of Onias the high priest, for strengthening and repairing the temple area. The book of First Maccabees describes what happened to the temple during the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (who ruled from 175 to 164 BC). He defiled the altar of burnt offering ([1 Maccabees 1:54](#)) and took many valuable items. These included the golden lampstand, the incense altar, the table for offerings, the curtain, and other treasures ([2 Maccabees 5:15–16; 6:2–4](#)).

When the temple was recaptured and restored by the Maccabees, they replaced the items taken by the Seleucids. However, they did not reuse the old altar of sacrifice. They considered the altar so polluted that they took it apart and replaced it with a new one they built from uncut stones ([1 Maccabees 4:36–61](#); [2 Maccabees 10:1–9](#)).

The temple area was used as a fortress. During the Maccabean period, Jewish fighters opposed the Seleucid army, which had a base in Jerusalem. Later, during the Hasmonean period, the temple area continued to be involved in battles.

In about 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem. He entered the temple to show his authority, but he did not steal anything. This showed a level of respect for the temple.

The history of Zerubbabel's temple ended when King Herod began building a new temple. He took control of Jerusalem with Roman help in 37 BC and made sure the old temple was not harmed at first. Around 21 BC, he began to take it apart to prepare for the construction of a much larger and grander temple.

Herod's Temple

The New Testament mentions Herod's temple more than 100 times. Other important sources include the Jewish historian Josephus and a section of Jewish writings called the *Middoth* (part of the rabbinic writings).

These two sources do not always agree, so it is difficult to be completely certain about all the details of the temple's design. Josephus is likely more accurate because he lived during the time of the temple. He was born around AD 37 and died in the early second century. The *Middoth* was written later, around AD 150, and sometimes includes exaggerated descriptions. Archaeologists have also helped by identifying parts of the temple's outer walls and gates.

Herod built his temple for political reasons, not religious ones. He was an Idumean (from a people south of Judah) and wanted to win the support of the Jewish people. He hoped that building a temple as grand as Solomon's would impress them.

Some people were afraid that the holy site might be ruined or that the temple might be destroyed and never rebuilt. To calm these fears, Herod first trained 1,000 priests to work as builders. He also gathered all the building materials before starting the project.

What Did Herod's Temple Look Like?

Herod's temple had the same basic layout as earlier temples, with three main sections. However, the front porch was much larger. The temple was built in the style of Greco-Roman architecture, so it was very different from Zerubbabel's temple.

Construction began in 20 BC. The main building was finished within ten years and was used for worship. But the entire project took much longer and was not fully completed until AD 64, just six years before the Romans destroyed it.

Herod prepared the site by clearing and leveling an area about 457.2 meters (500 yards) from north to south and 297.2 meters (325 yards) from east to west. This involved cutting away sections of rock in some areas and adding rubble to raise the ground in others. Large sections of the outer wall were built on stone blocks. Most blocks were about 4.6 meters (15 feet) long by 1.2 meters (4 feet) high. Parts of this wall still remain today. Some corner stones in the south wall weigh up to 63.5 metric tons (70 tons).

The main sanctuary of Herod's temple used the same basic measurements as Solomon's temple. It had two main rooms:

- The Holy Place was 18.3 meters (60 feet) long, 9.1 meters (30 feet) wide, and 18.3 meters (60 feet) high.
- The Most Holy Place was 30 feet square.

There was no furniture in the Most Holy Place. A large curtain (or veil) separated it from the Holy Place. The Holy Place contained three main items:

- the seven-branch lampstand,
- the table for the bread of the Presence, and
- the altar for burning incense.

The biggest difference from Solomon's temple was the huge front porch. It was 45.7 meters (150 feet) wide and high. The outer doorway was about 9.1 meters (30 feet) wide by 12.2 meters (40 feet) high. An inner doorway about half that size led into the sanctuary.

The roof above the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was level, reaching 45.7 meters (150 feet) high. This was possible because there were empty rooms built above both spaces. Gold spikes were placed on the roof to stop birds from landing and making it unclean.

The temple faced east, just like the earlier temples. On the other three sides, three levels of side rooms were built, each reaching up to 18.3 meters (60 feet). The builders used local white stone, cut into very large blocks and polished until they shone.

Twelve steps led from the Court of the Priests up to the temple porch. In front of the porch, about 10.1 meters (33 feet) away, stood the altar of sacrifice. It was made of uncut stone and had multiple levels. The altar was 4.6 meters (15 feet) tall and about 14.6 meters (48 feet) wide at its base. Most of the time, only priests entered this area. But once a year, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Israelite men were allowed to walk around the altar.

Outside this area was the Court of Israel, where Jewish men could gather. East of that was the Court of the Women, separated by 15 steps and a large gate made of shiny Corinthian bronze. This court had offering boxes for temple donations ([Mk 12:41-44](#)).

Surrounding the inner courts was the large Court of the Gentiles. A stone barrier and warning signs separated it from the inner areas. Two of these warning signs have been found. They were written in Greek and Latin and warned non-Jews (Gentiles) not to go farther, or they would be punished by death.

This outer court was busy and well used. Along its walls were covered walkways with tall columns. The south side had the Royal Porch with four rows of columns, each nearly 12.2 meters (40 feet) tall. The east side had two rows and was called Solomon's Porch or Solomon's Colonnade.

In this outer court:

- merchants and money changers set up stalls,
- the Sanhedrin (Jewish ruling council) met,
- Jesus and Jewish teachers spoke and debated ([Mark 11:27](#); [Luke 2:46](#); [19:47](#); [John 10:23](#)), and
- and the early church met there before being rejected by many Jewish leaders ([Acts 3:11](#); [5:12](#)).

Just northwest of the temple stood the Fortress of Antonia. This is where the Roman governor stayed when in Jerusalem. A Roman army unit was stationed there to control crowds ([Acts 21:31-40](#)). A wide moat separated the fortress from the temple. The high priest's special clothing was kept in the fortress as a sign of Roman control.

People could enter the Court of the Gentiles through:

- four gates in the west wall,
- two gates in the south wall, which led down into a deep valley (possibly the "pinnacle of the temple" in [Matthew 4:5](#); [Luke 4:9](#)), and
- and one gate each in the east and north walls.

Significance of the Temple in the Old Testament

The temple in Jerusalem was the main place of worship for the tribes of Israel. Even though King Jeroboam I of the northern kingdom tried to draw people away by setting up shrines at Bethel and Dan ([1 Kings 12:26-30](#)), Jerusalem remained the most important place of worship.

Kings Hezekiah and Josiah both tried to bring their religious reforms to the northern tribes as well ([2 Chronicles 30:1-12](#); [34:6-7](#)). People from the north still made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, even after the temple was destroyed ([Jeremiah 41:5](#)). The prophets also spoke of a future time when Jerusalem would become the center of worship for all nations ([Isaiah 2:1-4](#)).

The temple was God's dwelling place among his people. God's presence was symbolized in the

shekinah glory and the pillar of cloud. This presence dwelt in three places:

- in the tent of meeting ([Exodus 33:9–11](#)),
- with the tabernacle ([40:34–38](#)), and
- with the temple ([1 Kings 8:10–11](#)).

This may seem like a paradox. God is not limited by space, yet the temple was called the place where God would live forever (verses [13, 27](#)). God chose Zion (another name for Jerusalem), just as he chose David to be king ([Psalms 68:15–18; 76:2; 78:67–72](#)). Because of this, people called the temple the house of God ([27:4; 42:4; 84:1–4](#)).

Ezekiel's Vision of the Ideal Temple

The prophet Ezekiel gave a detailed vision of a perfect temple ([Ezekiel 40–48](#)). But this plan was not used when Zerubbabel's temple was built. Ezekiel had likely seen Solomon's temple before he was taken into exile in 597 BC. So his vision helps us better understand some of the details of the first temple.

Ezekiel's main goal was to show what pure worship should look like—worship that is free from anything unclean. He described how God's glory, which had left Solomon's corrupted temple, would return to a holy place ([9:3; 10:4, 18–19; 11:22–23](#)). In this vision, Jerusalem could again be called "The Lord is there" ([43:1–5; 48:35](#)).

Ezekiel also shared a very important idea: God's Spirit would live inside his faithful people ([36:24–28](#)). This pointed forward to the New Testament teaching that believers themselves are God's temple.

Significance of the Temple in the New Testament

Christ and the Temple

Jesus showed deep respect for the temple. When he was 12 years old, he joined in religious discussions there and called it his Father's house ([Luke 2:41–50](#)). He believed that the house of God was where God truly lived ([Matthew 12:4; 23:21](#)).

Although Jesus became angry and cleared the temple twice to remove corruption ([Matthew 21:12–13; John 2:13–16](#)), he wept over the future destruction of the city and temple ([Luke 19:41–44](#)).

Jesus often taught at the temple, but he also taught that he was "greater than the temple" ([Matthew 12:6](#)). When the people rejected him as the Messiah, even though he performed miracles, he warned them that the temple would be destroyed ([Matthew 21:9–15; 24:1–2](#)). For a short time after Pentecost, the early church met at the temple. But as opposition grew, the believers had to leave Jerusalem ([Acts 5:12, 21, 42; 8:1](#)).

The Church as the Temple

The New Testament writers used two different Greek words to describe the temple: *naos* and *hieron*. *Naos* refers to the actual sanctuary of the temple, the place of God's dwelling. *Hieron* refers to the whole temple area. This includes the outer courts as well as the main building. In general, *naos* refers to the most sacred part of the temple (the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place), while *hieron* included the outer court and the temple proper.

In Paul's letters, the word *naos* appears six times ([1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:4](#)). *Hieron* appears once ([1 Corinthians 9:13](#)). Paul kept the same distinction used in the rest of the New Testament:

- When Paul talked about the physical temple where priests offered animal sacrifices, he used the word *hieron* ([1 Corinthians 9:13](#)). These sacrifices were made in the outer court (see [Exodus 27–29, 40](#)).
- When Paul spoke about the "man of lawlessness" taking God's place in the temple, he used *naos* ([2 Thessalonians 2:4](#)). This word refers to the inner sanctuary, the place of God's presence.

In all the other passages written by Paul, *naos* is used metaphorically. Paul uses it to describe a place where God's Spirit lives (not a building, but people).

In one instance, Paul uses the sanctuary image to describe the individual believer's body ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)). In every other instance, the sanctuary depicts Christ's body, the church ([1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21](#)). Some readers think [1 Corinthians 3:16–17](#) refers to individual believers. But in the Greek language Paul used, it is clear that he was

talking about the church as a group, especially the church in Corinth.

When Paul told the church in Corinth that it was God's sanctuary, this would remind them of temples they knew in Corinth. Corinth had many temples to many gods. But Paul was probably thinking about the one temple in Jerusalem. The Jews had only one God and one temple in all of Israel. This helped keep them united as a people.

The Christians in Corinth were not united. They were dividing into groups based on their favorite leaders ([1 Corinthians 1:10–13](#)). Paul wanted them to remember that they were one body and one temple. God's Spirit lived among them, and they needed to stay united.

The book of Ephesians is Paul's masterpiece on the church. He says the church is like a living building that is growing ([Ephesians 2:21](#)). Each local church is part of this growth. Together, all the churches are becoming a holy sanctuary where the Lord lives. Paul also says that each local church is a place where God's Spirit lives (verse [22](#)). These churches are joined together to become one holy home for God across the world.

The Temple in John's Revelation

In the book of Revelation, John does not describe a physical temple. But he still uses images of Jerusalem and Mount Zion ([Revelations 3:12; 14:1; 21:2, 10, 22](#)). There are three main ideas:

17. The church is God's temple.

This temple is made of people who stay faithful, even when they suffer or die for their faith ([3:12; 14:1](#)). The temple grows as more of these faithful people, called martyrs, are added ([6:11](#))

18. The temple is a place of judgment.

God's judgments come from the temple ([11:19; 14:15; 15:5–16:1](#))

19. In the new creation, there is no need for a temple.

God and the Lamb (Jesus) are the temple ([21:22](#)). God will live with his people forever. That is the final and eternal temple.

See also Altar; Ark of the Covenant; Bread of the Presence; David; Feasts and Festivals of Israel; First Jewish Revolt; Judaism; Mercy Seat; Offerings

and Sacrifices; Priests and Levites; Sanctuary; Singers in the Temple; Solomon (Person).

Temple Assistants, Temple Servants

See Nethinim.

Tempt, Temptation

See Test.

Tempter

Tempter is a title for Satan, the evil one who tempts people to sin.

See Satan.

Ten Commandments, the

See Commandments, The Ten.

Tent of Meeting

Designation for the tabernacle. *See Tabernacle.*

Tentmaker

Artisans who made tents from the cloth woven from the hair of goats. The Greek term for tentmaker may have described a range of activities in cloth and leather. The single biblical reference ([Acts 18:3](#)) is to Aquila and Priscilla of Corinth. They worked as tentmakers. The apostle Paul joined them because he had trained in the same craft. He made a regular living at this trade during his missionary journeys ([2 Corinthians 11:7–10; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8](#)).

Terah (Person)

The father of Abram (Abraham), Nahor, and Haran ([Genesis 11:26; 1 Chronicles 1:26; Luke 3:34](#)).

Abram is listed first among Terah's sons, but Abram was likely not the oldest. After Terah lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran

([Genesis 11:26](#)). The New Testament reports that Abram left Haran after his father's death when he was 75 years old ([Genesis 12:4; Acts 7:4](#)).

Terah died at the age of 205 ([Genesis 11:32](#)). This suggests that Terah was at least 130 when Abram was born. Terah began the trip to Canaan, though he failed to go beyond Haran ([Genesis 11:31-32](#)). Abram was commanded there to leave his family and proceed to Canaan ([Genesis 12:1](#)).

See also Abraham.

Terah (Place)

One of the places where the Israelites stopped during their wilderness wanderings. It was located between Tahath and Mithcah ([Numbers 33:27-28](#)).

Teraphim

Idols associated with pagan magical rites. In the OT, the term is often translated "household gods," indicative of talismans, which were kept in family shrines ([Gn 31:19, 34](#)). These were the idols that Rachel stole from her father and that occasioned Laban's angry pursuit. Many have postulated that Laban's anger reflects a Nuzian tradition where ownership of the household gods conferred inheritance rights to the owner. It is more likely that Rachel stole the teraphim simply to ensure good luck and safety.

Teraphim are also mentioned in connection with Micah's attempt to establish a private priesthood ([Jgs 17:5](#)). When the Danites moved to Laish, they stole Micah's teraphim and ephod for oracular use ([18:14-20, 31](#)). Teraphim were typically small idols but on occasion could be life-size as well. David escaped from Saul when Michal placed a teraphim in his bed as a dummy ([1 Sm 19:13-16](#)). During Israel's kingdom period, teraphim continued to be used in heretical cultic practices. Josiah attempted to rid the country of teraphim, wizards, and mediums, but his reforms appear to have been temporary ([2 Kgs 23:24](#)). The prophets regularly condemned the use of teraphim, identifying them with heathen abominations ([Ez 21:21; Hos 3:4; Zec 10:2](#)).

See also Idols, Idolatry.

Terebinth

The Palestine terebinth or turpentine tree (*Pistacia terebinthus*) is a large tree that sheds its leaves seasonally ([Isaiah 6:13; Hosea 4:13](#)). It has spreading branches that grow in different directions. In winter, without its leaves, it looks very similar to an oak tree. This tree grows from 3.7 to 7.6 meters (12 to 25 feet) tall. Every part of the tree contains a sweet-smelling, sticky juice called resin. The **fruit** of the terebinth is a small reddish or bluish drupe (a type of fruit with a single seed inside, like an olive or cherry). The fruit is not typically eaten by humans, but birds and animals may eat it. It is much smaller and less flavorful than the fruit of the pistachio tree (*Pistacia vera*), which produces the pistachio nut we eat today.

The terebinth tree is common on the lower parts of hills throughout Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Arabia. It usually grows alone rather than in groups and is mostly found in places that are too warm or too dry for oak trees. Since the terebinth naturally grows in Gilead, it is likely that its sticky juice was part of the spices that the Ishmaelites carried from Gilead to Egypt ([Genesis 37:25](#)).

See Pistachio.

Teresh

Teresh was one of two trusted officials (called chamberlains) who guarded King Ahasuerus's (also called Xerxes) private rooms. Teresh and the other guard made a plan to kill the king. However, Mordecai found out about this plan and told Queen Esther. She warned the king, and the two guards were put to death ([Esther 2:21-23; 6:2](#)).

Tertius

Paul's amanuensis (secretary) for the book of Romans ([Rom 16:22](#)). Since his name is a common Roman name, he was probably Roman and known by the recipients of the letter. The supposition that Tertius is the same person as Silas because their names had similar meanings in Latin and Hebrew lacks any biblical or traditional evidence.

Tertullus

Tertullus was the lawyer chosen by the Jewish council (called the Sanhedrin) to speak against Paul during his trial. The Roman governor Felix led the trial in Caesarea ([Acts 24:1-2](#)). It is not clear whether Tertullus was Roman, Greek, or Jewish. Some people believe he was Jewish because he says "our law" and says that the Roman commander Lysias took Paul from "our hands" (verses [6b-7](#)). But the earliest copies of the Bible do not include these parts of the verses. So, we cannot be sure.

Tertullus probably worked as a lawyer in the Roman courts. The Jewish leaders brought him quickly, which suggests he was a trained speaker and legal expert.

In his speech ([Acts 24:2-8](#)), Tertullus began by praising Felix. Then he accused Paul of three things:

- causing trouble in public,
- disturbing the peace, and
- leading the group called the Nazarenes.

All of these were serious crimes under Roman law.

Test

The process of proving one's worth. When ascribed to God in his dealings with people, it means that God tests his peoples' faith and moral character. When the word is used in a negative way, it means "to tempt"—that is, to entice, solicit, or provoke to sin. Both senses of the word could be applied to Jesus' forty days of trial in the wilderness. He was tested by God and found faithful, while he was tempted by Satan and found sinless. The Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness to have his faith tried; but the agent in this trial was the wicked one, whose whole object was to seduce Jesus from his allegiance to God. It was temptation in the bad sense of the term. Yet Jesus did not give in to temptation; he passed the test (see [2 Cor 5:21](#); [Heb 7:26](#)).

Testament

Testament is an English word that comes from a Greek word. In the Bible, it describes the different ways God made agreements (called "covenant")

with people. The first covenant is called the "Old Testament," which was before Jesus came. The second covenant is called the "New Testament," which began with Jesus.

The Greek word for testament originally meant something like a person's last will. A last will is a legal document that says what should happen to their property after they die. This meaning helps us understand three important things about God's testament:

- 20.** A testament is different from a regular agreement. In a regular agreement, two or more people work out terms together. But a testament comes from just one person (called the "testator") who decides everything.
- 21.** A testament only starts working after the person who made it has died.
- 22.** Once a testament is made, it cannot be changed.

When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the translators had two options to translate the Hebrew word for "covenant." They could have used a word that meant an agreement where both sides had equal power to make decisions. But they chose not to use this word. Instead, they used a different word that showed that God was the one who decided the terms of the covenant. This better matched how God made covenants with the patriarchs and the people of Israel.

The writers of the New Testament found even more meaning in this word choice. They understood that just as a person's will only takes effect after they die, the new covenant God made with his people came into effect through Jesus's death ([Hebrews 9:15-22](#); compare [1 Corinthians 11:25](#); [Luke 22:20](#)).

See also Covenant; Covenant, The New.

Testament of Abraham

This Jewish apocryphal writing describes the death of Abraham. In the story, when the angel Michael comes to take Abraham's soul, he refuses to die. Michael does not want to force him, so he asks God for permission to let Abraham see all of creation first. The angel takes Abraham in a chariot into the heavens so that he can look at all people on earth. Abraham is shocked to see how evil people are, and

he curses the sinners, who immediately die. He then witnesses the judgment of a soul.

Although angels participate in the trial, Abel is the main judge. The soul seems to have done as much good as evil, but Abraham's intervention leads to a favorable judgment. Abraham realizes how harsh his curse on sinners was. However, the angel tells him their early death actually served to remove punishment for their sins.

After returning to earth, Abraham still refuses to die. Death appears in a terrifying form and kills 7,000 of Abraham's servants, though they later come back to life. Even then, Abraham still resists. Finally, Death takes Abraham's hand gently, and the angels lift his spirit to the heavens.

This work is found in several Greek manuscripts. The oldest is probably from the 13th century AD. The text has also survived in Slavonic, Romanian, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Coptic. The story was probably first written in Hebrew in the first century AD and later translated into Greek, possibly by a Christian writer.

A shorter version also exists, in which God takes Abraham's soul while he dreams. The story does not try to teach about the nature of God or his actions in human life. Its portrayal of the angel Michael and Death reflects Jewish beliefs from the first century AD.

See also Abraham; Apocrypha.

Testament of Job

This apocalyptic work is similar to the biblical Book of Job. The Testament of Job was written in Greek, probably during the second century AD. Because it does not include Christian ideas, most scholars believe it was written by a Jewish author.

In chapters 1–45, Job is the speaker. He realizes some people had dishonored a nearby temple by offering sacrifices to Satan. When Job destroys the temple, Satan threatens him and causes him to suffer through many trials. Job's friends come to comfort him, but their speeches are much shorter than in the Bible's Book of Job. In this version, Elihu speaks for Satan and displeases God.

Job offers sacrifices for all three friends. He remarries and has seven sons and three daughters, who inherit his wealth. In the conclusion of the story in chapters 46–51, it is Job's brother who speaks.

See also Apocrypha; Job.

Testament of Solomon

The Testament of Solomon is a pseudepigraphal (falsely attributed) writing from around the second century BC. The book claims that King Solomon himself wrote it. The text survives in both Semitic and Greek versions.

The Testament of Solomon blends Jewish and Christian ideas. It includes Christian themes such as the cross and the virgin birth, but also reflects Jewish traditions. The story tells how King Solomon received a special ring from the archangel Michael. With this ring, Solomon could control demons and make them build the temple.

After completing the temple, Solomon began to worship idols because of his desire for a Shunammite girl. The author uses Solomon's downfall as a warning about the power of demons and the many ways they can appear. The story also shows that angels have authority over them. The Testament of Solomon is written as Solomon's final message, given when he is close to death. In it, he looks back on his life (both his successes and his failures) and leaves a final lesson for Israel.

See also Apocrypha; Solomon (Person).

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is part of the Jewish pseudepigrapha (ancient writings that claim to be written by famous biblical people but were not). The book is called a *testament* because it presents the final speeches of each of Jacob's twelve sons before they die. The series begins with the words of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and ends with those of Benjamin, his youngest son.

Each patriarch gathers his children to tell stories about his life and to teach lessons from his experiences. In their speeches, the patriarchs warn against certain sins and encourage their families to live with faith, justice, and self-control. They also include predictions about the future of their descendants, describing both their failures and their hope for salvation. The account of the patriarch's life serves as a guide for the future of his descendants. At the end of each testament, the patriarch dies and is buried at Hebron, the place where the ancestors of Israel were laid to rest.

The idea of this kind of "testament" was probably inspired by the farewell speeches in the Old Testament. For instance, in [Genesis 49](#), Jacob gathers his sons to tell them about their future before he dies ([Genesis 49:33](#)). In a similar way, the aged Joshua called together the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel to instruct them before his death ([Joshua 23:2; 24:1](#)). King David also gave his son Solomon final advice, urging him to obey God's commands and live faithfully ([1 Kings 2:1-12](#)).

The current versions of the text in Slavonic, Armenian, and Greek are from the second or third century AD. However, scholars generally agree that an original text in a Semitic language, either Hebrew or Aramaic, was written by one or more authors in the third or second century BC. Later, Christians added some sections to this earlier Jewish text.

Examples of these later Christian additions appear in:

- Testament of Simeon 6:7
- Testament of Levi 10:2
- Testament of Dan 6:9
- Testament of Naphtali 4:5
- Testament of Asher 7:3-4
- Testament of Joseph 19:11
- Testament of Benjamin 3:8; 9:2-4

It seems that both Jewish and Christian writers revised the testaments over many centuries. The result is a Jewish document from about the third century BC that went through multiple Jewish and Christian revisions over a long period of time. These testaments became very popular in the tenth century, especially the prophecies of the patriarchs and their secret knowledge.

Below is a summary of each testament of the patriarchs. The excerpts are from R. H. Charles's *Pseudepigrapha*, pages 282-367.

The Testament of Reuben

Reuben begins his testament by remembering the time he dishonored his father Jacob. He recalls with sorrow how he had sexual relations with his father's concubine, Bilhah, while she was drunk. This event is central to his confession and teaching.

Reuben strongly warns his sons to avoid immoral behavior. He tells them to be careful in their relationships with women, because lust and temptation can lead to sin. His harsh opinions about women probably reflect the shame and pain that resulted from his own failure and his broken relationship with his father.

Reuben predicts that his descendants will become jealous of the descendants of Levi. However, he says they will not be able to defeat them. He encourages his children to live in peace, to love one another, and to be honest with their neighbors.

At the end of the testament, Reuben dies and is buried at Hebron.

The Testament of Simeon

The patriarch Simeon is described as a strong warrior. In the biblical story of Joseph being sold into slavery, Simeon admits he wanted to kill Joseph instead of selling him ([Genesis 37:25-28](#)). As punishment, God caused his right hand to wither for seven days. Simeon warns his sons against envy, deceit, and fornication. He predicts that they will attempt to harm the sons of Levi but prophesies that the sons of Levi will remain superior.

Simeon looks forward to a time of peace and joy when the "Most High" would be blessed (6:4-7a). Verse 7b is a Christian addition that says: "Because God has taken a body, eaten with men, and saved men." Simeon tells his sons that they should obey the descendants of Levi and Judah. This is because salvation will come from them. He predicts a high priest will come from Levi and a king from Judah's family line. Simeon ends by predicting that God will save all gentiles (non-Jewish nations) and Israel. The mention of the gentiles was likely added by a later Christian writer.

The Testament of Levi

Levi's testament contains a series of dreams that he shares with his sons. In these dreams, God reveals that the descendants of Levi and Judah will play a special role in the future. Levi predicts that through his family line and that of Judah, the Lord will "appear among men" to bring salvation to all peoples (2:11). The descendants of Levi would be "as the sun to all the seed of Israel" (4:3b). In one dream, he sees that his sons will receive the blessings of the priesthood (8:2-3). Levi also predicts that a king from Judah will establish a new

priesthood ministering to both Jews and gentiles (non-Jews).

Later editors added some Christian material to the text. Chapter ten includes a statement that because of sin, the sons of Levi would mistreat "the Savior of the world, Christ" (10:2). As a result, they would be scattered worldwide. Chapter thirteen focuses on wisdom and the importance of following the law. Chapter 16 introduces a prophecy about the end times (an *eschatological* prediction). It says that the descendants of Levi will turn away from God for seventy weeks.

The next chapter explains these seventy weeks. During this time, there will be a new priesthood in each jubilee period. The first priesthood will be great, and its priest will have such a close relationship with God that he will call God "Father." The second priesthood will "be conceived in the sorrow of beloved ones" but will be glorified by all (17:3). The following five priesthoods will be characterized by sorrow, pain, hatred, and darkness.

Eventually, a new priest will bring peace to all the earth (18:4). Sin will end, as this new priest will have a spirit of understanding and sanctification resting upon him (18:9). The book ends with a warning to choose between the law of the Lord and the works of Beliar (another name for Belial, meaning "the evil one"). Levi's sons promise to obey God's law. After Levi dies, they bury him at Hebron.

The Testament of Judah

At the beginning of the testament, Judah tells his descendants that he had been promised by his father that he would be king: "And it came to pass, when I became a man, that my father blessed me, saying, You shall be a king, prospering in all things" (1:6). He remembers his youth, when he was strong and able to defeat wild animals. Judah obeyed the commandments and resisted wrong sexual desire. He predicted his descendants would do what is evil because they will love money and be tempted by beautiful women (chapter 17).

In chapter 21, Judah predicts that the Lord will give a kingdom to his descendants and the priesthood to Levi's sons. Chapter 24 includes a Christian addition about the Christ. It predicts that from the star of Jacob one will arise that will be without sin and from it a rod of righteousness will grow to the gentiles (24:6). The testament ends with hope for the future when "they who are poor for the Lord's

sake shall be made rich and they who are put to death for the Lord's sake shall awake to life" (25:4). Judah dies and is buried at Hebron.

The Testament of Issachar

The last words of this patriarch are unique because they show Issachar as "upright" and free from wrongdoing. This contrasts with many of his brothers. He predicts the priesthood will come from Levi and kingship will come from Judah's family line. In chapter 6, Issachar predicts his children will follow *Beliar*. However, if they recognize God's mercy and follow Issachar's example, "every spirit of Beliar will flee from them." His final request is to be buried at Hebron with his ancestors.

The Testament of Zebulun

The patriarch Zebulun begins his testament by calling himself a "good gift" to his parents. Like Issachar, he says he does not know of any sin he committed except in thought. If he has done wrong, it is only because of ignorance. Zebulun claims he did not support his brothers' actions against Joseph. He would have told his father about Joseph's situation, but the brothers agreed that they would kill anyone who revealed the secret (1:6).

He states that without his intervention, the brothers would have killed Joseph (1:7). The brothers were so suspicious of Zebulun that they watched him until they sold Joseph. Later, in 5:3, Zebulun teaches a lesson also found in the New Testament and among Jewish rabbis (religious teachers with authority): "Have compassion in your hearts, my children, because as a man does to his neighbor, so will the Lord do to him."

Zebulun gives an example from his own life to show this truth. The sons of his brothers became sick and died because of their cruelty to Joseph. This was "because they showed no mercy in their hearts" (5:5). However, Zebulun's sons remained healthy.

Zebulun predicts that Israel would divide into two kingdoms and that both would end up being conquered by non-Jewish nations. However, the people will repent and the Lord will return them to their land and Jerusalem (9:8). In chapter 10, Zebulun predicts that after his death, he will "arise as a ruler among his sons" (10:2). He promises rewards for those who follow the laws and punishment for the ungodly. Zebulun dies at the end of his testament and is buried in Hebron.

The Testament of Dan

The patriarch Dan regrets that he was jealous of Joseph. He indicates that he was controlled by the spirit of *Belialar*. He reveals that he wanted to kill Joseph so that he could have the love of his father. Dan warns against the spirits of lying and anger, urging his descendants to love truth and long-suffering. He advises them to follow the commandments and to "love the Lord through all your life and one another with a true heart" (5:3).

Dan predicts that his sons will "in the last days" depart from the Lord and thus provoke the anger of the sons of Levi. They will also fight against the sons of Judah. His sons will not defeat the sons of Levi and Judah because an angel of the Lord will guide them.

Dan also says he read in the book of Enoch that Satan and other evil spirits will lead the sons of Levi, Judah, and Dan into sin. They will become captives and will suffer, facing plagues like those that came upon Egypt and all the troubles of the gentile nations. However, when they return to the Lord, they will receive mercy and peace.

Dan predicts that someone will arise from the tribes of Judah and Levi whom he calls "the salvation of the Lord." The "one arising" would make war against Beliar and execute an "everlasting vengeance" against their enemies (5:10). Dan's final warning is to be on guard against Satan and his spirits and to draw near to God and the angel "that intercedes for you" (6:2).

The last section urges Dan's sons to teach their children everything they have learned so that "the savior of the gentiles may receive" them. A later Christian addition describes this savior as true, patient, gentle, and humble (6:9). When Dan dies, they bury him near Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Testament of Naphtali

According to the testament, Naphtali is 130 years old when he gives his last words. He is described as being in good health, but the morning after a feast, he realizes he will die. He then gathers his sons around him. Naphtali had a strong sense of order that shaped how he understood both people and the universe.

For him, the "gentile problem" is that they abandoned the Lord. They changed their order to obey "stocks and stones." This change in order was the problem in Sodom and also caused the great flood of Noah's time.

Naphtali reads from the book of Enoch that his sons will depart from the Lord and walk "according to all lawlessness of the Gentiles" (4:1). He predicts that his descendants will be taken captive because of their sins, and afterward, a "few" will return to the Lord. Then God will bring them back to their land. After their return to the land, his sons will forget the Lord and "become ungodly" and they will be scattered across the earth. They will stay this way until the compassion of the Lord comes and a man working righteousness and mercy comes to them.

Naphtali describes two dreams he had at age 40. In the first dream, he saw the sun and moon stand still. Isaac told his grandsons to run and take hold of the sun and moon, each according to his strength. Levi took hold of the sun, and Judah seized the moon. Both of them were lifted up with the sun and the moon. A bull with two large horns and eagle wings appears. The other sons tried to seize the bull but failed. However, Joseph came and took hold of the bull and ascended "up with him on high" (5:7). Then Naphtali predicts that the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Chaldeans, and Syrians will take the 12 tribes of Israel into captivity.

In the other dream, he saw a ship sailing on the sea of Jamnia without sailors or a pilot. The ship had the words "The ship of Jacob" written on it (6:2). Jacob and his sons were on the ship. When a storm came, Jacob left them. The ship eventually broke apart because of the storm. Joseph sailed away in a small boat, while the other brothers each hung on to one of nine pieces of wood, with Levi and Judah sharing one. Levi's prayers apparently helped all the brothers reach the shore safely. When Naphtali tells his father these dreams, Jacob reveals to him that all these events must be fulfilled.

Naphtali urges his sons to stay united to Levi and Judah because through them, "shall salvation arise to Israel" (8:2). Through Levi and Judah, righteous people from other nations will also be gathered. Naphtali dies and is buried in Hebron.

The Testament of Gad

The patriarch Gad is represented as having hated Joseph. He hated Joseph because Joseph told their father that Gad and some of his brothers were eating the best parts of the flocks while they were supposed to be caring for them.

In his testament, Gad confesses this sin of hatred to his sons. He warns them against harboring hatred because it only brings anguish: "For as love would quicken even the dead and would call back them

that are condemned to die, so hatred would slay the living and those that had sinned venially it would not suffer to live" (4:6).

Gad teaches that repentance gives understanding to the soul and leads the mind to salvation. He urges his sons to honor the families of Levi and Judah, because through them comes the salvation of Israel. He predicts that his descendants will act with wickedness and corruption. The testament ends sadly. Gad asks to be buried near his fathers and is buried at Hebron.

The Testament of Asher

Asher speaks about the struggle between good and evil spirits. Each person must choose which to follow. He predicts that his descendants will act in ways that are against God and will not obey his law. Because of this, they will fall into the hands of their enemies and be scattered among the nations.

They will remain so until the "Most High" visits the earth. The text says, "coming Himself [as man with men eating and drinking] ... he shall save Israel and all the Gentiles" (7:3–4). This sentence was likely added later by Christians. It teaches that God himself would come to live among people and bring salvation to all nations.

After this prediction, Asher declares that the Lord will gather his people again because of his mercy and for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When Asher dies, his body is buried at Hebron.

The Testament of Joseph

Joseph calls himself the "beloved of Israel" (1:2). Although he faced jealousy and threats of death, he did not turn from God. In his testament, he tells the story of being sold into slavery. In chapter 1, the verses also follow the same parallel structure. In each verse, the first part tells about Joseph's suffering, and the second part tells how the Lord helped him. For example: "I was sold into slavery, and the Lord of all made me free: I was taken into captivity, and his strong hand succored me. I was beset with hunger and the Lord himself nourished me" (1:5).

Joseph describes his time in Egypt in great detail. Eight chapters tell how the Egyptian woman tried to tempt him. Joseph resisted her and remained faithful to God. Because of this, the Lord rewarded him. He tells his sons to fear the Lord in all they do. Anyone who follows the law of the Lord will be loved by God, and this is the key to success. Joseph encourages his children to do good to anyone who

would do evil to them and to pray for their enemies. He gives his own attitude toward his brothers as an example.

Joseph also urges his sons to observe the commandments of the Lord and to honor Levi and Judah for "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, who saves all the Gentiles and Israel" (19:11) will arise from them. He predicts that Israel will be enslaved in Egypt but also rescued. He directs his sons to take his bones with them when they leave Egypt. The testament concludes by indicating that after their return from Egypt, the Israelites buried the bones of Joseph at Hebron.

The Testament of Benjamin

The last patriarch gives his testament when he is 125 years old. He encourages his children to love the Lord and keep his commandments. He told them to follow the example of Joseph, who forgave his brothers and did not hold their sins against them.

Benjamin recounts Jacob's prediction that in Joseph will be fulfilled the prophecy "concerning the Lamb of God and Savior of the world, and that a blameless one shall be delivered up for lawless men, and a sinless one shall die for ungodly men in the blood of the covenant, for the salvation of the gentiles and of Israel and shall destroy Beliar and his servants" (3:8). This part of the testament shows Joseph as an innocent sufferer, one who did not deserve punishment and had no reason to feel guilt. Because of this, later Christian writers likely added material connecting Joseph's suffering to that of the Messiah. In the same way, the Christian Messiah suffered in innocence to save ungodly people.

Benjamin believed that there were evildoers among his sons. Having read in the book of Enoch, he predicts that they will commit "fornication with the fornication of Sodom" and only a few will survive (9:1). There would be a remnant from each tribe as the 12 tribes and the gentiles would gather at the last temple. Their salvation would be a result of the "Most High" sending his only "begotten prophet" (9:2). He would be lifted up upon a tree and the veil of the temple would be rent. Then the Spirit of God would be passed on to the gentiles. Benjamin admonishes his sons that if they walk in holiness according to the commandments of the Lord, all of Israel will be gathered to the Lord. When Benjamin dies, he is buried at Hebron.

From these short summaries, it is clear that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs include both Jewish and Christian additions. These additions go beyond simple edits. The final collection shows teachings about two messiahs, the command to love both God and neighbor, moral and theological lessons, and the idea that salvation is both for Jews and for non-Jews. However, it is very difficult to know exactly when these ideas were added or which religion they originally belonged to.

See also Apocrypha; Asher (Person); Benjamin (Person); Dan (Person); Gad (Person); Issachar (Person); Joseph; Judah (Person); Levi (Person); Naphtali (Person); Reuben (Person); Simeon (Person); Zebulun (Person).

Testimony

A testimony is a statement that a witness gives about what they have seen or heard.

See Witness.

Tetragrammaton

The name for the four consonants of one of the primary Hebrew names for God. It comes from the Greek roots *tetra*, "four," and *gramma*, "a letter of the alphabet". The four letters are the Hebrew equivalents of English Y (or J), H, W, and H. The name probably means "the one who is, that is, the absolute and unchangeable one." The Lord reveals the name to Moses ([Exodus 3:15](#); compare with [13:14](#); [John 8:56–58](#)).

In the Ten Commandments, the Jewish people were told not to take this name in vain ([Ex 20:2, 7](#)). So, the Jewish people viewed the name as holy and would not pronounce it. Instead, they would say Adonai, "Lord." Originally, the text was written with only consonants. Eventually, scholars called the Masoretes added vowel points to the Hebrew. When writing the tetragrammaton, they inserted the vowels for Adonai as a reminder not to read the sacred name. Non-Hebrew speakers combined the vowels of Adonai with the consonants JHWH, creating "Jehovah," which does not exist in Hebrew. It is possible the correct pronunciation of the name was Yahweh. Most translations write LORD, using capital letters to distinguish it from other uses of the English word "lord."

See also God, Names of.

Tetrarch

A tetrarch was a type of Roman official who ruled part of a province. Tetrarchs were local leaders, but they were not powerful enough to be called kings. This title was used in Roman provinces like Thessaly, Galatia, and Syria.

The title "tetrarch" may have come from governors who ruled over a fourth part of a region or country, as in Syria after the death of Herod the Great. By New Testament times, the significance of that meaning had lessened. The title of tetrarch applied only to secondary princes by that time.

Three tetrarchs are mentioned in the Bible. Luke reports that Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee. He also identifies Philip as the tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias as the tetrarch of Abilene ([Luke 3:1](#)). The only tetrarch mentioned elsewhere in the Bible is Herod ([Matthew 14:1](#); [Luke 3:19](#); [9:7](#); [Acts 13:1](#)). Herod is also referred to as "king" by his Jewish subjects, showing his greater significance ([Matthew 14:9](#); [Mark 6:14](#)).

Textus Receptus

See Bible, Manuscripts and Text of the (New Testament).

Thaddaeus, the Apostle

Thaddaeus was one of the 12 original apostles according to the lists in [Mark 3:18](#) and [Matthew 10:3](#). The King James Version identifies him as "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus." It is quite likely that Thaddaeus is the same person as Judas son of James (not Iscariot) in [Luke 6:16](#) and [Acts 1:13](#).

See Apostle, Apostleship.

Thahash

KJV spelling of Tahash, Reumah's son, in [Genesis 22:24](#). *See* Tahash.

Thamah

KJV spelling of Temah in [Ezra 2:53](#). *See* Temah.

Thamar

The King James Version spelling of Tamar, wife of Judah's firstborn son, in [Matthew 1:3](#).

See Tamar (Person) #1.

Thank Offering

See Offerings and Sacrifices.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is the act of showing gratitude. Gratitude is the feeling of thankfulness, and thanksgiving is expressing that feeling, often to God, for what he has done.

See Gratitude.

Thara

The King James Version spelling of Terah, Abraham's father, in [Luke 3:34](#).

See Terah (Person).

Tharshish

1. KJV alternate spelling of Tarshish, a port city, in [1 Kings 10:22](#) and [22:48](#). *See* Tarshish (Place).

2. KJV spelling of Tarshish, Bilhan's son, in [1 Chronicles 7:10](#). *See* Tarshish (Person) #2.

The Book of Elchasai

A lost Jewish work written in Aramaic. It was written by Elchasai during the reign of Emperor Trajan. Trajan was emperor of Rome from AD 98 to 117. The book of Elchasai was meant for his followers, the Elchasaites (or Sabai), but was read by both Jews and Jewish-Christian groups. Portions of the book are quoted by early church fathers Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Origen (quoted in Eusebius).

The book mixes Jewish, Christian, gnostic, and pagan ideas. Baptism is linked to forgiveness of sins

and is a way a person can be healed. It requires a form of Jewish legalism but rejects the need for sacrifices and a priesthood.

The Broad Wall

The Broad Wall was a section of the outer wall of Jerusalem that Nehemiah rebuilt in the fifth century BC. It is possible that the Broad Wall was on the northwest side of the city ([Nehemiah 3:8; 12:38](#)).

See Jerusalem.

The Caesars

The Caesars were the rulers of the Roman Empire. The name *Caesar* was first the family name of Julius Caesar, who lived 100–44 BC.

Later Roman leaders used *Caesar* as a title, even if they were not from Julius Caesar's family. This is where the words *Kaiser* (in German), *Keizer* (in Dutch), and *Czar* (in Russian) come from.

The Bible mentions Caesar Augustus ([Luke 2:1](#)) and Tiberius Caesar ([Luke 3:1](#)). In the book of Acts, the title *Caesar* refers to Nero ([Acts 25:11–12, 21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19](#)). During the time of the New Testament, 12 Caesars ruled. Six of them were part of the original Caesar family.

Emperors from Caesar's Lineage

- Julius Caesar (100–44 BC; he was not officially an emperor, but his name and leadership started the Caesar line).
- Tiberius (42 BC–AD 37, ruled AD 14–37)
- Claudius (10 BC–AD 54, ruled AD 41–54)
- Nero (AD 37–68, ruled AD 54–68)

Some Later Emperors

- Galba (3 BC–AD 69, ruled AD 68–69)
- Vespasian (AD 9–79, ruled AD 69–79)
- Titus (AD 39–81, ruled AD 79–81)
- Domitian (AD 51–96, ruled AD 81–96)
- Trajan (AD 53–117, ruled AD 98–117)
- Diocletian (AD 245–313, ruled AD 284–305)
- Constantine the Great (AD 272 or 273–337, ruled AD 306–337)

See also Rome, City of.

The Destroyer

23. A divine agent sent to carry out a sentence of destruction. The destroyer killed Egypt's firstborn. This ended the plagues and freed the Hebrews from slavery ([Exodus 12:23](#); compare [Hebrews 11:28](#)). The apostle Paul used the term for God's judgment on the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness ([1 Corinthians 10:10](#); compare [Numbers 16:44–50](#)).
24. In plural form, "destroyers" implies a group that causes destruction, either angels or humans ([Job 33:22](#); [Jeremiah 22:7](#)).
25. More broadly, the "destroyer" is any agent that causes destruction ([Job 15:21](#); [Jeremiah 4:7](#)).

26. Samson was called a destroyer by the Philistine who held him captive ([Judges 16:24](#)).

The Egyptian

An unidentified man from Egypt who led a violent revolt against Roman rule. He gathered a large group of followers, including a violent group called the *Sicarii*—Jewish rebels known for using small knives to assassinate their enemies. The Egyptian led his followers into the wilderness.

After a disturbance at the temple, the Roman commander Claudius Lysias asked the apostle Paul if he was this Egyptian rebel ([Acts 21:38](#)). The ancient Jewish historian Josephus also wrote about this man. He said the Egyptian led a failed rebellion that was stopped by the Roman governor Felix. The number of rebels in the revolt differs between sources, but all agree that the Egyptian escaped and was never caught.

The Great Sea

The Great Sea is another name for the Mediterranean Sea. The ancient Near Eastern peoples called it the Great Sea because of its great size in comparison to the other seas they knew ([Numbers 34:6](#); [Joshua 1:4](#)).

See Mediterranean Sea.

The Lord's Day

The phrase "Lord's Day" appears one time in the New Testament. John uses it in [Revelation 1:10](#). He writes, "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit." Most Christians today understand the Lord's Day to mean Sunday.

The earliest mention of Christians doing something special on Sunday is in Paul's letter to the church in Corinth. He tells them to set aside some money on "the first day of every week" to help poor believers in Jerusalem ([1 Corinthians 16:2](#)).

Why Was Sunday an Important Day?

Sunday had already become an important day for Christians by the time Paul wrote to the church in Corinth (around AD 55–56). Paul tells them to set aside money on the first day of the week ([1](#)

[Corinthians 16:1](#)). This shows that meeting together on Sunday was already a normal practice.

Paul also mentions other church meetings in 1 Corinthians (see [5:4; 11:18–20](#)). These meetings likely took place on Sundays. During these gatherings, the church also collected money to help with local needs (compare [1 Corinthians 9:7–14](#)).

So Paul was saying, “When you gather on Sunday and take a collection, also remember the poor believers in Jerusalem. Set aside something for them as well.” This was a personal act, but connected to the weekly church gathering.

A Sunday Meeting in Troas

A more detailed story about a Sunday meeting comes from [Acts 20:6–12](#). It happened in the city of Troas about three years after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. The meeting lasted all night. Luke, the writer of Acts, focuses on the story of a young man named Eutychus. He fell asleep during the meeting and died after falling from a window. But Paul brought him back to life. Even though Luke does not describe everything that happened at the meeting, he gives enough detail to show what early Christians did when they met on Sundays.

It is important that Luke tells us the meeting in Troas happened on a Sunday ([Acts 20:7](#)). In the book of Acts, he usually names the day only if it is a Sabbath or a special feast. So this detail is important.

Luke also uses a special word for “gathered.” The New Testament often uses this word when Christians come together for worship ([1 Corinthians 5:4](#)). This shows that the meeting in Troas was not just a special event to hear Paul. Paul had already been there for six days. The Sunday meeting was likely their regular weekly worship time. The church in Troas may have met every day, like the church in Jerusalem ([Acts 2:42, 46](#)). But they treated the Sunday meeting as a special occasion.

Connections to Jewish Worship

Luke uses this same word to describe the preaching of Paul ([Acts 20:7](#)). He had used it earlier to describe Paul’s preaching in Jewish synagogues at Ephesus and Corinth ([18:4; 19:8](#)). This shows a connection between Jewish Sabbath worship and early Christian Sunday worship.

When Christians stopped meeting in synagogues, they likely kept a similar pattern for their

gatherings. Synagogue worship usually included three main parts: reading the Scriptures, teaching, and prayer. The New Testament does not show all three happening at the same time in one Christian meeting, but each part is mentioned in different places.

Breaking Bread Together

The main reason the church in Troas met on Sunday was “to break bread” ([Acts 20:7](#)). This was a common New Testament phrase for sharing the Lord’s Supper. It may have also included a shared meal known as a love feast (compare [1 Corinthians 11:17–34](#)). The Lord’s Supper soon became the most important part of Sunday worship for the early church. It helped believers remember that Jesus rose from the dead. It also reminded them that Jesus was present with them when they gathered. For Christians, this made Sunday the right day to worship and share the Lord’s Supper together.

The Lord's Day in Revelation

The third clear mention of Sunday in the New Testament is in [Revelation 1:10](#). This is the only verse that calls it “the Lord’s Day.” This happened about 40 years after Paul’s visit to Troas. John was on the island of Patmos, off the coast of what is now Turkey. He says he was worshiping on the Lord’s Day when he received a vision from God ([Revelation 1:10](#)). Some people think “Lord’s Day” here might mean Easter, or even the final day of judgment that the Old Testament prophets talked about. But most Bible scholars agree that it simply means “Sunday,” based on how early Christians later used the phrase.

The immediate context of [Revelation 1:10](#) makes it clear that John saw Sunday as the Lord’s Day. On this day, Christians came together to show their full commitment to Jesus as Lord and Master ([Revelation 1:8](#)). Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. This showed that he truly is Lord (see [Revelation 1:18](#) and [John 20:25–28](#)).

One day, the whole world will recognize Jesus as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” ([Revelation 19:16](#); compare [Philippians 2:11](#)). But until then, the church shows this truth every time Christians gather to worship him.

The New Covenant

The new covenant is a special promise that God made through Jesus Christ to rescue people from the effects of sin. It replaces and completes the old covenant, which was based on the laws God gave to Moses. The Bible mainly talks about this new covenant in the New Testament.

The idea of a new covenant is found in several places in the Old Testament ([Ezekiel 34:23-31; 37:24-28](#); [Joel 2:12-32](#)). The actual phrase occurs only once ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

In this passage, Jeremiah describes how God's new covenant would be different from the old covenant he made with Moses. The main difference is where God would put his laws. In the old covenant, God wrote his laws on stone tablets ([Exodus 31:18; 34:27-32](#); [Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22; 9:11; 10:3-4](#)). It was also written in a book ([Exodus 24:7](#); compare the phrase "the old way of the written code," [Romans 7:6](#)).

But in the new covenant, God would write his laws directly in people's hearts. This would help people understand more clearly what God wants. People would be able to actually do what God asks (see [Romans 8:2-4](#)). Other prophets also talked about how God would work inside people's hearts ([Ezekiel 11:19-21; 36:26-27](#)). The prophet Joel said that one day God would give his Spirit to all kinds of people: "I will pour out My Spirit in those days" ([Joel 2:28-32](#)).

Another difference is how God's people know him under the two covenants. Israel knew God under the old covenant. God had revealed himself to Israel, but sometimes they forgot him ([Judges 2:10](#); [Hosea 4:1, 6](#)). The prophets wrote that the new covenant would be different: each person would be able to know God personally.

Lastly, the two covenants differ in how God deals with people's sin. Jeremiah said God would forgive his people's bad actions and remove their sins. The people of Israel already knew that God was merciful and forgiving ([Exodus 34:6-7](#)). But now Jeremiah was telling them something new: God would never think about their sins again ([Jeremiah 31:34](#)). Under the old covenant, people were reminded of their sins every year ([Hebrews 10:3](#)). But under the new covenant, God removes all memory of sin ([10:14](#)).

A New Covenant

The term "new covenant" appears at least six times in the New Testament ([1 Corinthians 11:25](#); [2 Corinthians 3:6](#); [Hebrews 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24](#)) According to some manuscripts, it is likely [Luke 22:20](#), also uses the phrase. In some Greek handwritten copies of [Matthew 26:28](#) and [Mark 14:24](#), the word "new" was added to "blood of the covenant." These scribes likely added this based on other stories of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians or possibly in the Gospel of Luke.

Since the word "new" was not in the best Greek copies of the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark, it likely was not in the original writings. It is clear from all four stories that Jesus saw the Lord's Supper as starting a different and therefore "new" covenant. Jesus's death made this new agreement with God official. This was similar to how God had made his first agreement official when Moses offered animal sacrifices ([Exodus 24:6-8](#)).

The cup in the Lord's Supper stands for the blood of Jesus's sacrifice, sealing the new covenant God has made with his people. The church remembers this new covenant, made firm by Jesus's death, each time it celebrates the Lord's Supper.

When Jesus started the Lord's Supper, he did not explain what was "new" about the covenant. In other places, he spoke about "baptism with the Holy Spirit" ([Acts 1:5; 11:16](#); compare [Matthew 3:11](#); [Mark 1:8](#); [Luke 3:16](#); and [John 1:33](#)). In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist makes the promise (compare [1 Corinthian 12:13](#)). Both Old Testament predictions refer to the same new covenant that God would make in the future, as shown in [2 Corinthians 3:6](#). There, Paul stated that God "has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant" (compare [Jeremiah 31:31](#)), not "of the letter but of the Spirit" (compare [Joel 2:28-32](#)), for "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Why Is the New Covenant Better?

In [2 Corinthians 3](#), Paul explains the difference between the old and new covenants. The old covenant, which God gave through Moses ([3:14](#)), was written on stone and brought death ([3:7](#)). But the new covenant that Jesus started is different and better ([3:8-9](#)). In this new covenant, God's Spirit writes his laws directly on people's hearts ([3:3](#)).

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament explains the new covenant more completely than any other book in the Bible. [Hebrews 8:8-12](#) quotes [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#), which is the longest Old

Testament quotation found in the New Testament. In [Hebrews 12:24](#), a different Greek word for “new” is used, but the meaning is the same.

The new covenant is one of the main topics in Hebrews. The book was written to help Christians who were having doubts about their faith. It shows them why their new faith in Jesus was better than their old Jewish beliefs and practices.

The book of Hebrews explains several ways that the new covenant is better than the old covenant, which was no longer needed.

- 27.** The new covenant has a better priesthood. In the old covenant, priests would serve God's people by speaking to God for them. But these priests were human and would eventually die, so new priests were always needed to replace them ([Hebrews 7:23](#)).

The new covenant is different. Jesus is our priest, and he lives forever. He never needs to be replaced, and he is always there to speak to God for his people ([7:24-25](#)).

- 28.** Jesus is a better priest than the priests of the old covenant. The old priests had to offer animal sacrifices again and again. They had to make these sacrifices first for their own sins because they too were sinful people. Then they would make sacrifices for everyone else's sins.

But Jesus was different. He never sinned, so he did not need to make sacrifices for himself. And instead of making many sacrifices, he gave his own life as one final sacrifice that would work forever ([7:27; 9:25-28; 10:12](#)).

- 29.** The new covenant has a better sacrifice. In the old covenant, priests had to kill animals as sacrifices for sin. But these animal sacrifices could only partly cover people's sins, and they had to be repeated over and over ([10:2-3](#)).

Jesus's sacrifice was different. When he gave his life, it was one perfect sacrifice that worked completely and forever ([9:11-14; 10:1-10](#)).

- 30.** The new covenant is built on “better promises” than the old ([8:6](#)).

31. The old covenant was not complete and had weaknesses ([8:7](#)). This is why it was replaced by something better ([8:13](#)). But the new covenant is complete and perfect, and it will last forever ([13:20](#)).

- 32.** The old and new covenants are different in how people can approach God. Under the old covenant, people could not come to God directly. They needed priests to go to God for them ([9:6-8](#)). Under the new covenant, everyone can come to God directly. When we do this, God cleanses our hearts and takes away our guilt (compare [9:14](#) with [9:9](#)).
- 33.** The new covenant has a better guarantee, a promise made by God himself ([7:20-22](#)).
- 34.** In the new covenant, God promises that his Holy Spirit will live in everyone who believes in Jesus. God gives his Spirit to all his people ([6:4](#)). Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is proof (“seal”) that we belong to God and a promise (“pledge”) that we will receive everything God has promised us (see [2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)).

Conclusion

The new covenant completes what God started in the old covenant. It also comes with a new command to love others. God puts his laws inside people's hearts through his Holy Spirit. God's Spirit lives in believers and gives them the power to follow his new command ([Romans 8:2-4](#); [Galatians 5:16-25](#)). This power from God's Spirit is one of the most important differences between the old and new covenants. The Spirit helps believers do what God asks of them.

See also Covenant.

The Paltite

A name for Hele, one of the mighty men of King David. He may have been a descendant of Palti ([2 Samuel 23:26](#), New Living Translation marginal

reading). He may have lived in Beth-pelet. In [1 Chronicles 11:27](#) he is called a “Pelonite.”

See Beth-Pelet.

The Revelation of John

Another name for the book of Revelation.

See Revelation, Book of.

The Story of Andrew

This fragment exists only in the Coptic language. In this legend from the late second century AD, a woman kills her child in the desert and gives the remains to a dog. She flees when the apostle Andrew and Philemon approach, but the dog reveals what happened. Andrew prays, and the dog vomits up the child. The child comes back to life, laughing and crying.

See also Andrew, the Apostle; Apocrypha.

The Twelve

A title for the 12 apostles in [1 Corinthians 15:5](#) and other verses.

See Apostle, Apostleship.

The Way

“The Way” is one of the names applied to the early Christian community ([Acts 9:2](#)). Both Jewish people and non-religious people used this name when talking about Christians. The name appeared in both positive and negative discussions about the church ([19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22](#)).

The apostle Paul used the term in his defense before the Roman governor Felix. This suggests that the name had some kind of official acceptance ([24:14, 22](#)). Most likely, this name came from Jesus’s own statement “I am the way and the truth and the life” ([John 14:6](#)).

Theater

A flat, semicircular orchestra surrounded by an open-air auditorium, a Greek creation in the sixth

century BC. A chorus and actors performed in the orchestra, and the audience sat on the raised hillside before them. The earliest drama was tragedy, which celebrated the deeds of the god Dionysus and began with a sacrifice on the altar in the orchestra. Later, comedy developed.

The Golden Age of Athens (c. 450 BC) was also the golden age of Greek drama; Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus wrote their dramas then. At that time audiences sat on the ground or on the wooden seats of the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, located on the south slope of the Acropolis. During the fourth century BC, theaters in Greece were equipped with stone seats arranged in concentric tiers against a concave hillside, and the orchestra was paved.

By the second and first centuries BC, great stone theaters were being built all over the Hellenistic East, and by that time a raised stage was constructed against the straight side of the semicircle of the orchestra. Action was now transferred to the stage. The auditorium of the typical theater consisted of three great bands of seats, which were divided into great wedges by the stairways that gave access to the seating. The elaborate stage was built in stone and had dressing and storage rooms. The orchestra was always paved.

Although initially the theater was intended for dramatic events, it came to be used for a variety of public meetings because it was one of the largest structures. For example, the great theater in Ephesus held about 25,000; the theater of Dionysus in Athens, about 17,000; and the south theater in Jerash of the Decapolis, about 5,000.

The theater should be distinguished from the odeum, which was shaped like a theater but was roofed. The odeum held only 1,000 or 2,000 people and was used primarily for musical events. It should also be distinguished from the amphitheater, which was a freestanding structure in stone, like the Colosseum of Rome and the arena of Verona, with an oval arena surrounded by concentric tiers of seats and used for gladiatorial combats, wild-beast hunts, and other such events. Only occasionally, as at Salamis in Cyprus and Caesarea in Palestine, were theaters free-standing stone structures; almost always they were built into the side of a hill.

By NT times, theaters were built in Greco-Roman towns all over the Mediterranean world. They even made their appearance in Palestine, as a result of

the Hellenizing activities of Herod the Great, who constructed Greek-style theaters in Samaria, Caesarea, and Jerusalem.

Only one theater, that of Ephesus, figures specifically in the NT ([Acts 19:29–41](#)).

See also Architecture.

Thebes

City appearing in the OT as No or No-Amon. No means “city” and is equivalent to the Egyptian *Waset* or Greek Thebes. *No-Amon* means “city of Amon.” Thebes appears only in the prophetic Scriptures of the OT and only in a context of judgment ([Jer 46:25](#); [Ez 30:14–16](#); [Na 3:8](#)). Thebes would suffer judgment and loss of population but would not be utterly destroyed. These prophecies were fulfilled in ancient times when Cambyses of Persia marched through Thebes in 525 BC and when the Roman Cornelius Gallus punished the city for a revolt in 30 BC.

Thebes was the capital of Egypt during most of the empire period (c. 1570–1100 BC), when the Hebrews were in bondage in the land and when the exodus took place. By that time, Amon had become the chief god, and the Pharaohs lavished their wealth on the great temples of Amon at Thebes, hoping for the god’s help in overcoming their enemies.

The city of ancient Thebes was located on both the east bank of the Nile (“the side of the rising sun”) and the west bank (“the side of the setting sun”). The city had an estimated population of nearly one million at its height.

Thebez

A city where Abimelech was killed when “a woman” dropped a millstone on him ([Judges 9:50–53](#)). After burning down the Tower of Shechem, Abimelech attacked Thebez but failed to capture the fortress inside the city. When the woman critically injured him with the millstone, Abimelech ordered his armor bearer to kill him. He did not want people to say that he had been killed by a woman.

Thebez was 17.7 kilometers (11 miles) northeast of Shechem. Today, it is traditionally identified with the modern town of Tubas.

Thelasar

The King James Version alternate form of Tel-assar in [2 Kings 19:12](#).

See Tel-assar.

Theocracy

A form of government where God has the highest political authority. Sometimes, God is represented by a human ruler, such as a king. So, [Deuteronomy 17:14–20](#) argues that a human king should only rule if chosen by the Lord.

Development of Theocracy in Israel

Theocracy (rule by God) developed in ancient Israel over time. The Israelites in Egypt believed that Yahweh, their special God, cared about their suffering. They thought Yahweh wanted to free them from slavery and free them from earthly rulers, especially the pharaoh (ruler of Egypt). The Israelites believed Yahweh wanted them to serve only Him (see [Exodus 3:7–10](#); [8:1](#); [9:1](#)).

It is important to understand how life was different under various rulers. Egyptian peasants (poor farmers) experienced harsh treatment under the pharaoh. They faced oppression, unreasonable work demands, and loss of freedom and self-respect. These difficult conditions were everyday experiences for Egyptian peasants.

In contrast, life under Yahweh’s rule came to mean something very different. The Israelites began to associate Yahweh’s leadership with freedom, justice, and equality. This was a significant change from their previous experiences.

When the Israelites arrived in Canaan, they found a different kind of leadership than they had seen in Egypt. The young Israelite tribes did not like this new system either. In Canaan, kings usually owned the city-states (small independent areas) they ruled. These kings often rented out some of the land to the people who lived there.

This was very different from what God wanted for the Israelites. When Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan, God’s plan was for them to be free. Each tribe was given a specific area of land. God wanted the Israelites to live on this land and only serve him, not any human ruler.

The Period of the Judges

In the period of the judges, the idea of theocracy was clear and constant. The Israelites were not a unified group, and they did not have one ruler. Instead, Yahweh ruled over them and unified them. This is why Gideon rejected kingship, saying "The LORD shall rule over you" ([Judges 8:23](#)).

In this period, human leadership was sometimes needed, especially when the tribes were threatened. These rulers, called judges, would be "raised up" to protect the people, and lead the people back to the Lord ([Judges 2:16](#)). The judges did not bring victory because of their own abilities. Yahweh was given credit for the victory.

The Period of Monarchy

Samuel was an important leader who lived during a time of change in Israel. He came after the judges and before the first kings of Israel. During this time, the Philistines (a neighboring group) became a big problem for the Israelites.

For about 200 years before Samuel, the Israelites and Philistines had lived near each other without much fighting. But this changed during Samuel's time. The Philistines started to attack Israel, trying to take over their land. The Israelites had been living under theocratic government. Different tribes of Israelites would work together to defend themselves when needed. But now, this system did not seem strong enough to fight against the Philistines.

Many important Israelites thought they needed a new way to govern themselves. They believed that having a king would make Israel stronger and help them survive. They asked for a king to lead them in battle against their enemies (see [1 Samuel 8:5, 19-20](#)).

The idea of having a king challenged Israel's belief in theocracy. Many people thought having a king was a good idea. They believed a king could help them in battles and make their nation stronger. But the Israelites had an old tradition of being ruled by God alone. This made the decision very difficult. Samuel, their leader at the time, thought that wanting a king meant rejecting God's rule. He warned the people about the problems a king might bring ([1 Samuel 8:10-18; 10:19](#)).

However, something unexpected happened. Samuel received a message from God about a man named Saul. God seemed willing to let Saul become king. Samuel was told to anoint Saul (put oil on his

head to show God had chosen him) as the first king of Israel ([1 Samuel 9:27-10:1](#)).

Then, the Bible tells us that "the spirit of God" came upon Saul ([1 Samuel 11:6](#)). This was similar to how God had empowered the judges who led Israel before. It showed that God was with Saul in a special way.

Saul's position as king was further strengthened when he won a battle against the Ammonites. After this victory, the people cheered for Saul and accepted him as their king. This public approval was the final step in establishing Saul's claim to kingship.

These events showed that Saul's kingship had both God's blessing and the people's support. The Bible tells us that there were different opinions about having a king in Israel. Some people wanted a king, while others thought it might go against God's rule. However, it was clear that God chose the king and told his prophet who to choose.

Theocracy in the Future

The Bible tells about a time when God's people would not need a human king to rule them. [Ezekiel 40-48](#)) describes a future where God would rule his people through special priests called Zadokites. This idea began to take shape around 520 BC, with the work of two prophets named Haggai and Zechariah. It became very important for the Jewish people after they returned from exile in Babylon. This new way of thinking changed how the community lived and behaved.

A man named Ezra helped make this idea of God's rule normal for Judaism. After Ezra's time, priests played a big role in the life of the nation. Even though foreign rulers like the Seleucids still had power over the people, the Jewish people looked forward to a different kind of king.

They waited for a special leader called the Messiah (God's chosen one). They believed the Messiah would be from the family of King David. This leader would bring peace and save Israel. He would make the old promises of God come true, bringing justice, goodness, and fairness to everyone.

See also King.

Theophany

An appearance or manifestation of God. The word comes from the Greek noun for "God" (*theos*) and the Greek verb "to appear" (*phano*).

A theophany is a representation of God in temporary but identifiable forms. It is one way God's special revelation is given to people. It is a divine revelation in which God is made visible and recognizable to people.

God made himself known to people through:

- A special messenger called the angel of the Lord
- Through the pillar and cloud that accompanied the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings
- Through the shekinah, or his presence inside of the tabernacle.

See Angel (Angel of the Lord); Pillar of Fire and Cloud; Shekinah.

Theophilus

35. A person to whom Luke wrote two books of the New Testament: the Gospel of Luke and Acts ([Luke 1:3](#); [Acts 1:1](#)). The name "Theophilus" means either "lover of God" or "loved by God" in Greek. Because of this meaning, some people think Theophilus might not be a real person's name. They suggest it could be a title used to address all readers of these books.

However, this is unlikely for two reasons. First, the New Testament usually uses real names rather than titles when addressing people. Second, Luke calls Theophilus "most excellent," a term of respect used for important officials. For example, Paul used this same title when speaking to Festus, and both Claudius Lysias and Tertullus used it when addressing Felix ([Acts 23:26](#); [24:2-3](#); [26:25](#)).

While Theophilus was probably an important person in society, we do not know exactly what position he held.

36. The Jewish high priest from AD 37 to 41. He came from an important religious family. His father was Annas, his brother was Jonathan, and his brother-in-law was Caiaphas. Vitellius, who ruled the area for Rome, made Theophilus the high priest after Jonathan. King Herod Agrippa later removed Theophilus from this position.

This Theophilus was probably the high priest who gave Paul permission to arrest Christians. Though he played this important role, his name does not appear in the New Testament.

Thessalonians, First Letter to the

Paul's first epistle to the church at Thessalonica.

Preview

- Author(s)
- Date, Origin, and Destination
- Purpose
- Content

Author(s)

The names of Paul, Silas (Greek "Silvanus"), and Timothy stand at the head of this letter, and as with other letters of Paul, his coworkers may have had some share in the writing of the letter. Often the plural pronouns "we" and "us" are retained, but "I, Paul" ([1 Thes 2:18](#)) and the singular pronoun in other places (see [3:5](#); [5:27](#)) show that the letter was essentially Paul's. From the 19th century, a few scholars have questioned the Pauline authorship of the epistle, but without convincing reasons. The issues dealt with in this letter are manifestly issues faced by a church in the earliest stages of its existence. In the light of differences of expression between this and other Pauline letters, some have suggested that Silvanus or Timothy may have had a significant part in writing it, but that is uncertain. The early church had no doubts about the authorship of the letter.

Date, Origin, and Destination

The letter is addressed specifically to "the church of the Thessalonians" ([1:1](#)). According to [Acts 17:1-9](#), Paul, with Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy, in

the course of their missionary work in the Roman province of Macedonia, came from Philippi to Thessalonica. He went first, as was his custom, to the synagogue, and for three Sabbaths explained and proved from the Scriptures that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead, declaring that Jesus was the Christ. Some Jews believed in Jesus as their Messiah, as did many God-fearing Greeks and several prominent women. But then the Jews stirred up opposition, so that Paul and his coworkers had to leave Thessalonica.

The actual time spent in Thessalonica was probably more than three weeks. In this letter Paul speaks of working for his support so as not to burden the Thessalonians ([1 Thes 2:9](#)). References concerning his actions and attitudes among them imply a longer time, and [Philippians 4:16](#) speaks of the Philippian Christians twice sending help to Paul in Thessalonica.

With Silas, and presumably Timothy, Paul went on to Berea, and his coworkers stayed there when Paul proceeded to Athens ([Acts 17:10-15](#)). When Timothy joined Paul at Athens, Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonian Christians because he was concerned about how they were faring against their opposition. Timothy returned from Thessalonica with good news. Subsequently, Paul wrote this letter.

[Acts 18:5](#) speaks of Timothy and Silas coming back from Macedonia to the apostle in Corinth. It was probably from Corinth, in the early part of his 18-month stay, that Paul wrote this letter. Since his work in Corinth can be approximately dated, this epistle was probably written early in the year 50, in all likelihood about a year after the first preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica.

Purpose

Timothy's report of the situation in Thessalonica motivated Paul to write this letter. Possibly Timothy brought a letter from the Thessalonians. This is suggested by the way Paul introduced certain subjects ("concerning brotherly love," [4:9](#); "concerning those who are asleep," [4:13](#); "as to the times and the seasons," [5:1](#)) and then said that he didn't need to write to them about these things. There were several reasons why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

1. He wanted to commend the Thessalonian Christians for their faith and devotion, which had become widely known as an example to others ([1:7-10](#)).

2. He realized that the persecution he had faced in Thessalonica had continued for those he left behind, and he wanted to encourage them to stand fast ([2:13-16](#)). He had feared for them but was delighted by the news of their steadfastness ([3:1-10](#)).

3. There were those who had been misrepresenting the apostle in Thessalonica, perhaps the Jews who had initiated opposition to him when he was there ([Acts 17:5](#)). They probably said that he was only a religious charlatan who had turned them away from their religion to his new faith, and they would never see him again. So the apostle reminded them of his methods and attitudes among them ([1 Thes 2:1-12](#)) and told of his desires and plans to see them again (vv [17-18](#)).

4. It was necessary also to urge the Thessalonian Christians to live true to Christian standards, especially in the matter of sexual morality ([4:1-8](#)). Other matters concerning their way of life and their relationships within the Christian fellowship also needed attention ([4:9-12](#); [5:12-22](#)).

5. Another major concern was to deal with the misconceptions of the Thessalonian Christians regarding those who had died and the second coming of the Lord ([4:13-18](#)). In relation to the future hope, there was also the question of "the times and the seasons," and Paul repeated the teaching he had given when among them ([5:1-11](#)).

6. There may also have been a danger of disunity that led the apostle to emphasize the fellowship of all believers ([5:27](#)), to urge them not to disparage any spiritual gifts (vv [19-21](#)), and not to fail in respecting their leaders (v [12](#)).

Content

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Response to the Gospel ([1:2-10](#))

Paul prayed with gratitude that in their lives the fruits of faith, love, and hope were evident. The gospel had come to them in the power of the Holy Spirit, backed by the lives of its messengers. Even though receiving the gospel had involved suffering, their faith was an example to the Christians of the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. The Thessalonians had turned to the living God from idols, indicating that most of the believers were Gentiles rather than Jews.

Paul's Defense of His Ministry in Thessalonica ([2:1-12](#))

Because of false accusations made about him, Paul found it necessary to defend his ministry. He had come from an experience of persecution in Philippi and had to face “great opposition” in Thessalonica. There was no guile in his trying to persuade them of the gospel’s truth. That gospel was entrusted to him by God, and his one desire was to communicate it to them in all integrity.

Their Acceptance of the Gospel ([2:13-16](#))

The Thessalonians had accepted the gospel as “the word of God” and had suffered at the hands of their own people. Such persecutors must face the righteous judgment of God.

Paul's Continuing Concern for Them ([2:17-20](#))

If Paul’s accusers were saying that the Thessalonians would never see him again, he could give the assurance that he had often wanted to return but had been prevented. In saying “Satan hindered us,” Paul may have been referring to the incident in which Jason was compelled to promise the authorities that Paul would leave the city and not return ([Acts 17:9](#)). In any case, the Thessalonian Christians are his “glory and joy.” His delight will be for them to stand “before our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.”

Timothy's Mission ([3:1-5](#))

Fearful for the Thessalonian Christians facing persecution, Paul was willing to be left alone in the work of the gospel in Athens (see [Acts 17:16-34](#)) and sent Timothy to encourage and support them in all their “afflictions.” Paul reiterated that Christians must always be prepared to face suffering.

The Good News That Timothy Brought ([3:6-10](#))

Paul himself had continued to have “distress and affliction” in the gospel’s cause, but the news of their faith and love had revived his spirit and given him great cause for thanksgiving to God. He was praying that he might see them again and strengthen them further in faith.

Paul's Prayer ([3:11-13](#))

Paul’s prayer was that God might return him to his friends in Thessalonica, and that they might overflow with love and be established in holiness of life, so as to appear “blameless, and holy when [they] stand before God our Father on that day when our Lord Jesus comes with all those who belong to him” ([3:13](#), nlt).

Exhortation to Purity of Life ([4:1-8](#))

Holiness, not immorality, and sanctification, not uncleanness, are the Christian’s calling. Paul stressed this by saying that living in a contrary way demonstrated disregard for the Holy Spirit. Christian standards must be utterly different from the prevailing standards among the heathen who don’t know God. For example, sexual relationships must not be determined by lust but expressed in holiness and honor within the bonds of marriage.

Practical Exhortation ([4:9-12](#))

The Christian duty of mutual love had been demonstrated in Thessalonica, but Paul asked that it be shown in increasing measure. He exhorted them to live quietly and work for their living, and to not be dependent on others for support.

What Happened to Those Who Had Died Since Becoming Believers ([4:13-18](#))

The Thessalonians may have written Paul about this issue. Paul told them they didn’t need to grieve, as those without hope, for their loved ones who had died. Those who are alive and those who have died will share together in the joy and triumph of the Lord’s return. Those who have died “will rise first”; those who are alive on earth will be caught up to meet their Master; then together, living and departed, “shall always be with the Lord.” With that assurance they can “comfort one another.”

Living in Readiness for the Lord’s Coming ([5:1-11](#))

Perhaps further questions had been asked about “the times and the seasons” in relation to the Second Coming. Neither they nor anyone else knows the time. The Lord will come unexpectedly like “a thief in the night.” What matters, therefore, is that Christians should never be complacent but ready at all times, living as “children of the day,” so that, waking or sleeping, “we might live with him.”

Other Christian Duties ([5:12-22](#))

In the last main section of the letter, Paul urged the Thessalonian Christians to respect their leaders and to acknowledge their oversight; to live at peace, in unity; to do and encourage all that is good. The will of God for the Christian life is constant joy, prayer, and praise. The Holy Spirit is not to be quenched, the gift of prophecy is not to be despised, but all things claiming to be of God must be tested, so that the good can be embraced and the evil rejected.

Conclusion ([5:23-28](#))

The final prayer of the letter is for their holiness of life, so that they may stand “blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Pray for us” is the apostle’s plea. Greetings are to be passed on and the letter read to all the believers.

See also Eschatology; Paul, The Apostle; Second Coming of Christ; Thessalonians, Second Letter to the; Thessalonica.

Thessalonica

Chief city of Macedonia and the seat of Roman administration in the century before Christ. In addition to having a magnificent harbor, Thessalonica had the good fortune of being located on the overland route from Italy to the East. This famous highway, called the Egnatian Way, ran directly through the city. Two Roman arches, the Vardar Gate and the Arch of Galerius, marked the western and eastern boundaries.

According to Strabo, a famous Greek geographer, Thessalonica was founded in 315 BC by the Macedonian general Cassander, who named it after his wife, the daughter of Philip and stepsister of Alexander the Great. It was settled by refugees from a large number of towns in the same region, which had been destroyed in war. When Macedonia was divided into four districts (167 BC), Thessalonica was made the capital of the second division. Its influence continued to expand when the area became a Roman province. In the second civil war between Caesar and Pompey (42 BC), Thessalonica remained loyal to Antony and Octavian and was rewarded by receiving the status of a free city. This gift of autonomy allowed the city to appoint its own magistrates, who were given the unusual title of *politarchs*. The historical accuracy of Luke is seen in the fact that while the term

“*politarch*” does not appear in earlier Greek literature, it is used in [Acts 17:6-8](#) and has been found on an inscription on the Vardar Gate and in other inscriptions from the area. At the beginning of the first century, Thessalonica had a council of five *politarchs*. Cicero, a Roman statesman who lived shortly before the time of Christ, spent seven months in exile at Thessalonica.

The church at Thessalonica was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey ([Acts 17:1-4](#)). At Troas the apostle had been directed in a vision to cross over the Aegean Sea to Macedonia. After ministering at Philippi, where he was beaten and jailed, Paul’s Roman citizenship secured his release and he traveled on to Thessalonica. On the Sabbath, Paul went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Some were persuaded, along with a number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women (v [4](#)).

Paul’s success stirred the jealousy of the Jews, who gathered some rabble from the marketplace and started a riot. They rushed the house of Jason, where Paul was staying, but when they were unable to find the apostle, they dragged his host and some other believers before the city officials. They claimed that Paul was guilty of defying Caesar’s decrees because he taught another king called Jesus. That very night Paul slipped out of town and made his way to Berea ([Acts 17:5-10](#)). The hostility of the Thessalonian Jews toward Paul is seen in the fact that when they learned that he was preaching at Berea they followed him there and stirred up the crowds against him (v [13](#)).

Our basic knowledge of the church at Thessalonica comes from two letters by Paul from Corinth at a slightly later date. These early letters of the apostle supply an important insight into the life of a first-century Macedonian congregation that was primarily Gentile. In the centuries that followed, the city remained as one of the major strongholds of Christianity.

See also Paul, The Apostle; Thessalonians, First Letter to the; Thessalonians, Second Letter to the.

Theudas

Rebel referred to by Gamaliel in his speech before the Sanhedrin as an example of the fact that false messiahs would fall without anyone’s intervention ([Acts 5:36](#)). Theudas evidently led an unsuccessful rebellion against Rome in which he and 400 others

were killed. A chronological difficulty is created by the fact that Josephus reports a rebellion led by Theudas during the reign of Claudius as occurring around AD 44, which is seven to ten years *after* Gamaliel's speech. While critics have offered this apparent anachronism as evidence that Luke (or some later editor) was in error, several other solutions are possible. Possibly the error is in Josephus's report rather than Luke's, or two different individuals named Theudas are intended. During the final years of Herod the Great, several rebellions occurred, one of which may have been instigated by Theudas. It has been suggested (without any direct evidence) that Herod's slave Simon may have adopted the name Theudas when he gained freedom and subsequently rebelled against Herod. While the identity of Theudas remains unknown, this fact does not necessarily discredit the historical accuracy of Luke's narrative.

Third Corinthians

Third Corinthians is an apocryphal letter (a writing not included in the Hebrew Bible but accepted by some Christian groups) that claims to record correspondence between the apostle Paul and the church in Corinth. It was written during the second century AD and is also known as *3 Corinthians*.

The work has three parts:

- 37.** A letter claiming to be from Stephanus of Corinth and sent to the apostle Paul about two false apostles, Simon and Cleobius.
- 38.** A short story about the delivery of the letter.
- 39.** Paul's response, in which he rejects the false teachings.

Originally, these letters were part of the Acts of Paul, a longer apocryphal document. However, they also circulated separately. At one point, they were even included in the Armenian Bible. The letters seek to explain Paul's mention in [2 Corinthians 2:4](#) of a letter he wrote in "great distress."

According to the early church father Tertullian, in his work *On Baptism*, a church leader from Asia wrote Third Corinthians around AD 160 as an expression of his love and respect for Paul. However, this leader was later removed from his position because he claimed that his writing came

from Paul himself. This event shows how firmly early Christians opposed any writings that falsely claimed to have been written by the apostles.

See also Apocrypha; Second Letter to the Corinthians.

Thistle, Thorn

The Bible uses 22 different Hebrew and Greek words to describe spiny or prickly shrubs or weeds. These words are translated as "bramble," "brier," "cockle," "thorn," and "thistle." Today, about 125 species of thorns and thistles grow in the Holy Land.

The thornbush mentioned in the story of [Judges 9:14-15](#) is likely the European boxthorn or desert-thorn (*Lycium europaeum*).

Most scholars agree that the "briers" and "thorns" in [Isaiah 10:17, 55:13](#), [Micah 7:4](#), and [Hebrews 6:8](#) refer to the Palestine nightshade (*Solanum incanum*), also called the "Jericho potato."

The thistles in [Genesis 3:17-18](#), [2 Kings 14:9](#), [2 Chronicles 25:18](#), [Hosea 10:8](#), and [Matthew 7:16](#), as well as the thorns of [Matthew 13:7](#) and [Hebrews 6:8](#), are thought to be one of the species of the thistle (*Centaurea*). Common thistles in the Holy Land include:

- the true star-thistle (*Centaurea calcitrapa*),
- the dwarf centaury (*Centaurea verutum*),
- the Iberian centaury (*Centaurea iberica*), and
- the lady's thistle (*Silybum marianum*).

Some thistles can grow as tall as 0.9 to 1.8 meters (5 to 6 feet). Thistles typically grow in areas that are not cultivated and are neglected. Many thistles have beautiful flowers, but all have sharp spines.

The "briers" in [Ezekiel 2:6](#) and the "pricking brier" in [Ezekiel 28:24](#) may refer to the prickly butchers-broom or knee-holly (*Ruscus aculeatus*). This plant commonly grows in rocky woods in the northern parts of the Holy Land, especially around Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel.

The stinkweed mentioned in [Job 31:40](#) probably refers to the corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*). This plant is common in grainfields throughout the Holy Land. It is a strong-growing and troublesome weed that grows from 0.3 to 0.9 meter (1 to 3 feet) tall.

Many Bible scholars think that the "thorns" used to make the crown of thorns ([Matthew 27:29](#); [John 19:2](#)) came from the Christ-thorn (*Paliurus spina-christi*). This belief led to its scientific name. The Christ-thorn is a spiny plant that usually grows as a spreading shrub 0.9 to 2.7 meters (3 to 9 feet) tall. The flexible branches have a pair of unequal, stiff, sharp spines at the base of each leaf. The young branches are unusually flexible, making them easy to weave into a crown-like wreath.

The thorns mentioned in [Judges 8:7](#), [Isaiah 7:19, 9:18, 55:13](#), and [Matthew 7:16](#) may refer to the Syrian Christ-thorn (*Zizyphus spina-christi*). This plant can be a shrub or small tree 2.7 to 4.6 meters (9 to 15 feet) tall, sometimes growing into a 12.2-meter (40-foot) tree. It has smooth white branches with a pair of strong, unequal, curved-back spines behind each leaf.

See also Bramble; Buckthorn.

Thomas, the Apostle

Thomas was one of Jesus's twelve closest followers (apostles). His name appears in all four Gospels of the New Testament.

Thomas had two names. His first name, Thomas, comes from an Aramaic word (the language Jesus spoke) that means "twin." Greek-speaking Christians often called him by another name, Didymus, which also means "twin" in Greek. The Gospel of John mentions this Greek name three times ([John 11:16](#); [20:24](#); [21:2](#)). The koine papyri, an early source document, confirms that the name Didymus was well known in the New Testament era.

Thomas in the Gospels

Thomas is mentioned in the lists of Jesus's twelve apostles in [Matthew 10:3](#), [Mark 3:18](#), and [Luke 6:15](#) (compare [Acts 1:13](#)). While these books only list his name, the Gospel of John tells us more about him.

In John's Gospel, Thomas appears in several important moments:

- When Jesus planned to go to Jerusalem where he faced danger, Thomas bravely said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him" ([John 11:16](#)).
- When Jesus spoke about leaving his disciples, Thomas asked him to explain where he was going ([14:5](#)).
- After Jesus rose from the dead, Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared to the other disciples. Thomas said he would not believe unless he could see and touch Jesus's wounds. Eight days later, Jesus appeared again and showed Thomas his wounds. Thomas then believed and declared, "my Lord and my God" ([20:24, 26-28](#)).
- Thomas was also present later when Jesus appeared to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee ([21:2](#)).

Thomas in Apocryphal Writings and Tradition

Two books from the Apocrypha (books included in some versions of the Bible but not considered Scripture by all Christian traditions) are identified with Thomas's name:

40. The Gospel of Thomas from the writings found near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. It records 114 "secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke." Thomas supposedly preserved these sayings.

41. The Acts of Thomas with both Greek and Syriac versions. In this book, Jesus and Thomas are identified as "twins" because they share similar appearances and destinies. This book says that the apostle Thomas had secret teachings.

It also explains what happened to Thomas. Against his wishes, Thomas traveled to India under the Lord's command. He was martyred there, killed with spears by an Indian king. Later, he was raised up, and his empty tomb was believed to have special powers. Today in St. Thomas, India, Christians claim to be the spiritual descendants of the apostle.

See also Apocrypha: Thomas, Acts of, Thomas, Gospel of; Apostle, Apostleship.

Thorn

A thorn is a sharp point that grows from the stem or branch of a plant. Thorns can hurt people or animals that touch them. Some plants grow thorns to protect themselves.

The Bible often mentions thorns. They can be part of the land's natural plants, or they can be a symbol of pain, trouble, or punishment. For example, after Adam and Eve sinned, God said the ground would grow thorns and thistles ([Genesis 3:18](#)).

People also used thorns to make a crown and put it on Jesus's head to mock him before his death ([Matthew 27:29](#)).

See Thistle, Thorn.

Three Taverns

A place where the Christians came to meet the apostle Paul when he arrived in Rome ([Acts 28:15](#)). It was on the Appian Way located at milepost 33 (49.1 kilometers or 30.5 English miles). The Forum of Appius is 16.1 kilometers (ten miles) further south along the same road. Three Taverns was near modern Cisterna. It was at an important crossing between the Appian Way and the road from Antium

to Norba. So it became a common meeting place for travelers.

Thresher, Threshing, Threshing Floor

See Agriculture.

Throne

An elevated, ceremonial chair. It symbolizes the importance and authority of its occupant. As the word "throne" spread, it became a symbol of kingship. It came to mean the kingdom itself. When Pharaoh made Joseph viceroy, he said, "Only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you" ([Genesis 41:40](#)). The establishment of David as king of Israel was equivalent to the establishment of the throne of David ([2 Samuel 3:10](#)). To occupy the throne indicated succession to the kingship ([1 Kings 1:46](#)).

Only one throne is described in detail in the Old Testament, the throne of Solomon ([1 Kings 10:18-20](#); [2 Chronicles 9:17-19](#)). The description and ancient monuments show thrones. They hint at the appearance of the throne of Israel. An elevated seat with six steps leading up to it, the throne was partly made of ivory and overlaid with gold. The throne had a backrest and arms. There were lion statues beside it and six similar statues on either side of the steps. Although not mentioned in the Old Testament's description, a footstool was an indispensable part of the throne ([Isaiah 66:1](#)).

The Hebrew term *kisseh* is used as a seat of honor for any distinguished person:

- A priest ([1 Samuel 4:13, 18](#))
- A ruler ([Psalm 94:20](#))
- A military officer ([Jeremiah 1:15](#))
- A favored guest ([2 Kings 4:10](#))

It mainly refers to a king's chair from which he ruled. The Old Testament refers to thrones of foreign kings ([Exodus 11:5](#); [Jeremiah 43:10](#); [Jonah 3:6](#)). It especially emphasizes the throne of Israel and the throne of David.

The God of Israel is described metaphorically as sitting upon a throne ([Isaiah 66:1](#)). Many prophets describe visions of God on a throne:

- Micaiah ([1 Kings 22:19](#))
- Isaiah ([Isaiah 6:1-3](#))
- Ezekiel ([Ezekiel 1:4-28; 10:1](#))
- Daniel ([Daniel 7:9-10](#))

Later, Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God was of major significance in Jewish "throne mysticism." In [Revelation 4](#), God's throne is flanked by the 24 elder thrones. An emerald rainbow and seven torches surround it. A crystal sea lies in front, with four living creatures on each side.

God's throne is usually in heaven ([Psalm 11:4](#); [Matthew 5:34](#)). But, God's throne is also described as being in:

- Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 3:17](#))
- The temple ([Ezekiel 43:6-7](#))
- Israel ([Jeremiah 14:21](#))

The concept of Christ's throne is rare in the Old Testament ([Isaiah 9:7](#); [Jeremiah 17:25](#)) but common in the New Testament ([Luke 1:32](#); [Acts 2:30](#)). This throne symbolizes Christ's kingship and authority.

Thummim

See Urim and Thummim.

Thunder, Sons of

"Sons of Thunder" is the literal meaning of the word "Boanerges." Jesus gave this nickname to James and John ([Mark 3:17](#)). *See Boanerges.*

Thutmose

See Egypt, Egyptian.

Thyatira

Location of one of the seven local churches in the book of Revelation. The city was founded by the Lydian kingdom and later captured by Seleucus, Alexander's general. It then served as a border settlement to preserve his kingdom from Lysimachus, his rival to the west.

After the kingdom of Pergamum was founded (282 BC), Thyatira became the borderline between Pergamum and the Syrians. The city was without natural defenses. It was not built on a hill and therefore was subject to repeated invasions. The strength of the city lay largely in its strategic location and also upon the fertility of the area surrounding it. Its inhabitants were descendants of Macedonian soldiers and retained much of their ancestors' militancy. They were formidable defenders of the city.

When Rome defeated Antiochus in 189 BC, Thyatira was incorporated into the kingdom of Pergamum, Rome's ally. Peace and prosperity followed. Under the Roman emperor Claudius (AD 41-54), Thyatira rose to new prominence and was permitted to issue its own coins. The emperor Hadrian included this city in his Middle East itinerary (AD 134), a hint of the importance of Thyatira in the second century AD.

Prosperity attracted many Jews to this area. Among the commercial activities of the city were textiles and bronze armor. The armorers were in a guild, like the silversmiths in Ephesus. The first known Christian convert in Europe was a businesswoman from Thyatira named Lydia ([Acts 16:14-15, 40](#)). She specialized in the costly purple garments that were exported from Thyatira to Macedonia. Here the purple dye, from the madder root, offered a much cheaper cloth to compete with costlier garments dyed with the expensive murex dye from Phoenicia.

In the message to the church in Thyatira, the members are commended for their love, faith, service, and endurance ([Rv 2:19](#)). But the influence of paganism is still reflected in the sharp rebuke of those who tolerate the heresy of which "Jezebel" was the leader. Their temptation was similar to that of the Corinthian believers who were uncertain about eating food that had been dedicated to idols ([1 Cor 8:1-13](#)). The trade guilds held periodic festivals in which food offered to idols was consumed. This was sometimes accompanied by licentious rites in which religion and sex were mingled. This church was condemned for its accommodation to these pagan practices. Immorality was so rife among the pagans that the early church, with its uncompromising attitude toward unchastity, stood in constant tension with the mores of the community. Superstition and devil worship were apparently a great temptation as well. The "deep things of Satan" ([Rv 2:24](#)) is probably an allusion to one of the Gnostic sects that

stressed “depth” and carried on secret rites in which only initiates participated. So serious was the temptation that the best hope was for survival of the remnant—hence, the exhortation “hold fast what you have, until I come” (v 25).

See also Revelation, Book of.

Thyine

KJV translation for “scented wood” in [Revelation 18:12](#). Thyine was a dark-colored, fragrant, and valuable wood used for making furniture. *See* Plants (Citron Tree).

Tiberias

City midway along the western shores of Lake Galilee, built about AD 20 by Herod Antipas, Herod the Great’s son and the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–AD 39), who named the town in honor of the emperor Tiberius. The name is preserved in the modern town Tabariyeh. The site became his new capital after abandoning Sepphoris, which he built in 4 BC. The location of Tiberias had several advantages: it lay just below a rocky projection above the lake, a natural acropolis that offered good protection; it was a center where roads from north, south, and west met, allowing Herod to move readily to various parts of his domain; and a little to the south lay famous warm springs, which were known to the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, who spoke of their health-giving qualities. Herod built a lakeside palace, feeling secure in the knowledge that a naturally fortified acropolis lay behind him. From there he would have enjoyed a superb panorama, which took in the whole of Galilee at a glance.

During the building of the town, a necropolis was discovered, which led to the Jewish abandonment of the site. The town was subsequently settled by a heterogeneous company of Gentiles, some of whom were brought forcibly to the place by Herod. By offering good houses and land to all, Herod assembled a sizable population (Josephus’s *Antiquities* 18.2.3). According to the Gospels, Jesus never went there, probably in deference to Jewish scruples about the pollution caused by corpses. The town is mentioned only once in the NT ([In 6:23](#)), where boats came from Tiberias following the episode of the feeding of the 5,000. The Sea of

Tiberias, that is, Lake Galilee, is referred to in [John 6:1](#) and [21:1](#).

Tiberias, Sea of

Alternate name for the Sea of Galilee in [John 6:1](#) and [21:1](#). *See* Sea of Galilee.

Tiberius

Tiberius was the emperor of the Roman Empire from AD 14 to 37. He ruled while Jesus was living on earth.

Early Life and Rise to Power

Tiberius was born in 42 BC. When he was four years old, his mother divorced his father and married Octavian (later called Augustus). This made Tiberius the stepson of the future emperor.

In AD 13, Augustus made Tiberius his co-ruler. A year later, Augustus died, and Tiberius became emperor. He took the name Tiberius Caesar Augustus.

A Difficult Rule

Tiberius had many personal and political struggles. He was forced into a marriage he did not want. The Roman Senate did not always support him. In AD 27, Tiberius left Rome and went to live on the island of Capri.

He gave power to a Roman official named Sejanus. Sejanus was the head of the emperor’s guard. Over time, Sejanus tried to take full control of the empire. Tiberius later found out and had Sejanus put to death.

Tiberius and Pontius Pilate

Before moving to Capri, Tiberius chose Pontius Pilate to be the Roman governor of Judea (AD 26). Pilate reported directly to Tiberius. If there was trouble in Judea, Tiberius could remove Pilate from office.

This helps explain Pilate’s actions during Jesus’s trial. The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of claiming to be a king ([John 18:33–38](#)). This sounded like a threat to the emperor. Pilate believed Jesus was innocent and wanted to free him. But the Jewish leaders warned Pilate. They said that if he released Jesus, he would not be a friend of Caesar ([19:12](#)).

Pilate feared they might report him to Tiberius, so he gave in and had Jesus killed.

Tiberius in the Bible

The Bible only names Tiberius once. The Gospel of Luke says that John the Baptist began his work in the 15th year of Tiberius's rule. That was when Pilate was governor of Judea ([Luke 3:1](#)). Scholars are not sure if Luke counted from when Tiberius ruled with Augustus or when he ruled alone.

Humble and Serious

Tiberius did not want people to worship him as a god. Earlier emperors had received this honor, but Tiberius said only Julius Caesar and Augustus should receive it. Interest in emperor worship was starting to fade.

Tiberius also stopped the practice of naming months after emperors. For example, July is named for Julius Caesar, and August is named for Augustus. But no month is named after Tiberius.

Tiberius died in AD 37. He had ruled for 23 years. His life was full of struggles, but he was a smart and careful leader.

See also Caesars, The.

Tibhath

A city that belonged to King Hadadezer ([1 Chronicles 18:8](#)). The same place is called Betah in the Hebrew text of [2 Samuel 8:8](#).

See Tebah (Place).

Tibni

Ginath's son, who competed with Omri to be king of Israel after Zimri's suicide ([1 Kgs 16:21-22](#)). Tibni ruled over half of Israel from 884–880 BC before Omri defeated him in a civil war.

Tidal

King of Goim who fought with Kedorlaomer's confederation against Sodom ([Gn 14:1-9](#)).

Tiglath-Pileser

Name of three Assyrian kings, the most important of whom was Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC). The name means "my trust is in the son of the temple Esharra," and appears in various forms (cf. [2 Kgs 15:29](#); also called Tilgath-pilneser in [1 Chr 5:6](#); [2 Chr 28:20](#)).

Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1077 BC) was the son of Ashur-resh-ishi. Having gained independence from Babylonian overlordship, Tiglath-pileser consolidated his hold over the territory newly acquired in his father's reign, maintaining control and guarding against counterattacks from the former occupiers. Security brought increased trade and prosperity, and a large temple-building program was undertaken.

Tiglath-pileser II (c. 967–935 BC) was a weak king who ruled Assyria during a period of decline. Although he was able to maintain some degree of internal control, he was powerless to prevent outside peoples from encroaching upon Assyrian territory. In particular, the Arameans took advantage of Assyrian weakness to occupy large areas of land, and an Aramean ruler named Kapara built a palace at Guzana (the Gozan of [2 Kgs 17:6](#)). Some of the Arameans who occupied the area have been identified from inscriptions found at the site. This period was of particular importance for the emergence of the Aramean Empire.

Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC) ascended to the throne at a time when he could stem and reverse another decline in Assyrian fortunes. Although not directly in line for the throne, he was probably of royal descent. On occasion, he used the name Pul ([2 Kgs 15:19](#); [1 Chr 5:26](#)), which may have been his real name as opposed to his throne name.

Tiglath-pileser III was a strong, able, resourceful king whose reign is remarkable for the rapid extension of Assyrian boundaries and for the peaceful administration of the newly acquired territories. He assisted Babylon by defeating the Arameans, and by his diplomacy retained Babylonian support while he concentrated his military efforts elsewhere. On the death of the vassal king Nabu-nasir of Babylon in 734 BC, Tiglath-pileser gained the support of some of the tribes and finally forced the submission of Marduk-apla-iddina (the Merodach-baladan of [Is 39:1](#)). According to the Babylonian Chronicle, he used the name Pul when acceding to the throne of Babylon himself in 729 BC. He was the first Assyrian king on the throne of Babylon in 500 years.

His reign, which was marked by a vast increase in territory coupled with a firm and able administration, also had long-term effects far beyond Assyria's immediate borders. The expansion into Syria and Palestine was bound to lead eventually to conflict with Egypt when that country wished once again to mount a more aggressive foreign policy. Tiglath-pileser was the father of Shalmaneser V (727–722 BC).

See also Assyria, Assyrians.

Tigris River

The Tigris River is one of the two largest rivers that flow through the ancient region of Mesopotamia (the area that is now mainly in Iraq). The Bible mentions this river only a few times.

In the description of the garden of Eden, the Tigris River is the third of the four rivers that flowed out of the river that watered the garden ([Genesis 2:14](#)). However, this reference does not help us know where the garden of Eden was located.

The only other direct mentions of the Tigris in the Bible come much later. Daniel calls it "the great river" when describing where he received a vision ([Daniel 10:4](#)). Nahum was likely referring to the Tigris when he described the opening of the river gates of Nineveh during the Babylonian siege ([Nahum 2:6](#)).

When its two main tributaries are included, the length of the Tigris is 1,844 kilometers (1,146 miles). The source of the river is a mountain lake called Golenjik, located only a few kilometers (two or three miles) from the channel of the Euphrates.

As with most rivers of the region, the flow of the Tigris varies during the year. Flood season begins in early March, with its peak in early- to mid-May. Though boats could travel on the Tigris, historical records show it was not used much for trade. However, the river was important politically during the time when the Assyrian empire was powerful. Three major Assyrian cities (Nineveh, Assur, and Calah) were built along its banks. But the Tigris never proved to be a strong enough natural barrier to effectively protect the empire from enemy attacks.

Tikvah

1. Harhas's son, father of Shallum, and the father-in-law of Huldah the prophetess ([2 Kgs 22:14](#)); alternately called Tokhath (kjv "Tikvath") in [2 Chronicles 34:22](#).

2. Father of Jahzeiah, who was one of the four individuals on record who opposed Ezra's command to divorce foreign wives ([Ezr 10:15](#)).

Tikvath

KJV spelling of Tokhath, an alternate name for Tikvah, Harhas's son, in [2 Chronicles 34:22](#). See Tikvah #1.

Tilgath-Pilneser

Alternate spelling of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III's name in [1 Chronicles 5:6, 26](#) and [2 Chronicles 28:20](#). See Tiglath-pileser.

Tilon

Shimon's son from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:20](#)).

Timaeus

Timaeus was the father of Bartimaeus. Jesus restored the sight of the blind beggar named Bartimaeus near the gateway leading from Jericho. ([Mark 10:46](#)).

Timbrel

Small hand drum. See Musical Instruments (Shalishim; Toph).

Time

See Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

Timeus

Another way of spelling the name Timaeus.

See Timaeus.

Timna (Person)

1. Daughter of Seir, sister of Lotan, and a native Horite inhabitant of Edom ([Gn 36:22](#); [1 Chr 1:39](#)). She was a concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son, and the mother of Amalek ([Gn 36:12](#)).
2. Edomite chief ([Gn 36:40](#); [1 Chr 1:36, 51](#)). This name may refer either to the name of the ancestor of the Edomite clan or to the geographical area occupied by the clan.

Timnah (Place)

1. One of the cities on the northern boundary of Judah's inheritance, located between Beth-shemesh and Ekron ([Jos 15:10](#)). This is the likely site of Judah's affair with Tamar, which resulted in the birth of Perez and Zerah ([Gn 38:12-14](#)). A frontier town between Judah and Philistia, Timnah was the place where Samson had his first marital difficulties with one of the daughters of the Philistines ([Jgs 14:1-5](#); [15:6](#)). The town evidently changed hands frequently between the Israelites and the Philistines. Apparently, Israel did achieve control of Timnah during the conquest (cf. [Jos 19:43](#)), but it was under Philistine control by the time of Samson ([Jgs 14:1](#)). Ahaz recaptured Timnah (c. 730 BC) from the Philistines ([2 Chr 28:18](#)).
2. One of the cities of the southern hill country that was part of the inheritance of Judah ([Jos 15:57](#)). It is possible that this is the site of Judah's encounter with Tamar ([Gn 38:12-14](#); and perhaps the same as #1 above).

Timnath

KJV spelling of Timnah, a town in northern Judah, in [Genesis 38:12-14](#) and [Judges 14:1-5](#). See Timnah (Place) #1.

Timnath-Heres, Timnath-Serah

The city that Joshua the son of Nun asked for and that was given to him as his inheritance when the land was divided among the tribes of Israel ([Jos 19:49-50](#)). Joshua rebuilt the city and settled there. When Joshua died, he was buried on the property

located in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash ([Jos 24:30](#)). [Judges 2:9](#) gives the same location, but the name is Timnath-heres (see nlt mg), which means “territory [or portion] of the sun.” This seems to indicate that the city used to be a place for sun worship.

Timnite

Inhabitant from the town of Timnah in northern Judah ([Jgs 15:6](#)). See Timnah (Place) #1.

Timon

One of the seven men chosen by the early church in Jerusalem to serve the widows and manage the daily distribution of food ([Acts 6:5](#)). These seven men were selected because they were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The other six men were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Parmenas, and Nicolas.

Timotheus

KJV spelling of Timothy. See Timothy (Person).

Timothy (Person)

A young man who converted to Christianity and worked with the apostle Paul. His name means “one who honors God.”

Timothy first appears in [Acts 16:1-3](#) as Paul's disciple who was “the son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father” (verse 1). He was a third-generation Christian after his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois ([2 Timothy 1:5](#)).

The apostle Paul was like a spiritual father to Timothy. Paul refers to Timothy as “my true child in the faith” ([1 Timothy 1:2](#)). Paul may have helped Timothy convert during his first or second missionary journey.

Timothy was the son of a Greek (or gentile) father and was not circumcised. Circumcision is the practice of removing a small part of skin from the male sex organ. This practice was important to the Jewish people and showed that they were a part of God's people. When Paul decided to take Timothy with him on his second missionary journey, he had

him circumcised to avoid any problems in their missionary work among the Jews.

Timothy had a good reputation among the believers at Lystra and Iconium ([Acts 16:2](#)). He worked with Paul and became his assistant on Paul's second missionary journey at Lystra. Timothy traveled with Paul into Europe after Paul received a vision about Macedonia.

When Paul decided to go to Athens, he left Silas and Timothy at Berea to establish the church there ([Acts 17:14](#)). Timothy and Silas eventually joined Paul in Corinth ([18:5](#)). He then appears with Paul in Ephesus on his third journey ([19:22](#)), from where Paul sends him into Macedonia ahead of himself. Timothy is last mentioned in [Acts 20:4](#). He is included in a group going with Paul to Jerusalem to bring an offering for the Christian Jews there.

Paul mentions Timothy often in his letters. His name is included in the greetings that introduce 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. He was in Corinth on the second journey when Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He was at Ephesus on the third journey when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians. He was also in Rome during Paul's first time in prison there. This is when Paul wrote Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Timothy is the recipient of 1 and 2 Timothy.

In the greetings at the end of Paul's letter to the Romans ([16:21](#)), Timothy is listed along with others who send their good wishes to the believers in Rome. In [1 Corinthians 4:17](#) and [16:10](#), Paul praises Timothy as he sends him with a message to Corinth (see also [Philippians 2:19–23](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:2–6](#)). In [2 Corinthians 1:19](#), Timothy, like Paul and Silas, proclaimed the good news about Jesus Christ. Paul put Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus and wrote him two pastoral letters to help him succeed as a leader.

In [Hebrews 13:23](#), the author (who was probably not Paul) tells his readers that Timothy had been released from prison and that he hoped to come with Timothy to visit them. Therefore, we know that Timothy was in prison at some point in time.

See also Timothy, First Letter to; Timothy, Second Letter to.

Timothy, First Letter to

The first letter from Paul to his young coworker Timothy.

We should consider the authorship, date, and background of 1 Timothy along with 2 Timothy and Titus. These letters, known as the Pastoral Epistles, were written to help two young coworkers address church issues in Ephesus and Crete.

Preview

- Author
- Date
- Background
- Theology
- Content

Author

In 1 Timothy, as in 2 Timothy and Titus, Paul is named as the author in the first verse. Paul's name is the only one linked to these letters in early church tradition since the time of Irenaeus, around AD 185. All three letters contain many personal references to Paul's life, providing strong evidence that he was indeed the author.

Some scholars argue against Paul writing it for these reasons:

42. The Greek vocabulary includes many words not found in other letters by Paul.

But, the subject matter in these letters is different. In the Pastoral Epistles, the author addresses technical issues of church organization and discipline. A church leader writes to other leaders. Paul was highly educated and had a large vocabulary. All the unique words in the Pastoral Letters could have been part of Paul's vocabulary. If they were not his words, they might have come from the scribes Paul often used to write his letters.

43. Some notes about Paul's journeys do not match the journeys described in the book of Acts.

To believe that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles and did the things described in them, he must have been released from Roman imprisonment. After his release, he would have traveled to Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia. The writer of Acts may not have mentioned these later journeys because the book concludes with Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

Some legal evidence suggests that Paul would have been released automatically after two years if he had not been convicted by then.

- 44.** The detailed development of the church in the pastoral letters suggests they were written after Paul's lifetime. They mention elders, bishops, and deacons.

Elders existed in Old Testament times, and bishops in local churches are likely the same as elders. Paul also mentions deacons in his letters, like in [Philippians 1:1](#).

Most conservative scholars, and many others, strongly believe that Paul wrote all three Pastoral Letters.

Date

If Paul wrote the Pastorals, he likely wrote 1 Timothy after his first release from Roman imprisonment, around AD 61 or 62. He wrote it before his second imprisonment, between AD 64 and 67, when Nero died. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and traveled to Macedonia ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)), where he may have written 1 Timothy. The letter was addressed to Timothy in Ephesus.

Background

Paul left Timothy in charge of the church in Ephesus ([1 Timothy 1:2-3](#)). Paul wanted to visit the Roman province of Asia, where Ephesus was the main city, during his second missionary journey, but the spirit did not allow it. Instead, he traveled to Macedonia and Greece ([Acts 16:6](#)). He briefly visited Ephesus at the end of his second journey ([Acts 18:19-20](#)). On his third journey, he made Ephesus his main base and spent three years there ([Acts 19:1-20:1](#)). During his first imprisonment in Rome, he wrote a letter to Ephesus and nearby churches. A few years later, he wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy in Ephesus.

Theology

The theology of 1 Timothy aligns with other letters by Paul and the New Testament overall. It repeatedly shows God's sovereignty and love. Jesus is presented as both God and man. Salvation comes through faith in God via Christ. The law cannot save anyone because everyone has broken it. However, the law is good and guides saved people to live a life that pleases God.

The church is a major focus of the letter. All Christians should join the church. They gain much from it for developing Christian character and can serve God more effectively within it. The church needs organization to work effectively. It must always strive to avoid false teachings and teach the truths of the gospel.

Content

Salutation (1:1-2)

The author, Paul, calls himself an apostle, chosen and authorized by God the Father and his son, Christ Jesus. Paul had the authority to speak to the young pastor and the church.

The letter is written to Timothy, Paul's cherished spiritual child. Paul gave him three blessings:

- 45.** Grace
- 46.** Mercy
- 47.** Peace from God

Dealing with Heresy (1:3-20)

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to stop people from teaching incorrect beliefs ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)). Paul thought that beliefs were as important as actions. The false teaching mentioned here is an early form of Gnosticism, a harmful belief that troubled the church for centuries.

Early Gnostics believed they have deeper insights into truth than average Christians. They separated God as spirit from humans as matter. For Gnostics, many angels, emanations [a spiritual overflowing from God], and time periods connected the two, instead of Jesus Christ as the sole mediator. They debated myths and fables. They sought salvation by pleasing an endless chain of angels rather than accepting God's salvation through faith. However, only God's grace can save sinners, as Paul knew well.

Correct Worship in the Church (2:1-15)

"I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be offered for everyone" ([1 Timothy 2:1](#)). Prayer is a very important part of Christian church worship. Paul stressed the need for special prayers for those in high authority, even though the state was the Roman Empire with Nero as its emperor. Paul taught this clearly in [Romans 13](#), and Jesus told his disciples to give to Caesar what belonged to him ([Matthew 22:17](#)).

Christian men and women should pray to God, raising holy hands that are free from sin, anger, and resentment. Paul specifically advised the women: "I want the women to adorn themselves with respectable apparel, with modesty, and with self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess to worship God" ([1 Timothy 2:9-10](#)). Paul also said, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man" ([1 Timothy 2:12](#)). However, this did not mean they could not speak in church meetings. According to Acts and 1 Corinthians, women prayed, prophesied, and testified in church meetings. Teaching was reserved for men because elders, who were male, had the responsibility to teach. Thus, teaching and having authority were connected.

Proper Organization in the Church ([3:1-5:25](#))

The first issue to resolve about the early church's organization was identifying the bishops. The first verse of this section states, "If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble task" ([1 Timothy 3:1](#)). In all the Pastoral Epistles, the bishop is clearly an officer within a local church, not an official over multiple churches like the episcopal bishop role that developed in the early second century. In light of [Titus 1:4-6](#), where Paul moved directly from elders to bishops, most scholars believe Paul used the two terms interchangeably. Timothy would be the closest to a modern pastor in the church, with elders (bishops) and deacons helping him govern the church.

Being an elder in the church is a noble goal. However, a person must meet high standards to be chosen for this important role. He should earn respect from both church members and outsiders. While most qualifications are clear, a few need further explanation.

"An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife" ([1 Timothy 3:2](#)). The Greek literally says, "a man of one woman." This clearly prohibits polygamy and excludes a man who is unfaithful to his wife. It likely does not exclude a man who has been divorced and remarried or a bachelor who has never married. The church should require its leaders to uphold a high standard of sexual morality.

An elder should manage his family well if he is to lead in the church. He should not be a heavy drinker. Paul did not require complete abstinence, but he insisted that an elder should not be

controlled by alcohol. An elder should not be a new Christian, as this might make him arrogant and hinder his leadership. Overall, only a person of excellent character should be chosen as an elder or bishop in the church.

Paul then spoke about the role of the deacon: "Deacons likewise must be dignified" ([1 Timothy 3:8](#)). The qualifications for deacons are almost the same as those for elders. Before becoming deacons, they should have experience in church work. [First Timothy 3:11](#) applies the same qualifications to women who want to be deacons and to the wives of deacons. [1 Timothy 3:12](#) continues with the general qualifications for deacons.

In [1 Timothy 4](#), Paul encourages Timothy to lead the church, especially when dealing with heretics. Some Gnostic heretics promoted false asceticism, forbidding marriage and certain foods. However, God provided these things for us to use and appreciate for his glory. Timothy's role as a pastor was to teach God's truths and avoid getting involved in debates about the heretics' godless and silly myths ([1 Timothy 4:7](#)). Paul advised Timothy to keep his spirit strong through regular spiritual practice, which was more important than physical exercise.

Paul knew Timothy was young, and older Christians might look down on him for it. Timothy should work hard to earn their respect—in speech, behavior, love, faith, and purity ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)). Since God called Timothy and the church ordained him by laying hands on him, Timothy should aim to meet these important responsibilities.

Paul advised Timothy on how a young preacher should interact with different age and gender groups in the church. He should treat older men like his father, older women like his mother, younger men like his brothers, and younger women like his sisters, emphasizing "with absolute purity" ([1 Timothy 5:2](#)).

Paul advised Timothy on how to help widows. At that time, few women could work, and there was no insurance or social security. Women who lost their husbands faced difficult situations. The early church created a list to help widows. Younger widows were encouraged to remarry for support. Families able to help should care for their own needy members. The church would then care for older widows without family support. The church must use its limited resources wisely and fairly to help as many as possible.

In the early church, leaders received payment for their work. Paul said they should "worthy of double honor" ([1 Timothy 5:17](#)). Church leaders should not be chosen or ordained too quickly, and their sins should not be ignored. Timothy was also warned to keep himself free from sin. The section ends with another discussion about the sins of church leaders ([1 Timothy 5:24-25](#)). When sins are obvious, the church must discipline the sinner. Sometimes, a person's sins are not visible to others, but God knows and will address them. The same applies to the many good deeds of leaders.

Some Practical Teaching about the Christian Life ([6:1-21](#))

In those days, slavery was common. Christian slaves were expected to be obedient, and Christian masters were expected to be fair. Many centuries later, Christian values helped end slavery. However, during Paul's time, it was not possible for him or anyone else to start a movement to abolish slavery.

Timothy was encouraged to ignore the false teachings and focus on sharing the true messages of the gospel.

Two sections ([1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19](#)) discuss a Christian's view of wealth. Paul closely followed Jesus's teachings. Money can become a false god and cause many problems for church members. However, it can also serve God and become treasure stored in heaven.

Finally, in two sections ([1 Timothy 6:11-16, 20-21](#)), Paul encouraged Timothy to do his best to be a true man of God. He should fight well as a soldier of God. Life will often be hard, but Timothy should focus on the second coming of the glorious Christ.

See also Timothy, Second Letter to; Titus, Letter to.

Timothy, Second Letter to

Preview

- Author
- Place and Date of Writing
- Background
- Content

Author

Many people who doubt that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles agree that 2 Timothy includes some genuine parts from Paul, especially in the personal references. However, the evidence supporting Paul's authorship is stronger than the evidence against it. (See the discussion on the authorship of the Pastoral Letters under "Timothy, First Letter to.")

Place and Date of Writing

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to Timothy. [Second Timothy 1:15-18](#) specifically mentions his time in Rome and how Onesiphorus remained loyal when others from Asia deserted him. [Second Timothy 2:9](#) also mentions his imprisonment for preaching the gospel. Toward the end of the letter, starting at [2 Timothy 4:6](#), Paul shares his prison experience and his lack of hope for release. Second Timothy serves as a kind of last will and testament for the apostle. Early, reliable tradition states that Paul was martyred in Rome under Nero. Therefore, Rome was the place where 2 Timothy was written.

The letter was written to Timothy in Ephesus, as clearly stated throughout the letter.

Two possible years exist for when it was written.

48. The year 64 AD marks the great fire in Rome. Nero tried to blame the Christians for the fire. Paul may have been martyred then.
49. Nero died in AD 67, so that is the latest possible date.

The letter was written between AD 64 and 67, with a preference for the earlier date.

Background

After writing 1 Timothy, Paul traveled more and then reached Rome for his second imprisonment. See the section under "Timothy, First Letter to."

Content

Greeting ([1:1-2](#))

In ancient letters, the writer typically starts with their name. The writer then identifies himself as an apostle, a follower of Jesus Christ, and someone tasked with sharing the message of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul uses this

introduction to establish his authority and summarize the core of true Christian faith.

The letter is addressed to "Timothy, my beloved child." It includes a triple blessing: "Grace, mercy, and peace" from God the Father and his son, Jesus Christ. Paul, as in all his letters, replaces the plain Greek greeting, "greetings," with the profound theological term, "grace." He also adds the Greek translation of the common Hebrew greeting, "peace." Here, he includes the important word, "mercy," as he did in 1 Timothy.

Exhortations to Timothy to Be a Good Minister ([1:3-2:13](#))

Paul starts this section by telling Timothy how often he prayed to God, thanking him for Timothy. Paul prayed to the God of his ancestors, whom he aimed to please. Paul really wanted to see Timothy, especially when he remembered their tearful goodbye.

Paul reminded Timothy of his strong faith in the Lord, a faith passed down by his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. [Acts 16:1-3](#) mentions that Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer, while his father was a Greek, or Gentile. His father did not have him circumcised as a baby. However, his mother shared her faith with him. When Paul chose Timothy to join him on his second missionary journey, he had Timothy circumcised to help him work better with the Jews. Timothy inherited a rich spiritual legacy from Lois, Eunice, and Paul.

"I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" ([2 Timothy 1:6](#)). [First Timothy 4:14](#) adds, "the laying on of the hands of the elders." This suggests a formal ordination service, where Timothy was set apart as a minister of the gospel through the laying on of hands and prayer. Timothy should always remember that solemn moment, which should fill his life with strength and courage. He was truly a man of God, filled with the spirit, and unafraid to do his Christian work. Timothy might suffer for his faith, but he could find encouragement in the sufferings and imprisonment of his spiritual father, Paul. God would give Timothy the strength to endure suffering, just as he did for Paul.

Paul reminded Timothy that God saved both of them and chose them long ago to share God's love through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to defeat death and show the path to eternal life. Paul knew what he believed, but more importantly, he knew whom he trusted—Jesus Christ. Despite many

uncertainties, Paul was certain about Christ. Paul was also sure that Christ would protect what was entrusted to him until they met again. Paul wanted Timothy to have the same confidence.

Paul encouraged Timothy to firmly follow the teachings he had learned from Paul. These teachings focused on Jesus Christ and the faith and love in Christ. Timothy should protect this knowledge carefully, with help from the holy spirit.

Paul shared with Timothy his deep sorrow that all the Christians in the Roman province of Asia, where Ephesus was the main city, had abandoned him. Paul named two deserters, Phygelus and Hermogenes, whom Timothy evidently knew. In contrast, Paul praised Onesiphorus (also mentioned at [2 Timothy 4:19](#)), who was a wonderful and faithful helper to Paul in both Ephesus and Rome.

Paul urged Timothy to be strong with the strength Christ gave him ([2 Timothy 2:1](#)). Timothy should teach Christian truths to others and train them to teach more people. Paul likely thought of the elders and deacons (compare 1 Timothy). Paul used three illustrations to motivate Timothy to excel in his Christian service. Timothy should:

- 50. Fight and endure like a good soldier**
- 51. Compete well like a good athlete**
- 52. Work hard like a good farmer**

If they do their tasks well, all three will receive rewards. Jesus and other New Testament writers also used these illustrations.

During his teachings, Paul gave a clear summary of true Christology in [2 Timothy 2:8-10](#). Jesus was fully human and fully God. It is wrong to deny either the complete humanity or the complete divinity of Christ, even though no human can fully understand the mystery of the Incarnation. This divine-human being died and then rose from the dead.

Warnings against Heresy ([2:14-4:5](#))

This section starts with the statement, "Remind the believers of these things, charging them before God to avoid quarreling over words, which succeeds only in leading the listeners to ruin." Some beliefs are wrong and should be condemned, but Christians are warned not to argue about unimportant matters. Christians may become angry with each other and waste time fighting among themselves instead of opposing Satan.

Timothy needed to work hard to become a good servant and earn his Master's approval by understanding his teachings. This way, he could fight against false teachings. Two heretics, Hymenaeus and Philetus, are mentioned. Philetus is only named here in the New Testament. Hymenaeus is also mentioned in [1 Timothy 1:20](#) with another heretic, Alexander. Paul had excommunicated them by handing them over to Satan. They falsely taught that the resurrection of believers had already occurred ([2 Timothy 2:18](#)). This false teaching weakened the Christian hope of the final resurrection, which brings all believers into eternity. The heretics denied this reality and claimed it had already happened.

Paul encouraged Timothy to show he was a true servant of God. He should be known by God and live by God's truths. Timothy should avoid the harmful thoughts common to young men and resist the urge to argue. Instead, he should be gentle, patient, and humble, helping his people avoid Satan's traps.

[Second Timothy 3:1–9](#) contains Paul's strongest criticism of the false teachers in the church. They attend church but do not believe in Christian truths. They do not live Christian lives and try to persuade others to follow their beliefs. Paul compared these false teachers to the Egyptian magicians in [Exodus 7](#) (Jewish tradition calls them Jannes and Jambres). The false teachers in Timothy's time would fail in their attacks on the truth, just as Jannes and Jambres failed in their attacks on God and Moses.

Paul compared his life and beliefs to those of the heretics. Heretics had persecuted him, even during his first missionary journey. Despite this, he continued to preach the truth and led many to accept Christ. Timothy should follow Paul's example.

The best way to overcome false beliefs is to carefully study the Word of God. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)).

Paul instructed Timothy to preach the word faithfully and diligently. Many might not want to hear the Bible's truths, but Timothy should try to correct and rebuke them, even if it leads to persecution.

Paul's Faith and Hope ([4:6–18](#))

Paul wrote these important instructions to Timothy because he knew he had little time left on earth: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand" ([2 Timothy 4:6](#)). He can look back with satisfaction on a life of true faith and service. He can confidently look forward to his crown of victory in eternity. This faith helped Paul face death bravely, and it will do the same for all Christians who see the second coming as a blessed hope.

Paul asked Timothy to come to Rome to be with him. Luke was the only friend still with Paul. Paul mentioned other friends who had left. Demas had disappointed him. Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus had gone to other places. Paul asked Timothy to bring his coat from Troas, where he left it with Carpus. He also wanted his books, especially those on parchment, likely copies of Scripture. Paul warned Timothy about Alexander the coppersmith, an evil man (see [1 Timothy 1:20](#)).

During Paul's first trial, all his friends abandoned him. However, God stayed with him and saved him. Paul even had the chance to share the gospel with the world.

Final Greetings ([4:19–22](#))

Paul sent greetings to many of his friends in Ephesus. He also sent greetings to Timothy from some Roman Christians he knew. He urged Timothy to visit him before winter, when travel would be hard or impossible. He concluded with a short blessing: "The Lord be with your spirit."

See also Paul, The Apostle; Timothy, First Letter to; Titus, Letter to.

Tin

See Minerals and Metals.

Tiphsah

1. City on the northeastern boundary of Solomon's empire ([1 Kgs 4:24](#)). It is most likely identified with Thapsacus, a town mentioned frequently in Greek and Roman texts. Though its precise location is unknown, it was an important trading center on the Euphrates River that dominated an east-west caravan route and also served as a northern terminal for river traffic.

2. KJV rendering of Tappuah, one of the towns conquered by Menahem after he deposited Shallum in Samaria ([2 Kgs 15:16](#)). See Tappuah (Place) #2.

Tiras

Japheth's seventh son listed in the "table of nations" ([Gn 10:2](#); [1 Chr 1:5](#)). His descendants have been alternately linked to the Thracians, the Agathyrsi, the tribes of the Taurus mountain region, and the maritime Tyrrheni, but all of these identifications are purely speculative.

Tirathites

First of three families listed as scribes living at Jabez; perhaps belonging to the Kenite family ([1 Chr 2:55](#)).

Tirhakah

Ethiopian king who marched north to fight against the Assyrian army, thus diverting Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem ([2 Kgs 19:9](#); [Is 37:9](#)). The report of Tirhakah's intended invasion prompted the Rabshakeh's second threat against Jerusalem, Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance, and the subsequent divine destruction of the Assyrian army ([2 Kgs 19:8-37](#)). Tirhakah is almost certainly the Egyptian king Taharqa, who ruled from 689–664 BC during the 25th (Ethiopian) dynasty. Tirhakah probably served as commander of the army while he was crown prince, so that the reference to him as "king" refers to his then-future position.

Tirhanah

Hezronite and the second of Caleb's four sons by Maacah, his concubine ([1 Chr 2:48](#)).

Tiria

Jahallelel's son and a descendant of Judah through Caleb ([1 Chr 4:16](#)).

Tirshatha

KJV translation of a Hebrew word designating a title of authority with the connotation of "governor." It is appended to Zerubbabel's name ([Ezr 2:63](#)) and Nehemiah's name ([Neh 8:9](#); [10:1](#)), both of whom held the office in Jerusalem during the postexilic period.

Tirzah (Person)

Tirzah was one of the daughters of Zelophehad from the tribe of Manasseh ([Numbers 26:33](#)). Since her father had no sons, she and her sisters asked for and received the inheritance of their father ([Numbers 27:1](#); [Joshua 17:3](#)). This situation led to the creation of a new law about inheritance rights. The law stated that daughters who received their families' inheritance must marry someone from within their own tribe ([Numbers 36:11](#)).

Tirzah (Place)

Tirzah was the early capital city of the divided kingdom of Israel ([1 Kings 14:17](#); [15:21, 33](#); [16:6-23](#)). It was one of the cities captured by Joshua during Israel's conquest of Canaan ([Joshua 12:24](#)).

Tirzah became an important city when King Jeroboam made it his home ([1 Kings 14:17](#)). Baasha planned to move his capital to Ramah but his war against Asa forced him to return to Tirzah ([1 Kings 15:21](#)). Tirzah also served as the capital city for the kings Elah, Zimri, and Omri during the first six years of Omri's reign. But when Omri built a new capital called Samaria, Tirzah became less important.

In 753 BC, King Menahem used Tirzah to revolt against King Shallum ([2 Kings 15:14](#)). This might have been because of the rivalry between the cities of Tirzah and Samaria.

The city was known for being beautiful ([Song of Solomon 6:4](#)). It was built on a high hill, which would have given people a great view of the surrounding area. However, today we do not know exactly where the city was located.

Tishbe

Native city of Elijah the prophet and its inhabitants ([1 Kgs 17:1](#); [21:17, 28](#); [2 Kgs 1:3, 8](#); [9:36](#)). The

Hebrew form of Tishbe in [1 Kings 17:1](#) prompted the KJV to translate the word as "of the inhabitants [of Gilead]." Most translations follow the Septuagint, however, in considering Tishbe a proper noun. This reading is also supported by the fact that Elijah is elsewhere called a Tishbite. If Tishbe is considered a proper name, it is likely identified with Thisbe, a town in Naphtali that is mentioned in [Tobit 1:2](#).

Tishri

Hebrew month corresponding to about mid-September to mid-October. *See Calendars, Ancient and Modern.*

Tithe, Tithing

The word "tithe" comes from Old English, meaning "tenth." It refers to a tax on produce or labor to support religion.

The practice of tithing is very ancient. For example, Abraham paid a tithe, or a tenth, of his war spoils to Melchizedek (see [Genesis 14:20](#)). Tithing was also common in many places, including:

- Athens
- Arabia
- Rome
- Carthage
- Egypt
- Syria
- Babylon
- China

The book of Deuteronomy ([Deuteronomy 12:2–7, 17–19; 14:22–29](#)) says that when worship was centralized in Israel, people had to bring their annual tithe to the sanctuary. Priests and Levites shared this tithe. The items tithed included:

- Grain
- Wine
- Oil
- Livestock

Every third year, the entire tithe was given as charity to Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows ([Deuteronomy 26:12](#)). [Numbers 18:21–32](#) states that all tithes in Israel were given to the Levites as payment for their service as priests.

The prophet Malachi condemned those who withheld their tithes. He called it "robbing God" ([Malachi 3:8–10](#)). He promised that tithing would bring blessings, full barns, and pest protection. Early tithe feasts likely included thanks for God's gifts. This is not much emphasized in the texts (compare [Genesis 28:22](#)). Tithing's main purpose was to support God's service and charity.

The New Testament mentions tithing critically, except for Melchizedek's tithe ([Hebrews 7](#)). In [Matthew 23:23](#) and [Luke 11:42](#), Jesus criticized those who meticulously tithed small herbs. They neglected the more important matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. Jesus saw this as a sign of poor morals and misplaced priorities. He linked it to Pharisaism. He said that it was easier to follow the rules. It was more satisfying, too. It was harder to develop the moral sense to manage relationships with others and with God. In [Luke 18:12](#), a Pharisee, boasting in prayer about his virtues, mentioned his tithing of all his income as one of his claims to divine favor. Jesus, however, valued humility over pride-filled religious practices. He preferred a humble penitent to a boastful Pharisee.

See also Offerings and Sacrifices.

Titius Justus

A believer in Corinth with whom the apostle Paul stayed ([Acts 18:7](#)).

See Justus #2.

Title

Tiny ornamental "horn" on certain Hebrew letters. *See Jot or Tittle.*

Titus (Person)

53. One of Paul's converts—"my true child in our common faith" ([Timothy 1:4](#)). Titus was one of Paul's converts and a close friend who helped him spread Christianity around the Mediterranean world ([2 Corinthians 8:23](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [Titus 1:4-5](#)).

Paul mentioned Titus often in his letters (eight times in 2 Corinthians, twice in Galatians, once each in 2 Timothy and Titus). Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts. Scholars do not know why Titus is not mentioned in Acts. Some have suggested that he was a brother of Luke, the author of Acts.

Unlike Timothy, who had one Jewish parent, Titus was born to non-Jewish parents. We do not know how Titus became a Christian or met Paul. The first time we hear about Titus is when he went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem ([Galatians 2:3](#)). This was probably around AD 50, when church leaders met to discuss important issues at the Jerusalem Council ([Acts 15](#)). The church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to the council not long after Paul's first missionary journey.

At that time, some Christians thought new believers who were not Jewish (people who were not born into the Jewish faith) should follow Jewish customs. Paul disagreed with this idea. He brought Titus, who was not Jewish, to show that following Jewish customs was not needed to be a Christian. The church leaders agreed with Paul. They accepted Titus as a Christian without requiring him to follow Jewish practices. This decision helped the early church welcome more people who were not born Jewish.

Titus probably traveled with Paul after this, but we do not hear about him again until Paul had problems with the church in Corinth. This happened during Paul's third missionary journey to share the message about Jesus.

According to 2 Corinthians, Paul was teaching in Ephesus for a long time. During this time, he heard that the Christians in Corinth were angry with him. They no longer accepted Paul as a leader chosen by God (an apostle). Paul tried to make peace with them, but it did not work. So Paul sent Titus to Corinth to help fix the relationship. Later, Titus met

Paul in Macedonia (a region in Greece) and brought good news. He said the Corinthian Christians had changed their minds. They now loved and respected Paul again ([2 Corinthians 7:6-7](#)). Because of this, Paul sent Titus back to Corinth with his second letter to the Corinthians. This letter included instructions to collect money for the poor Jewish Christians of Judea ([8:6, 16](#)). Titus was successful in this task, too ([Romans 15:25-6](#)).

Some people think Paul was set free after being in prison in Rome. If this is true, it seems Titus went with Paul to the island of Crete. When Paul left Crete, he asked Titus to stay and help the new Christian groups there grow stronger ([Titus 1:5](#)). This job was not easy. The people of Crete were hard to manage, and there were already false teachers causing problems for the new Christians (verses [10-16](#)). But Paul knew Titus could handle this difficult task.

Later, Paul wrote a letter to Titus. This letter is one of Paul's three Pastoral Letters (letters written to guide church leaders). Paul wrote it to encourage Titus in his work with the Christians in Crete. The letter ends with Paul asking Titus to join him at Nicopolis, a town on the west coast of Greece, where he planned to spend the winter ([Titus 3:12](#)). Paul probably sent Titus on a mission to Dalmatia from Nicopolis. Or he might have sent him later from Rome, where Paul was in prison again (see [2 Timothy 4:10](#)). Dalmatia was a region that is now part of Croatia. If later tradition is correct, Titus returned to Crete, where he served as bishop (church leader) until he was an old man.

See also Titus, Letter to.

54. An alternate spelling of the name of a gentile proselyte in Corinth. Paul went to his house after the Jewish community rejected his message ([Acts 18:7](#)). Better manuscript evidence names him as Titius Justus. *See* Justus #2.
55. Vespasian's son. He was the emperor of Rome from AD 79 to 81. *See* Titus Caesar.

Titus Caesar

Titus was a Roman emperor who lived from AD 39 to 81. He ruled the Roman Empire from AD 79 to

81. He was the son of Emperor Vespasian. He was known for his military skill and kind leadership.

Military Career and War in Palestine

Titus's full name was Titus Flavius Vespasianus. He was a successful military leader in Germany and Britain. When the Jewish people rebelled, he joined his father Vespasian in Palestine.

After Vespasian left for Rome, Titus became the general in charge of Roman forces in the region. On September 26, AD 70, the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. They also captured the city's fortress and killed many Jews. Titus returned to Rome with prisoners and treasures from the temple. He and his father celebrated their victory.

To honor this event, the Romans built the Arch of Titus in Rome. It still stands today as a symbol of that victory.

Life in Rome

Before becoming emperor, Titus worked closely with his father. He helped write official orders and spoke in the Roman Senate. He was good at politics and also skilled in music.

Titus fell in love with Queen Bernice, the sister of King Agrippa II ([Acts 25–26](#)). He planned to marry her but changed his mind after hearing rumors that she had an inappropriate relationship with her brother.

His Short Rule

Titus became emperor after Vespasian died in AD 79. During his short rule, three major disasters struck:

- Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the towns of Pompeii, Stabiae, and Herculaneum (August, AD 79)
- A fire burned parts of Rome for three days (AD 80)
- A deadly sickness spread across the city

The Roman writer Suetonius said Titus cared for the people like a father cares for his children. When he died suddenly in AD 81, people across Rome mourned. Both leaders and everyday citizens praised him for his kindness and leadership.

See also Caesars, the.

Titus, Letter to

Paul's letter to his colleague, Titus.

Preview

- Author
- Recipient
- Date
- Purpose and Teaching
- Content

Author

This letter starts with Paul's name and greeting ([Titus 1:1–3](#)). However, modern scholars question if Paul wrote it. They cite its language, style, church situation, and presentation of Christian teaching. Yet, many respected scholars and careful students defend Paul's authorship. They argue there is no reason to believe someone else wrote it using Paul's name after his death. The differences between this letter and Paul's other letters are explained in the "Author" section of the article "Timothy, First Letter to."

Recipient

Titus was one of Paul's most trusted and valuable coworkers. Paul refers to him ([2 Corinthians 8:23](#)) as "my partner and fellow worker." According to [Titus 1:4](#), Paul converted him. [Galatians 2:1–4](#) shows that Titus was a Gentile. He was a test case for whether Gentile Christians needed circumcision. At that time, Titus was with Paul and Barnabas in Jerusalem. Much later, during Paul's third missionary journey, Titus had two important tasks in Corinth. The first involved repairing the strained relationship between Paul and the Corinthian Christians. The second involved the Gentile collection for the Jerusalem church ([2 Corinthians 2:12–13; 7:5–16; 8:1–24](#)). If [2 Timothy 4:9–18](#) was written at the end of Paul's life, then Titus went to Dalmatia after this letter.

Date

It is hard to date this letter precisely. Titus stayed in Crete to continue the apostle's work ([Titus 1:5](#)). Paul visited Crete briefly on his way to Rome ([Acts 27:7–13](#)), but that was not the time mentioned here. In [Titus 3:12](#), Titus is asked to come to Nicopolis, likely in Epirus, Greece, where Paul planned to spend the winter. Many believe that after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome ([Acts](#)

[28:16–31](#)), he was released and continued his ministry in places like Spain, Crete, and Greece. He was then arrested again, imprisoned, and eventually executed. Those who doubt Paul wrote Titus think this letter, like 1 and 2 Timothy, was written in the generation after Paul's death.

Purpose and Teaching

This letter, though addressed to a colleague of the apostle, contains few personal references and advice. Paul's main concern was the growing churches in Crete. They faced false teachings with Jewish elements, strict practices, and much speculative talk ([Titus 1:10, 14–15; 3:9](#)). It seems they encountered an early Jewish form of Gnosticism. The advocates of this teaching promoted it for selfish gain ([Titus 1:11](#)). Titus and the elders he appointed were tasked with correcting these false teachings and providing sound instruction ([Titus 1:9](#)). While the letter does not specify this sound teaching, it likely related to God's saving grace in Christ, the holy spirit's renewing work, and the future return of Jesus ([Titus 2:11–13; 3:4–7](#)). The letter emphasizes living a life that reflects the gospel's truth, with guidance for different groups in the Christian community:

- Older men and women
- Young women
- Young men
- Slaves

Content

Greetings (1:1–4)

Paul sends greetings. He is an apostle responsible for spreading the gospel. This gospel encourages faith, strengthens truth, offers hope of eternal life, and promotes godly living. Paul addresses Titus as "my true child in our common faith."

Titus's Work in Crete (1:5–9)

Titus stayed in Crete to continue Paul's work and appoint leaders in each church (see [Acts 14:23](#)). These leaders are also called bishops (see [Acts 20:17, 28](#)), meaning they oversee the church. The required qualities for these roles are described (see [1 Timothy 3:2–7](#)).

Dealing with False Teachings (1:10–16)

The previous section ends by discussing the elders' duty to "encourage others by sound teaching and refute those who contradict it." The opposers were disturbing people, even "entire households," by spreading false teachings. Paul described these false teachers in a negative way, similar to how he spoke about Cretans. He noted that their lives did not reflect the knowledge of God they claimed to have.

Promoting Right Teaching (2:1–10)

Titus had a special duty to encourage living that matches good teaching. He needed to urge older men to be self-controlled ([Titus 2:2](#)) and teach older women to live godly lives ([Titus 2:3](#)). These women were then to guide younger women to live pure and loving lives at home, so no one would speak badly about God's word ([Titus 2:4–5](#)). Younger men were to practice self-control ([Titus 2:6](#)). Titus was to be a role model in speech and actions, so opponents would have nothing negative to say about Christians ([Titus 2:7–8](#)). Lastly, slaves were taught to obey their masters and provide honest service, so they would make the teachings about God our savior appealing in every way ([Titus 2:10](#)).

God's Grace (2:11–15)

The purpose of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ is to bring salvation to everyone. People should turn away from godless and sensual living to lead upright lives. They should always expect the return of "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." Their lives will show that they belong to God and are always eager to do what is right.

Doing What Is Good (3:1–8)

In this section, Paul tells Titus to instruct the Christians in Crete to obey their rulers (see [Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17](#)) and to be ready for honest work in the community. Paul emphasizes living a good life, especially showing courtesy and seeking peace in relationships. This lifestyle results from spiritual change. The saving work of Christ, given through mercy and not earned, enables this change. He provides cleansing from sin, through "new birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

Paul's Final Remarks and Greetings (3:9–15)

In this final section, Paul advises Titus to avoid people who argue about religion just to argue. He

also instructs Titus on handling those who create divisions.

After this, Paul tells Titus he will send him Artemas or Tychicus. He then encourages Titus to take care of Apollos and Zenas if they visit Crete. Titus should come to Paul in Nicopolis before winter.

The letter ends with a final encouragement to do good deeds and live a spiritually fruitful life.

See also Paul, The Apostle; Timothy, First Letter to; Timothy, Second Letter to; Titus (Person) #1.

Tiz

Village in which Joha lived ([1 Chr 11:45](#)).

Toah

Kohathite Levite and Samuel's ancestor ([1 Chr 6:34](#)).

Tob

A place where Jephthah went to live after his half brothers forced him to leave because he was born to a different mother ([Judges 11:3-5](#)). During the rule of King David, the Ammonites hired 12,000 men from Tob as soldiers to fight against David ([2 Samuel 10:6-8](#)).

Tob was probably the same as the Aramean kingdom called Tob, which was located in the desert to the east or northeast of Gilead. Many years later, during the time of the Maccabees, a group of Jewish people lived in Tob.

Tob-Adonijah

One of the Levites under Jehoshaphat who went out into the cities of Judah to teach the law ([2 Chr 17:8](#)).

Tobiah

56. The ancestor of a family of people who returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon. This family was not able to prove their Jewish heritage ([Ezra 2:60](#); [Nehemiah 7:62](#)).

57. An Ammonite who opposed Nehemiah when he arrived in Jerusalem about 445 BC. Tobiah is called "the Ammonite official" in [Nehemiah 2:10, 19](#), a term describing an important person with power, like a governor. He, Sanballat, and Geshem were the main opponents of the wall's reconstruction. They were high-ranking Persian Empire officers. He was connected by marriage with the Jews in two ways. He married Shecaniah's daughter, the son of Arah. His son Jehohanan married Meshullam's daughter, the son of Berekiah ([Nehemiah 6:18](#)). His marriage to a prominent Jerusalem family gave him strong ties with the city's aristocracy ([Nehemiah 6:17](#)).

Nehemiah had to face the threat posed by Tobiah and his influential allies. Nehemiah was accused of leading the people of Jerusalem in a revolt against King Artaxerxes ([Nehemiah 2:19](#)). As the wall was rebuilt, Tobiah planned to besiege Jerusalem ([Nehemiah 4:8](#)). Nehemiah ordered the Jews to defend themselves. They continued to repair the wall, protected by armed guards. As the enemy forces drew closer, every worker held a weapon, along with his trowel ([Nehemiah 4:17-19](#)). They believed that "Our God will fight for us" and were encouraged ([Nehemiah 4:20](#)). Tobiah also joined in the plot to assassinate Nehemiah after the walls were rebuilt ([Nehemiah 6:2-4](#)). Nehemiah was accused of false reports of rebellion. A Jerusalemite, hired by the allies, tried to tempt him into entering the temple. This would discredit his standing among the faithful ([Nehemiah 6:5-13](#)).

After Nehemiah left Jerusalem to meet Artaxerxes, Tobiah regained his followers. The priest Eliashib, related to Tobiah, then converted a temple offering room for him ([Nehemiah 13:4-5](#)). Tobiah used these quarters when visiting Jerusalem. One of Nehemiah's first actions, upon his return, was to

evict Tobiah from the temple ([Nehemiah 13:8–9](#)) and then restore the room for its proper use.

Tobias

The hero of the book of Tobit, who with divine aid marries his kinswoman Sarah, in spite of a jealous evil spirit, and restores his father Tobit's sight. *See* Tobit, Book of.

Tobijah

- 58.** A Levite sent by King Jehoshaphat to teach the law in the cities of Judah ([2 Chronicles 17:8](#)).
- 59.** One of four men who returned from Babylon to Jerusalem with gold and silver used to make a crown for the high priest Joshua (spelled "Jeshua" in the New Living Translation, [Zechariah 6:10, 14](#)).

Tobit (Person)

Primary character of the deuterocanonical book of Tobit. *See* Tobit, Book of.

Togarmah

Third son of Gomer, a descendant of Japheth ([Gn 10:3; 1 Chr 1:6](#)). Beth-togarmah ("house of Togarmah") appears in Ezekiel's prophecy against the nations that opposed Israel ([Ez 27:14; 38:6](#)). Beth-togarmah was one of the principal trading partners of Tyre, providing war horses and mules. Since Togarmah is consistently linked with Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Dedan, and Tarshish, Ezekiel probably had the ethnographic lists of [Genesis 10](#) in mind. As an ethnographic term, most have identified Togarmah with Armenia. The Armenians identify Togarmah (Thorgon) as the founder of their race.

Tohu

One of Samuel's ancestors ([1 Samuel 1:1](#)). He belonged to a family group called the Kohathites,

who were members of the Levite tribe. The Levites were people who served in God's temple.

Toi

A king who ruled over Hamath during the time when David defeated the armies of Hadadezer ([2 Samuel 8:9–10](#)). He is also called Tou in [1 Chronicles 18:9–10](#). Toi sent his son Joram to congratulate David and to give him gifts.

Token

One of the villages settled by the tribe of Simeon ([1 Chronicles 4:32](#), spelled "Tochen" in the King James Version). The name does not appear in a similar passage in [Joshua 19](#). However, in that list in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) it is written as Thokka.

Tokhath

Another form of Tikvah, the father-in-law of Huldah the prophetess, in [2 Chronicles 34:22](#).

See Tikvah #1.

Tola

1. One of the four sons of Issachar named among the 66 descendants of Jacob who accompanied him in the migration to Egypt to join Joseph ([Gn 46:13](#)); and the ancestor of the first of four families of the tribe of Issachar, as identified in the census of Israel undertaken by Moses and Eleazar ([Nm 26:23](#)). Tola's sons were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel ([1 Chr 7:2](#)). The Israelite clan of the Tolaites took its name from him ([Nm 26:23](#)), and during the time of David the warriors of his family numbered 22,600 men ([1 Chr 7:1–2](#)).

2. One of the judges of Israel, the son of Puah and the grandson of Dodo ([Jgs 10:1](#)), of Issachar's tribe. Shamir, his home and burial place, was in the hill country of Ephraim. There he judged Israel for 23 years.

Although he "delivered" Israel after the debacle of Abimelech's abortive attempt to establish a monarchy at Shechem, his accomplishment is covered in just two verses ([Jgs 10:1–2](#)). Like other

"minor judges," mentioned only briefly (e.g., [12:8–15](#)), he actually functioned in the judicial role—some more prominent "judges" (e.g., Gideon and Jephthah) were first, and perhaps solely, military heroes.

See also Judges, Book of.

Tolad

Another form of Eltolad, a city in Simeon's territory, in [1 Chronicles 4:29](#).

See Eltolad.

Tolaite

Any descendant of Tola from the tribe of Issachar ([Numbers 26:23](#)).

See Tola #1.

Tomb

See Burial, Burial Customs.

Tongues of Fire

A phrase in [Acts 2:3](#), describing the physical appearance of the Spirit. The tongues of fire seem to fulfill John the Baptist's prediction that the Coming One would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire ([Matthew 3:11](#); [Luke 3:16](#)). The disciples are described as being filled with the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the Old Testament promise that John the Baptist and Jesus repeated about the baptism of the Spirit.

See also Pentecost.

Tongues, Speaking in

Speaking in tongues is when someone speaks in a language they have not learned. This is a special gift from God. The Greek word for this is *glossolalia*, which means "speaking in tongues." It is a combination of the word *laleo* ("to speak") and *glossa* ('tongue').

First Appearance in the Early Church

The first time people spoke in tongues was on the Day of Pentecost. On this day, the Holy Spirit filled 120 Christians who were meeting together. They began praising God in many different languages they had never learned. People from about 16 different nations who were in Jerusalem could understand what the Christians were saying because each person heard the message (the good news about Jesus) in their own language ([Acts 2:8–11](#)).

Other Times People Spoke in Tongues

Later in the book of Acts, other groups of people also spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Spirit ([10:46](#); [19:6](#)). However, not everyone spoke in tongues when they received the Spirit (see [8:15–17](#)). This shows that speaking in tongues was not the only sign that someone had received the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that all believers receive the Holy Spirit when they become part of the church, which is called the body of Christ ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)). The real evidence that the Holy Spirit is working in someone's life is the "fruit of the Spirit" as described in [Galatians 5:22–23](#):

- love
- joy
- peace
- patience
- kindness
- goodness
- faithfulness
- gentleness
- self-control

Public and Private Use of Speaking in Tongues

In the days of the early church, some Christians spoke in tongues and some did not. Paul taught that an interpreter must be present if speaking in tongues was done publicly in church. If no one could interpret, tongues should be used privately as a way to pray and worship God. In these cases, the person is speaking to themselves and to God ([1 Corinthians 14:28](#)). This is different from speaking in tongues during church meetings, which requires someone to interpret the message for everyone to understand.

However, under certain conditions described by Paul, speaking in tongues can become one of the spiritual gifts used in ministry to the church for the common good. The primary concern is that speaking in tongues in public should not be reduced to simply praying or speaking without interpretation.

Rules for Speaking in Tongues in Church

The apostle Paul gave clear rules about speaking in tongues during church meetings. These rules are meant to ensure that the gift of speaking in tongues serves the church and does not become a way to seek personal fulfillment ([1 Corinthians 14:27-33](#)):

60. Only one, two, or three people should speak in tongues during a worship service.
61. These people should speak one at a time, not all at once.
62. Someone must be present who can explain (interpret) what is being said in tongues. If no one can interpret, the person should not speak in tongues during the service.
63. The person speaking in tongues should not be the same person who interprets the message ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)).
64. If there are too many people speaking in tongues and not enough interpreters, people should pray for the ability to interpret instead ([1 Corinthians 14:13](#)).
65. After someone interprets the tongues into regular language, others should evaluate whether the message agrees with God's truth.
66. People with the gift of discernment (the ability to tell if something is truly from God) should test everything that is said ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)).

People should always stay in control of themselves during worship. They should not blame unusual behavior on being "carried away by the Spirit." God brings peace and unity, not disorder and confusion.

Paul taught that Christians should not specifically seek the gift of speaking in tongues. Instead, they should desire gifts that help everyone understand God's message clearly ([1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 5](#)). However, if someone has the gift of tongues, they should not be prevented from using it, as long as they follow these rules and use it to help others.

See Baptism of the Spirit; Spiritual Gifts.

Topaz

See Stones, Precious.

Tophel

Place where Israel camped opposite the Jordan, "in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel" ([Dt 1:1](#)). Tophel has been identified with et-Tafileh, east of the Dead Sea. *See Wilderness Wanderings.*

Topheth

Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem. Israel dishonored the Lord there by offering human sacrifices to the god Molech.

King Josiah, as part of his religious reform, destroyed Topheth and tore down its altars ([2 Kings 23:10](#)). These reforms opposed practices established earlier by his grandfather Manasseh ([2 Chronicles 33:6](#)). Jeremiah, a prophet who lived during Josiah's time, later condemned the return of such practices ([Jeremiah 7:31-32](#)).

Jeremiah prophesied that the valley would one day be called the "Valley of Slaughter." He said this because the Babylonians would defeat Judah there when they attacked Jerusalem. Jeremiah repeated this prophecy during his parable of the potter's flask. He said that Jerusalem would be destroyed so completely that it would be like Topheth ([19:12](#)).

By Jeremiah's time, Topheth also seems to have become a kind of city dump. People threw away broken pottery there. It was also used for burials that could not take place in the main cemeteries of Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 19:11](#)).

While Topheth is not mentioned in the New Testament, it is linked to Gehenna (the Aramaic

form of "valley of Hinnom"). Gehenna refers to the place of destruction and is typically translated "hell" in the New Testament ([Matthew 5:22, 29–30; 10:28; 18:9](#); [Mark 9:43–47](#); [Luke 12:5](#)).

Torah

A word translated as "law" in the Old Testament. "Torah" comes from the Hebrew verbal root *yarah*, which means "to throw" or "to shoot." The idea behind the word is to inform, instruct, direct, or guide. In Jewish tradition, the Torah is the text of the first five books of the Bible, also called the Pentateuch.

The Written Torah

The word Torah means more than just the first five books of the Bible. In the Old Testament, Torah refers to all of God's teachings and instructions for his people. The New Testament continues this broader meaning of Torah. When translated into Greek, the word Torah becomes *nomos* and may refer to either the Mosaic law or a broad behavioral principle ([Romans 7:14; 9:31](#)).

The Oral Torah

Jewish teachers also follow something called the "oral Torah." This is a collection of teachings from ancient Jewish religious leaders and scholars that was passed down by word of mouth. While these teachings are not part of the Old Testament, they help explain how to follow God's laws in daily life.

This often made the demands of the Law less strict by understanding them in a new way. This became especially important after the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. The temple was where Jewish people would worship God, offer sacrifices, and meet with priests—all things that God had commanded in the Torah. When they could no longer do these things, they needed new ways to follow God's laws.

By the time Jesus was born, these oral traditions were well established (compare [Mark 7:3](#)). Many Jews believed these teachings were implied in the Torah given to Moses.

How Different Groups Understood the Torah

The Pharisees were an important Jewish religious group during the New Testament period. They believed God had punished the Jewish people by letting the Babylonians capture them and take

them away from their homeland in the seventh century BC. They thought this happened because the people had not obeyed God's laws in the Torah carefully enough. Many Pharisees also believed that God's promised savior (the Messiah) would not come until all Jewish people fully followed the Torah's rules.

The Sadducees were another important group of Jewish religious leaders. Unlike other Jewish groups, they only accepted the Torah as God's word. They focused less on miracles or other supernatural events described in the Torah. The Sadducees also did not believe people could live again after death. But Jesus used the words of the Torah to show that there is life after death (compare [Matthew 22:31–32](#)).

The Torah in Worship and Ceremony

Reading the Torah in Jewish places of worship (called synagogues) is a very special ceremony that has been practiced for thousands of years. Being asked to read from the Torah is considered a great honor.

The Torah scrolls are carefully handwritten in Hebrew by a specially trained writer called a sofer (or scribe). These scrolls are made from animal skin that has been prepared according to Jewish religious rules. The scroll is wrapped around two wooden, silver, or ivory poles.

The ends of these poles are often beautifully decorated with precious metals and jewels. When someone reads from the Torah, they use a special pointer called a yad to keep their place in the text. This pointer helps protect the scroll because touching the words directly with fingers could damage the delicate writing over time. The pointer also helps the reader follow the words correctly without skipping any of God's sacred message.

The Torah's Role for Non-Jews

Traditional Jewish teachers say that God gave the Torah specifically to the Jewish people. This means that non-Jewish people do not need to follow all its rules.

However, a famous Jewish teacher named Maimonides, who lived in the Middle Ages, taught that non-Jewish people could receive God's blessings in the afterlife by following seven basic rules. According to Jewish tradition, God gave these rules to Noah. They are:

67. Do not worship false gods.

- 68.** Do not commit sexual sins.
- 69.** Do not murder.
- 70.** Do not disrespect God's name.
- 71.** Do not act unjustly.
- 72.** Do not steal.
- 73.** Do not eat meat from an animal while it is still alive.

The Torah in the New Testament

The New Testament teaches something important about the Torah. While God's laws in the Torah were necessary for their time, they were not meant to be the way people could earn their salvation by following rules perfectly. Even though one verse seems to suggest people could become right with God by following his laws, no human can obey God's laws perfectly ([Leviticus 18:5](#)).

The Old Testament shows that God has always saved people through his kindness, not through their perfect behavior. For example, God accepted Abraham because of his faith, not because he followed all the rules perfectly ([Genesis 15](#)). This happened 400 years before God gave the Torah to Moses. This shows us how God has always welcomed people who trust in him.

One main purpose of God's laws is to help people see that they cannot be perfect on their own ([Galatians 3:24](#)). When people try to follow all of God's laws, they realize how much they need God's help and forgiveness ([Romans 7:7](#)). This leads them to trust in Jesus.

Jesus greatly respected the Torah. The purpose of his life was to fulfill everything the Torah required. When people trust in Jesus, they receive the benefit of his perfect obedience to God's laws. Jesus is the end of the law so that everyone who has faith in him may be justified ([Romans 10:4](#)).

See also Judaism; Law, Biblical Concept of; Talmud.

Tortoise

A tortoise is a slow-moving reptile with a hard shell that lives on land.

In Bible times, the word "tortoise" in some English translations may actually refer to certain kinds of lizards ([Leviticus 11:29](#)). This is because the original Hebrew word in that verse is uncertain

and could describe a different reptile common in the Middle East.

See Lizard; see also Animals.

Tou

Another form of Toi, the king of Hamath, in [1 Chronicles 18:9-10](#).

See Toi.

Tower

See Fort, Fortification; Watchtower.

Tower of Babel

See Babel.

Tower of Shechem

See Shechem, Tower of.

Tower of Siloam

See Siloam, Tower of.

Tower of the Furnaces

KJV translation for "Tower of the Ovens," a tower in Jerusalem, in [Nehemiah 3:11](#). *See Ovens, Tower of the.*

Tower of the Hundred

See Hundred, Tower of the.

Town Clerk

A town clerk was an important official in ancient city governments. This person had the job of writing down and announcing the decisions made by city leaders. The town clerk also helped communicate between the city and the Roman government.

In Ephesus, the town clerk helped calm an angry crowd that had gathered because of Paul's teaching ([Acts 19:35](#)). The town clerk had the power to punish people who caused trouble in the city. Fortunately, he was able to quiet the crowd and prevent further problems.

Trachonitis, Traconitis

One of the five Roman provinces east of the Jordan River. The other Roman provinces east of the Jordan River were Batanea, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, and Iturea. This region, which may have included parts of Gaulanitis, Batanea, and Auranitis, was part of the tetrarchy ruled by Philip, the brother of Herod ([Luke 3:1](#)). Traconitis was a barren area located northeast of the Sea of Galilee. In Aramaic, it was known as *Argob*, meaning "heap of stones," which described the rough and rocky terrain.

Aside from the reference in Luke, Traconitis is rarely mentioned in historical records. The Jewish historian Josephus suggests that Uz, the son of Aram (compare [Genesis 10:23](#)), colonized the area. The Romans took control of Traconitis when Augustus defeated a local robber-chief, Zenodorus. He then gave the land to Herod the Great, on the condition that he suppress the bandits. After Herod's death, his son Philip inherited the land but likely only had control over it in name.

Today, the region is called *el-Lejah* and is located in southern Syria and northern Jordan.

Trade Routes

See Travel.

Tradition

Respect for tradition was strong among Jews during the period at the beginning of the Christian era. The Rabbinic Tradition supported the written law. An important collection about tradition was the *Pirke Abot*, Traditions of the Fathers. This collection of comments by famous rabbis added explanations of the written Law in scripture. A collection of rabbinic traditions became an authoritative commentary on the written law. These collections of traditional wisdom were considered to be equal to the written Law.

The Pharisees used the expression "tradition of the elders" when speaking to Jesus about hand washing ([Matthew 15:2](#); [Mark 7:5](#)). In his response, Jesus referred to the "traditions of men," drawing attention to the human origin of the traditions.

In [Mark 7:8](#), he definitively set the commandment of God over these traditions. Jesus talked about how the tradition had become a burden to the people. Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees for the way traditions were enforced as law ([Matthew 23](#)). He noted that following the tradition had become more important than the moral and personal effect of the teaching.

See Judaism; Law, Biblical Concept of; Pharisees; Talmud; Tradition, Oral.

Tradition, Oral

The way stories, beliefs, and customs are passed down from one generation to the next by speaking them aloud rather than writing them down. Oral tradition is different from written tradition, but they are closely connected. Many written stories come from oral traditions. It is important to study how people changed from telling stories to writing them down.

In the ancient Near East, scribes recorded all important events. At the same time, people told these stories out loud, helping to spread information in their society and to future generations. It is important to understand that written and spoken versions of the same stories often existed together and helped interpret each other.

Oral transmission was very important in Judaism. One of the main ideas in rabbinic theology (the beliefs of Jewish religious teachers) is that the oral law is as important as the written Law. The oral law included traditional explanations passed down from teachers to students. As people passed on these traditions, they added more explanations of basic ideas.

Rabbinic literature shows that schools used careful methods to study the Law. The main goal of teachers was to make sure students memorized the teachings accurately. In rabbinic Judaism, passing on oral tradition became a highly organized technique.

This care was important because the oral law was considered as important as the written Law. It was

essential that these traditions were not passed on carelessly. Authorized oral tradition was a key part of Jewish life.

In the earliest period, Jesus's words and actions were likely passed on by word of mouth. We are not sure if Jesus used the same teaching methods as the rabbis. However, people took just as much care to preserve his teachings as the rabbis did with their oral law.

See also Judaism; Pharisees; Talmud; Tradition.

Trajan

Trajan was a Roman emperor known for his military success and for expanding the Roman Empire. He was born in AD 53 and died in 117. He was emperor of the Roman Empire from AD 98 to 117.

Early Life and Rise to Power

Trajan's full name was Marcus Trajanus. He was born in Italica, Spain, to Roman parents. His father was a soldier who later became governor of a province in eastern Spain. Trajan trained as a military leader and became well known for his skill in battle. He fought in Spain, Syria, and Germany.

In AD 97, the emperor Nerva adopted Trajan as his son and chosen successor. When Nerva died the next year, Trajan became emperor.

Military Success and Building Projects

As emperor, Trajan added new lands to the Roman Empire through military conquests. These included:

- Dacia (today's Romania and Hungary)
- Arabia
- Parthia (part of modern-day Iran)

Trajan also built many new cities. One of them was Thamugadi, located in the area now called Algeria. He built bridges over the Danube River in Dacia and the Tagus River in Spain. He improved trade by creating a new harbor at the port of Rome.

Persecution of Christians

A Roman writer named Pliny wrote to Trajan about Christians. In his letter (*Letters* 10.96), Pliny said that Trajan punished Christians. At that time, Roman leaders believed that worshiping Jesus was

dangerous. Christians refused to worship Roman gods or the emperor's image. This was seen as a threat to the safety and unity of Rome.

See also Caesars, the.

Transfiguration

Event in Jesus' earthly ministry described in four passages in the NT ([Mt 17:1–8](#); [Mk 9:2–8](#); [Lk 9:28–36](#); [2 Pt 1:16–18](#)), wherein Jesus was glorified in the presence of three disciples: James, Peter, and John.

The Location of the Event

The exact site where the Transfiguration took place is not given in the NT. [Matthew 17:1](#) and [Mark 9:2](#) simply state that it took place on a "high mountain." Various suggestions have been made as to which mountain, with the traditional site being Mt Tabor, a round hill located in the plain of Esdraelon approximately 10 miles (16.1 kilometers) southwest of the Sea of Galilee. There are, however, two major problems with this suggested location. For one, it is difficult to see how Mt Tabor can justifiably be called a "high mountain," for it is less than 2,000 feet (609.6 meters) above sea level. Second, in the time of Jesus a Roman garrison was stationed on Mt Tabor, and thus it would be unlikely that Jesus would have walked with his disciples up this mountain. A second suggestion for the site is Mt Carmel, which is located on the coast, but this seems off the main route of Jesus' travel after the events of Caesarea Philippi. A third suggestion is Mt Hermon, which is over 9,000 feet (2,743.2 meters) high and lies about 12 miles (19.3 kilometers) to the northeast of Caesarea Philippi. Mt Hermon is indeed a high mountain and has the additional advantage of being located near Caesarea Philippi.

The Event

Six days after the events of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to be alone with him on a high mountain. As on several other instances, these three disciples alone accompanied Jesus (cf. also [Mk 5:35–43](#); [14:32–42](#)). According to the Gospel accounts, three things took place at the Transfiguration:

1. "He was transfigured." The various accounts all witness to an unusual transformation of Jesus. Jesus is transfigured: "his face shone like the sun,

and his garments became white as light" ([Mt 17:2](#)). This transformation is described in Matthew and Mark by the Greek verb metamorpheo, the root for the word "metamorphosis." This indicates that a tremendous change occurred.

2. Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke to Jesus. These men, who undoubtedly represent the Law and the Prophets, are said to have spoken to Jesus of his "exodus," or departure ([Lk 9:31](#)). The term used in [Luke 9:31](#) to describe Jesus' "exodus" (or death) is rather unusual and clearly portrays the death of Jesus not as a tragedy or defeat but as a victorious journey.

3. After Peter's remark that it was good for the three disciples to be present and witness this, and after his suggestion that they build three booths, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" ([Mk 9:7](#)). These words were clearly a rebuke for Peter having placed Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. To make three booths (one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus) loses sight of who Jesus is, and the voice from heaven pointed out Peter's error. The rebuke also must be understood in light of what Peter had said a few days earlier at Caesarea Philippi. Had Peter forgotten that he had just said to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

The Meaning of the Event

In order to understand the significance of the Transfiguration, it is important to contrast the heavenly voice at Jesus' transfiguration with the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism. At the baptism both [Mark 1:11](#) and [Luke 3:22](#) indicate that the voice was addressed to Jesus: "You are my beloved Son." At the Transfiguration, however, the voice is not addressed to Jesus but to Peter, James, and John: "This is my beloved Son" ([Mk 9:7](#)). Clearly the events of the Transfiguration are primarily directed toward the disciples rather than Jesus. "He was transfigured before them" (v [2](#)); "there appeared to them Elijah with Moses" (v [4](#)); "a cloud overshadowed them . . . 'listen to him'" (v [7](#)); "they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only" (v [8](#)). Evidently from these references, the incident is not meant so much for Jesus' sake as for the disciples'. Following closely after the events of Caesarea Philippi, God appeared to affirm at the Transfiguration what Peter had previously confessed at Caesarea Philippi: Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

In [2 Peter 1:16–18](#) the writer recounts that he was an eyewitness of the Transfiguration. John seems to

have done the same thing when he wrote the prologue to his Gospel and said, "We have beheld his glory" ([Jn 1:14](#)). At the Transfiguration the true form (Greek morphe) of the Son of God temporarily broke through the veil of his humanity and the disciples saw his preexistent glory. In this transformation of Jesus, the three disciples witnessed something of Jesus' preincarnate glory, as well as his future glory, which he received at his resurrection and which all will see when he returns to judge the world.

When Christ returns in his glory, all the believers will be transfigured and thereby receive a glorious, resurrected body. Thus, Christ's transfiguration is the preview of every believer's transfiguration (see [1 Cor 15:42–45](#); [Phil 3:20–21](#); [Col 3:4](#)).

See also Jesus Christ, Life and Teachings of.

Transformation

An inward renewal and reshaping of the mind through which a Christian's inner person is changed into the likeness of Christ. Paul told the Roman believers, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds" ([Rom 12:2](#)). As one's Christian life progresses, the person should gradually notice that his or her thought life is being changed from Christlessness to Christlikeness. Transformation does not happen overnight—regeneration is instantaneous, but transformation is not. Christians are transformed to Christ's image gradually as they spend time beholding him in intimate fellowship. Eventually, they will begin to mirror the one they behold. Paul said, "We all with unveiled face, mirroring the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another, even as from the Lord who is the Spirit" ([2 Cor 3:18](#)—from the Greek). This does not come from conscious imitation but from spiritual communion with the Lord. The result will be beyond our expectations. The apostle John said it well: "We can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is" ([1 Jn 3:2](#), nlt).

Transgression

A transgression is breaking a law or command. In the Bible, it often means disobeying God's law.

See Sin.

Transjordan

Territory on the east side of the Jordan River. Although this name does not appear in the Bible, numerous events took place there in biblical history. Today the area is roughly equivalent to the kingdom of Jordan. In biblical times the area would have comprised Bashan, Gilead, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the desert regions farther east. In the OT the expression "beyond the Jordan" is often used for the area ([Gn 50:10-11](#); [Dt 3:20; 4:47](#); [Jos 9:10; 13:8; 18:7](#); [Jgs 5:17](#)), although the same expression is used occasionally for the area west of Jordan ([Dt 3:25](#)). In NT times, this area was known as Perea. See Perea.

Travel

Travel in biblical times refers to the movement of people within and between regions during the periods described in the Old and New Testaments. Travel was typically done for religious, commercial, or military purposes.

In biblical times, roads were difficult and sometimes impassable for travel. Sea voyages were made in small ships, usually by military and commercial personnel. Ships were rarely used for simple tourist traffic. With little reason to travel, ordinary citizens tended to remain in limited areas. From time to time, there were group migrations. Sometimes people traveled for religious festivals or fled from war or famine.

Travel in Old Testament Times

Several stories show the people of Israel moving over restricted areas to graze their flocks. Joseph's brothers took flocks from the south of the land up to Shechem and then to Dothan ([Genesis 37:12-17](#)). This was a 96.5-kilometer journey (60 miles). David traveled around Palestine and even went to Moab ([1 Samuel 22:3](#)). The Danites moved from their home southwest of Jerusalem to the north, just south of the Lebanon Mountains ([Judges 18](#)).

Examples of travel for better pasturelands, migration, and protection are common. Travelers would normally walk, though people sometimes rode asses or used them as pack animals. Oxen could haul heavy loads and sometimes people ([Genesis 46:5](#)). Later the camel came into general use for travel ([1 Kings 10:2](#); [2 Kings 8:9](#)). Little is

known of resting places for travelers in Old Testament times. There are only a few references to a "lodging place" (*malon* in Hebrew) in Old Testament narratives ([Genesis 42:27](#); [43:21](#); [Exodus 4:24](#)).

Travel in New Testament Times

People in the Roman world traveled often:

- to fulfill religious obligations at festival time,
- for trade,
- for government administration, and
- for military purposes.

Early Christian missionaries also traveled extensively.

Roman peace and authority combined with well-made Roman stone roads made travel relatively safe and quick. The modes of travel improved over that known in Old Testament times. People could travel long distances within the Roman Empire over good roads and in comparative safety. Sea travel was still risky, with wind, storms, and pirates ([Acts 15:39](#); [18:18-22](#); [Romans 15:24-25](#); [2 Corinthians 11:25-26](#)). Paul's sea journey to Rome, for example, was dangerous ([Acts 27:1-28:14](#)).

The New Testament mentions several journeys on foot:

- Mary traveled from Galilee to Judea to visit Elizabeth ([Luke 1:39–40, 56](#)).
- The baby Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the census ([Luke 2:1–7](#)).
- Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to comply with the Jewish purification law ([Luke 2:22](#)).
- The annual Passover visit was made by Joseph and Mary ([Luke 2:41–51](#)).
- Other journeys are mentioned ([John 2:13; 5:1; 7:1–10; 12:1](#)).
- Jesus himself walked to Jericho from Galilee ([Mark 1:1–11](#)) and also to the region of Tyre and Sidon ([7:24](#)).
- Jesus was in Samaria more than once ([Luke 17:11; John 4:4](#)).
- Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem was via Jericho and up through the hills to Jerusalem ([Mark 10:1, 46; 11:1](#)).
- Jesus's last journey after the resurrection was to Emmaus ([Luke 24:13–35](#)).

Paul traveled by sea on each of his missionary journeys ([Acts 13:1–14; 15:41–18:22; 18:23–21:17](#)). He was often accompanied by friends. He also made many journeys on foot in Palestine, Asia Minor, and the Greek peninsula.

But not all travel was on foot in New Testament times. People often traveled by riding on donkeys. Jesus once rode from Bethphage to Jerusalem, a short but highly symbolic journey ([Matthew 21:2–7; Mark 11:1–11; John 12:12–15](#)). When Joseph traveled with his pregnant wife, Mary, to Bethlehem for the census at the time of Jesus' birth, Mary probably rode on an ass. The Ethiopian eunuch was riding in a chariot after worshiping at Jerusalem and was joined by Philip traveling on foot ([Acts 8:26–38](#)). Roman soldiers both marched and used horses for traveling. When Paul was brought to Caesarea from Jerusalem, mounts were prepared for him ([23:23–24](#)).

Roads and Sea Lanes

Roads were important in the development, land formation, and history of Palestine. Palestine

formed a bridge between Egypt and centers of civilization and trade in the Middle East. Many roads were strategically important for commercial and military use. Some roads became important as pilgrim routes to ease travel to religious centers like Jerusalem. Roads in biblical times were of three main types:

74. long-distance international roads
75. medium-distance intraregional roads
76. roads inside each region or state

Great International Roads

Great international roads linked the Mediterranean coast to the northern Tigris Valley and southern Mesopotamia. Some linked Mesopotamia to Asia Minor. Others led south to Egypt, either along the coast or east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and across the Sinai Peninsula.

Trade routes ran between Anatolia and Assyria early in the second millennium BC. A major trade route ran from northern Mesopotamia to Egypt, called the King's Highway. [Genesis 14](#) refers to a military campaign launched to make the King's Highway safer and more secure for travelers.

Military invaders and travelers from Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia traveled across Syria, then turned south into Palestine and Egypt. As Greece and Rome increased in power and influence, the Middle East opened up another network of roads for the peoples of the East.

Until Roman times, roads were not surfaced with stone but were cleared pathways. They were very rough and sometimes steep. In wet weather, roads became impassable in many places. But they were well marked by "waymarks" and "guideposts" ([Jeremiah 31:21](#)).

The Romans built important roads with deep foundations and large blocks of flat stone at the surface. Roman roads can still be seen in many places in the Middle East and in Europe. Distance markers or milestones were placed along the roads.

International North-South Roads in Palestine

The roads that linked countries to the north with Egypt passed through Palestine, a natural land bridge. There were three major roads:

- The coastal road began in Damascus. It passed through Hazor across the plain of Esdraelon, through the Megiddo Pass. Then the road went down the coast past Gaza and into Egypt. This was probably "the way of the sea" ([Isaiah 9:1](#)).
- The Sinai road led from Egypt into the southern Negev. It then took travelers to Kadesh-barnea, Beersheba, Hebron, Jerusalem, Shechem, Acco, Tyre, and Sidon.
- The Red Sea road entered the Palestine area from the Gulf of Aqaba. The ancient port of Elath and Solomon's port of Ezion-geber was here ([Numbers 33:35; 2 Chronicles 8:17](#)). From there it led through the mountainous areas of Transjordan. It crossed deep valleys and then traveled north through the Hauran region to Damascus. This was the road taken by caravans from southern Arabia to Damascus, the ancient King's Highway ([Numbers 20:17; 21:22](#)).
- One such road led from Gaza to Beersheba and then down the Arabah, with an offshoot to Petra.
- Another led from Ashkelon, via Gath, to Hebron and on to En-gedi on the Dead Sea.
- Another road led from Joppa east up the valley of Aijalon ([Joshua 10:6-14](#)) to Bethel and on to Jericho.
- One well-used road led from Joppa to Shechem, across the Jordan at Adam ([Joshua 3:16](#)) and into Gilead in Transjordan.
- Other roads led from Acco eastward to Galilee and also up the coast to Tyre and Sidon. There were many east-west roads that connected various parts of Palestine. In Roman times, when the speedy movement of armies was essential, some of the old roads were improved and new ones built.

Sea Lanes

While other local populations like the Phoenicians relied on sea travel, the people of Israel seldom used the sea lanes. When Solomon planned to send ships down the Red Sea to Ophir ([1 Kings 9:26-28](#)), he used Phoenician sailors. Jehoshaphat planned a similar expedition, but his ships were wrecked ([22:48-49](#)). Coastal traffic in Old Testament times was in the hands of Philistines and Phoenicians. There were several ports along the Mediterranean Sea coast, such as Gaza, Joppa, Dor, and Acco, but none were considered good harbors. There were also sea lanes linking the Mediterranean coast with Egypt and distant Tarshish (probably Spain). The other coastal water was the Gulf of Aqaba with its two ports:

- Ezion-geber for Transjordan
- Elath for west of the Jordan.

Solomon's fleet used Ezion-geber as its home port.

Trade changed in New Testament times. The Middle East made many trade items used by peoples farther west, especially the Romans. Alexandria in Egypt and Antioch in Syria handled both cargo and travelers. Smaller ports like those

East-West Roads

Several important roads ran east-west, intersecting the larger roads leading north.

in Palestine and many others around the coast of Asia Minor provided a haven for ships. A land crossing was engineered across the 8-kilometer-(five-mile-) wide peninsula at Corinth. Smaller boats were hauled overland to avoid a 321.8-kilometer (200-mile) journey around the Greek peninsula.

Even large ships in New Testament times were in danger from wind and storm at sea ([Acts 27](#)). Sea travel was limited to when the risk of storms was smaller, roughly from November to March. Trade-based sea traffic in the Mediterranean Sea was high at appropriate seasons. Grain ships crossed regularly from Rome to Egypt and to the east.

Ships were driven by sail power. When needed, oars operated by slaves provided extra power. Ancient wrecks and descriptions in Latin and Greek literature show the size of these ships. An old dry dock 39.6 meters (130 feet) long found near Athens was once used for Greek war vessels, which were smaller than the cargo vessels. The Roman writer Lucian refers to an Alexandrian grain ship 54.9 meters (180 feet) long. A ship that large would have a capacity of about 1,088.6 metric tons (1,200 tons). Paul's ship carried 276 persons ([Acts 27:37](#)). Modern underwater archaeology continues to give more information about ancient ships.

Reasons for Travel

The most important reason for travel in New Testament times was for trade and commerce. This kind of travel involved far more than transferring goods. People worked as agents, supervisors, insurers of cargo, bankers, and more. Many jobs were involved in buying, moving, and delivering cargo.

Many people also traveled for military reasons. Military tasks involving travel included:

- observation and investigation
- securing supplies
- arranging for housing troops,
- transporting troops and equipment

Some travelers were tradespeople changing their place of employment, like Aquila and Priscilla ([Acts 18:2-3](#)). Aquila had traveled from Pontus on the Black Sea to Rome. Then, in a time of persecution, Aquila and his wife fled to Corinth. Other reasons people might have traveled include:

- People on religious pilgrimage traveled by land or sea. Jews from many lands journeyed to Jerusalem for the annual Passover festivities (compare [Acts 2:5-11](#)). Non-Jews went to religious centers at Ephesus, Athens, and Eleusis, where there were important temples. Many minor temples also attracted pilgrims.
- Craftsmen and builders traveled to meet the demand for new constructions. Building materials had to be moved to building sites.
- Some people made trips for health reasons. They went to temples famed for healing miracles or to enjoy the benefits of hot springs like those at Capernaum or Tiberias.
- Athletes traveled to major centers for important contests like the Olympic games. Crowds of people traveled to attend contest events.
- Some travelers were students or teachers going to great centers of learning.
- Official emissaries traveled bearing important government and commercial documents.

Despite all this activity, vast numbers of ordinary citizens hardly ever traveled more than a few miles from their homes.

Treasurer

An officer in charge of financial matters. In OT times he had charge of the royal or sacred treasures, which consisted of goods, documents, money, and jewels. He was steward of the king's possessions and overseer of the treasury. David appointed Azmaveth over the king's treasures, Jonathan over the treasures in cities and villages ([1 Chr 27:25](#)), and Ahijah over the temple treasures ([26:20](#)). Solomon's temple treasury was in the care of Jehiel ([29:7-8](#)). In Isaiah's day there was a treasurer for the household named Shebna ([Is 22:15](#)). An inscription found near Jerusalem may record his name.

Treasurers held positions in other lands too. King Cyrus of Persia entrusted his temple treasures to Mithredath ([Ezr 1:8](#)). Artaxerxes ordered the treasurers of the province “beyond the river” to supply funds to Ezra the priest ([7:21–22](#)). Nehemiah appointed treasurers over storehouses to distribute goods ([Neh 12:44; 13:13](#)).

In the NT, two treasurers are known. The Ethiopian eunuch was in charge of the treasury of Candace, queen of Ethiopia ([Acts 8:27](#)), and Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth ([Rom 16:23](#)). An inscription left at Corinth by Erastus, a Roman treasurer, may be his.

See also Money; Banker, Banking.

Tree

A tree is a plant with a woody stem called a trunk. Most trees have branches and leaves.

The Bible mentions many kinds of trees, such as olive, palm, and cedar. Trees were important for food, shelter, tools, and building. They also appear often in symbols and stories in the Bible ([Genesis 2:9](#); [Psalm 1:3](#); [Revelation 22:2](#)).

See Plants; *see also* Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; Tree of Life.

Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

Forbidden tree in Eden, whose fruit imparted knowledge and subsequent death, i.e., separation from God and ultimate expiration ([Gn 2:9, 15–17](#); [3:1–24](#)). The tempting serpent promised Eve equality with God if she ate the fruit. The result of Eve and Adam eating from this tree was that they indeed attained the “knowledge of good and evil.” According to the usage of the phrasing “knowing good and evil” in the rest of the Bible ([Dt 1:39](#); [Is 7:15–16](#); [Heb 5:14](#)), the idea is that it describes a stage in a child’s life when he or she passes from innocence to moral awareness.

Accompanying this knowledge is sexual self-awareness. Thus, when Adam and Eve partook of the fruit, they became aware of their own sexuality. At the same time, they were able to see as God saw and thereby thought that God would shame them for their nakedness. The story came to symbolize the loss of innocence and divine companionship through deliberate disobedience in an attempt to attain godhood.

The sad result of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that Adam and Eve lost their innocence and were subsequently separated from God. Banishment from Eden followed to prevent the eating of fruit from a second tree, “the tree of life,” which would have made them immortal. But they would have been immortal in their fallen, sinful state. Thus, it was a blessing to banish them.

See also Adam (Person); Eve; Garden of Eden; Fall of Man; Tree of Life.

Tree of Life

Tree placed by God in the midst of the Garden of Eden ([Gn 2:8–9](#)), a tree whose fruit could give eternal life. God told Adam that he could eat from every tree of the Garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (vv [16–17](#)). When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were expelled from the garden lest they “take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever” ([3:22](#)).

The Genesis narrative suggests that God intended the tree of life to provide Adam and Eve with a symbol of life in fellowship with and dependence on him. Human life, as distinguished from that of the animals, is much more than merely biological; it is also spiritual—it finds its deepest fulfillment in fellowship with God. Life in the fullness of its physical and spiritual dimensions, however, could remain a person’s possession only so long as he or she remained obedient to God’s command ([Gn 2:17](#)). Apart from Genesis, the only other OT occurrences of the phrase the “tree of life” are found in Proverbs (quoted here from rsv), where it symbolizes the enrichment of life in various ways. In [Proverbs 3:18](#) wisdom is referred to as “a tree of life to those who lay hold of her”; in [11:30](#) “the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life”; in [13:12](#) a fulfilled desire is as “a tree of life”; and in [15:4](#) “a gentle tongue is a tree of life.”

The book of Revelation contains the only references to the tree of life in the NT ([Rv 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19](#)). The Bible begins and ends with a Paradise in the midst of which is a tree of life. The way to the tree of life, which was closed in [Genesis 3](#), is open again for God’s believing people. This was made possible by the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Those who have washed their robes in the blood of Christ (cf. [Rv 7:14](#)) and have sought forgiveness of their sin through the redemptive work of Christ, receive

the right to the tree of life ([22:14](#)), but the disobedient will have no access to it.

See also Adam (Person); Eve; Fall of Man; Garden of Eden; Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Trespass

Doing something wrong against God's law or against another person. In the Bible, trespass is often another word for sin ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)).

See Sin.

Trespass Offering

See Offerings and Sacrifices.

Tribe of Levi

The Beginning of the Tribe of Levi

The Levites were one of the tribes of Israel. The Levites are named after Levi, the third son of Leah and Jacob ([Genesis 29:34](#)). The name Levi means "attached," reflecting Leah's hope that bearing three sons would cause Jacob to be more attached to her as his wife. This idea of attachment also appears in [Numbers 18:2](#), where the tribe of Levi is described as being "attached" to Aaron.

Levi is first mentioned in connection with the violent event at Shechem, where Levi and Simeon slaughtered the inhabitants of the city in revenge for the rape of their sister, Dinah ([Genesis 34:25-29](#)). This act brought a rebuke from their father Jacob ([Genesis 34:30](#)), who also cursed them on his deathbed, predicting that their descendants would be scattered throughout Israel ([49:5-7](#)). Despite this curse, the tribe of Levi would later become God's chosen priestly tribe, while Simeon eventually merged into the tribe of Judah.

The Special Role of the Levites

At first, Levi was a "secular" tribe like the others, without any special religious role ([Exodus 2:1](#)). However, this changed when the Levites demonstrated their loyalty to God during Israel's rebellion with the golden calf incident ([Exodus 32:25-29](#)). As a reward for their faithfulness, God established a "covenant with Levi" ([Numbers 18:19](#)), setting them apart for priestly duties

([Numbers 3:11-13](#)). From that point on, the Levites were to serve as priests and religious leaders for Israel. In return for their service, the tribe of Levi did not receive a specific territory like the other tribes; instead, God was to be their inheritance ([Numbers 18:20](#)). However, they were given 48 cities, including six cities of refuge, scattered throughout Israel ([Joshua 21:1-42](#)).

Since Levi could build their own wealth or land, the tribe was to be supported by gifts and tithes ([Numbers 18:21](#)), like the widow, orphan, and stranger. Their livelihood was the responsibility of God's people ([Deuteronomy 14:29](#)). Since they were God's tribe, Joab did not want to include Levi in David's census ([1 Chronicles 21:6](#); compare [Numbers 1:49](#)). Levi did not serve in war except in a religious way ([2 Chronicles 20:21](#)). They were responsible for the meeting tent ([Numbers 1:50-53](#)) and later the temple ([1 Chronicles 23:25-32](#)).

Duties and Responsibilities

Within Levi, the Bible makes a clear distinction between:

- The high priest,
- The rest of the priests, and
- Some lesser Levites who had minor tasks.

In the early days, they packed and moved the tent of meeting ([Numbers 1:50-51](#)), and did other duties. Later, they served as doormen and musicians ([1 Chronicles 16:42](#)). The duties of Levi are listed in [Deuteronomy 33:8-11](#). There, religious help and advice are just as important as their priestly duties. So, it is not surprising that Jehoshaphat used them to teach the law ([2 Chronicles 17:7-9](#)). But, they were normally seen as simply priests ([Judges 17:13](#)).

The Levites' role as religious leaders and teachers was significant throughout Israel's history, and references to the lasting covenant with Levi can be found in [Jeremiah 33:20-26](#) and [Malachi 3:3-4](#). After the Babylonian exile, members of the tribe of Levi returned to Jerusalem ([Ezra 2:36-42](#)), with a higher proportion from the priestly families.

Levites in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Barnabas, a prominent early Christian, is identified as a Levite ([Acts 4:36](#)). Even today, the surname Levy among Jews often indicates descent from the tribe of Levi.

See also Priests and Levites.

Tribes, Territories of the

See Conquest and Allotment of the Land.

Tribulation

An experience of suffering, distress, trouble, or persecution. The Greek word appears in the New Testament about 45 times. There is a Hebrew word that appears in four or five Old Testament passages, never in the prophetic books. The New Testament is the main source of meaning for the word.

What Are Common Examples of Tribulation?

In the New Testament, the word "tribulation" is sometimes used to mean hardships in the lives of common people, such as:

- childbirth pain ([John 16:21](#))
- concerns in marriage ([1 Corinthians 7:28](#))
- the suffering of widows ([James 1:27](#))

These are all called tribulations. Major disasters like famine are called "great tribulation" ([Acts 7:11](#)).

What Did Jesus Teach About Tribulation?

A more specific understanding of the word "tribulation" means a specific Christian experience. The teachings of Christ provide basic definitions for this meaning of "tribulation." Jesus said that whenever the gospel is present in the world, tribulation is unavoidable. As the word of the gospel is spread, tribulation and persecution will also be present ([Matthew 13:21](#)).

This idea of tribulation during the church age is carefully developed in Jesus's teaching on future events. The main source for this teaching comes from Jesus' sermon preached on the Mount of Olives ([Matthew 24-25](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 21](#)). This teaching provides the only description and clear time frame for the tribulation of his followers. Jesus predicted the beginning, the extent, and the end of tribulation. This teaching on the tribulation was given to the 12 disciples privately ([Matthew 24:3](#)).

Jesus told the 12 disciples that they would endure tribulation. This tribulation means persecution to the death for his name's sake ([Matthew 24:9](#)). The teaching points to the idea that tribulation would affect Christians in many places throughout history. Jesus's prediction to the 12 disciples that they would be direct victims of tribulation ([Matthew 24:8](#)), gives a clear starting point.

The same group of disciples would witness the "great tribulation" of Jerusalem as predicted by the prophet Daniel ([Matthew 24:15-21](#)). It is clear in the passage that Jesus meant the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The fall of Jerusalem to Roman legions was to be viewed as symbol of ongoing tribulation. Matthew himself makes an editorial comment in [24:15](#), saying "let the reader understand." This would have alerted his original readers to the fulfillment of Jesus's prediction within their lifetimes. The parallel section in [Luke 21:20-24](#) makes it clear that non-Jewish people would rule for a long period after the destruction of Jewish Jerusalem. This is what happened after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

How Should Christians Respond to Tribulation?

The New Testament warns believers to expect tribulation. The New Testament also defines appropriate responses to tribulation:

- Christians should rejoice in sufferings because of the good fruit. Tribulation produces perseverance and strength of character ([Romans 5:3-4](#)).
- They should be patient because God comforts the faithful ([Romans 12:12](#); [2 Corinthians 1:4](#)).
- They should understand that tribulation prepares believers for glory in eternity ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#)).

It is rare in history for Christians to enjoy wealth and freedom. Most believers throughout history have suffered. The normal work of the church has been to endure as a persecuted minority in an unfriendly world. For Christians who are protected from tribulation, it may seem that tribulation applies to a future period in history.

Most Christians suffer oppression, rejection, trouble, and persecution. Because of this, the tribulation Jesus predicted is an ever-present reality. The severity of the tribulation may vary. Yet

Christ's promise remains true: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!" ([John 16:33](#)). See Suffering; Eschatology; Persecution.

Tribune

A Roman military official who served as the commander of a cohort (1,000 men). In New Testament usage it designated the commander of the Roman garrison (military post) in Jerusalem (for example, [Acts 21:31](#); [22:24](#); [23:10](#); [24:22](#)). Paul was placed under the tribune's protection after his arrest in Jerusalem ([21:33](#)).

Tributary, Tribute

See Tax, Taxation.

Trichotomy

The threefold division of human nature into body, soul, and spirit ([1 Thes 5:23](#)). See Man.

Trigon

A triangular-shaped harp mentioned in [Daniel 3:5–15](#). See Musical Instruments (Sabcha).

Trinity

The term designating the three members of the triune God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Bible does not use the word "Trinity." Scholars created it to describe the three members of the Godhead. The Bible presents God as Father, Son, and Spirit. They are not three "gods," but three personas of the one true God (see, for example, [Matthew 28:19](#); [1 Corinthians 16:23–24](#); [2 Corinthians 13:13](#)).

The Father is the source of creation, the giver of life, and the God of the universe (see [John 5:26](#); [1 Corinthians 8:6](#); [Ephesians 3:14–15](#)).

The Son is the image of the invisible God. He is the exact representation of his being and nature. He is the Messiah-Redeemer (see [Philippians 2:5–6](#); [Colossians 1:14–16](#); [Hebrews 1:1–3](#)).

The Spirit is God in action. The Spirit is God reaching and influencing people. The Spirit regenerates, infills, and guides them (see [John 14:26](#); [15:26](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Ephesians 2:18](#)).

They are a tri-unity. They inhabit and work together to fulfill the divine design in the universe (see [John 16:13–15](#)).

See also God, Names of (Father); Son of God; Spirit.

Triumphal Entry

A term that denotes Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem, where the multitudes welcomed him and hailed him as Son of David, King of the Jews. Ironically, this event occurred just a few days prior to his betrayal, arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

See also Jesus Christ (The Final Days in Jerusalem).

Troas

A city in ancient times that was located in what is now Turkey. It was located 16.1 kilometers (10 miles) south of Troy. Troy was famous as the place where the Trojan War happened, which the ancient poet Homer wrote about. Both Troy and Troas were built on an area called the Troad Plain, which stretched about 16.1 kilometers (10 miles) along the sea. The apostle Paul traveled from Troas to Macedonia after receiving a vision where a man said, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" ([Acts 16:9](#)).

Early History

About 300 BC, the Seleucid king Antigonus founded the city and named it after himself. Later, the name of the city changed to Alexandria Troas in honor of Alexander the Great. He had passed through Troas in pursuit of the Persians. The city became a Roman colony when Roman power replaced the Greeks. According to some scholars, Julius Caesar envisioned Troas as his eastern capital. Later, Constantine the Great first considered making it his capital before Byzantium (Constantinople).

Paul's Visits to Troas

Troas was an important seaport during the time of Paul. This was because it was the easiest and shortest route from Asia to Europe.

On the second missionary journey, Paul and Silas came to Troas. This was "after the Holy Spirit had prevented them from speaking the word in the province of Asia" ([Acts 16:6](#)). This trip to Europe is not emphasized in Acts. Yet, many scholars think this short voyage had great historical importance. They compare its significance to the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar. After this vision, Paul and Silas left Troas and passed the island of Samothrace. Then they landed at Neapolis (modern Kavalla), their first stop in Europe (verse [11](#)).

We know someone must have established a church in Troas. This is because of events described later. Paul finished his mission in Ephesus. Then he stayed and preached the gospel in Troas ([2 Corinthians 2:12](#)). On his way to Jerusalem for the last time, Paul stopped in Troas. There, he preached until after midnight. One of the young men slumped down into a sound sleep. Then he fell from a window and died. But Paul resurrected him. Then Paul continued teaching until morning ([Acts 20:6-12](#)).

Paul visited Troas again. It seems as though this was when they arrested him there. He left behind a cloak and papers. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul asks him to bring these items to him at his prison in Rome ([2 Timothy 4:13](#)).

Trogylillum

Trogylillum is a rocky area in the sea between the island of Samos and the city of Miletus. In [Acts 20:15](#), some early copies of the Bible mention that Paul's ship stopped at this place during his journey to Jerusalem near the end of his third missionary journey. Since Trogylillum is a piece of land that sticks out into the sea between Samos and Miletus, it would be reasonable for a sailing ship to have stopped there for the night.

However, most scholars who study ancient Bible manuscripts believe the phrase "after remaining at Trogylillum" (which appears in the King James Version) was added to the Bible text later and was not part of the original writing.

Trophimus

A Christian from the province of Asia. He accompanied Paul on his final trip to Jerusalem ([Acts 20:4](#)). Some Jews had seen Trophimus the Ephesian with Paul in Jerusalem. They assumed

that Paul brought him into the temple. Since Trophimus was not a Jew, they accused him of defiling the temple ([21:28-29](#)). This false accusation became the excuse to arrest and imprison Paul.

Trophimus was traveling with Paul as one of the representatives of the Asian church. They had selected him to oversee the collection for the Jerusalem church. Trophimus was likely one of the fellow believers who traveled with Titus to deliver the second letter to the Corinthians ([2 Corinthians 8:16-24](#)). According to [2 Timothy 4:20](#), Trophimus accompanied Paul before his final imprisonment in Rome. But then Trophimus stayed at Miletus because of an illness. Tradition suggests that Emperor Nero ordered Trophimus to be killed by cutting off his head.

Trumpet

See Musical Instruments (Hatzotzrot).

Truth

That which is real and verifiable by experience.

In Scripture, truth is a very important concept because God is the God of all truth ([Pss 31:5; 108:4; 146:6](#)), who speaks and judges truly ([57:3; 96:13](#)). He is the real source and cause of the whole universe. Scripture also focuses on the revealed truth in the gospel of God's redeeming grace through Christ. This is the truth Christ and the apostles proclaimed ([In 8:44-46; 18:37; Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 4:2](#)), which was foreshadowed in the OT ([1 Pt 1:10-12](#)), and witnessed to by the Holy Spirit ([In 16:13](#)). The OT teaching was never false, but it was shadowy and incomplete in comparison with the revealed truth of the NT. So Christ brought spiritual reality ([In 1:17](#)), and the Holy Spirit leads believers into the experience of all that is real in Christ ([16:13](#)).

Christ is the truth because, being God, his words carry divine authority. They are truth and life ([In 6:63](#)). In addition, the life of Christ epitomized truthfulness and utter reliability. When people live in obedience to the truth, they themselves are true and reliable. Scripture calls upon people to "do the truth" ([In 3:21](#), kjv). Those who have experienced God's reality in Christ know, by experience, that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life ([In 14:6](#)).

Tryphaena, Tryphena

A Christian woman of Rome. Along with Tryphosa, Paul called her one of the women “who have worked hard in the Lord” ([Romans 16:12](#)). These two women may have been sisters. Or, they may have both served as leaders (called deaconesses) in the church.

See also Deacon, Deaconess.

Tryphosa

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Tubal

Fifth of the listed sons of Japheth in the table of nations ([Gn 10:2](#); [1 Chr 1:5](#)). Tubal later gained significance in the prophetic writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel as one of the nations that would be judged for threatening God’s people ([Is 66:19](#); [Ez 27:13](#); [32:26](#); [38:2–3](#); [39:1](#)). Tubal is typically mentioned with Javan and Meshech as either nations of the north or nations of the coastlands ([Is 66:19](#); [Ez 38:2](#)). The fact that Tubal traded with Tyre ([Ez 27:13](#)) supports the premise that Tubal was located in a coastland region. Beyond this sketchy evidence, it is difficult to determine Tubal’s precise ethnic identification or location. It has been identified with the Scythians, the Iberians, the region between the Black and the Caspian Seas, Thessaly, and various Hittite tribes.

Tubal-Cain

Son of Lamech by his wife Zillah ([Gn 4:22](#)). He was “a forger of all instruments of bronze and iron.” Though the text does not claim that he was the first or the “father” of all ironworkers, many scholars think that the text originally paralleled verses [20](#) and [21](#) to imply that he was the first.

Tulip

A tulip is a flowering plant that grows from a bulb. Several types of tulips are native to Asia. The rose of Sharon mentioned in [Song of Solomon 2:1](#) may be the mountain tulip (*Tulipa montana*) or the closely related Sharon tulip (*Tulipa sharonensis*).

The mountain tulip is an attractive plant with leaves that often have wavy edges. This species commonly grows in the mountainous regions of Syria, Lebanon, and the Anti-Lebanon. As its name suggests, it primarily grows in mountain areas.

The Sharon tulip grows in sandy places on the Sharon coastal plains.

Tumbleweed

A tumbleweed is a dry, round plant that rolls across the ground when blown by the wind. The “tumbleweed” mentioned in [Psalm 83:13](#) and [Isaiah 17:13](#) likely refer to the Palestinian tumbleweed (*Gundelia tournefortii*). This plant belongs to the thistle family. It is a prickly herb that contains a milky juice. When it dries, it breaks off and rolls across the land, often gathering in large piles in low areas.

Tumor

Abnormal swelling or growth in any part of the body. The term notably appears in [1 Samuel 5–6](#). The Philistines took the ark of God from Israel. Soon after, a deadly and painful disease spread through the Philistine city where they kept it. The disease was associated with the presence of rats ([1 Samuel 6:4–5](#)). The signs of this disease match what we now call the bubonic plague.

In bubonic plague, the fleas of the rat transmit the bacteria *Yersinia pestis* to humans. The bacteria invade the human body. They cause fever and buboes, which are large, soft swellings in the armpit and groin. Without treatment, 6 to 9 out of every 10 people who got the disease would die. The Philistines sent the ark of God back to Israel. With it, they sent offerings made of gold that looked like rats and tumors ([1 Samuel 6:11, 17–18](#)).

See also Medicine and Medical Practice.

Tunic

See Clothing.

Turtledove

A turtledove is a type of small wild pigeon. Turtledoves are known for their gentle cooing sound. In the Bible, they were often offered as sacrifices, especially by people who could not afford larger animals ([Leviticus 5:7](#)).

See Pigeon.

Twin Brothers

The twin sons of Zeus in Greek mythology, also known as Castor and Pollux or the Dioscuri. Paul sailed from Malta to Rome on a ship that had these twin brothers as its figurehead ([Acts 28:11](#)).

See Dioscuri.

Tychicus

One of the believers who accompanied Paul in his trip to collect and deliver the offering for the Jerusalem church ([Acts 20:4](#)). Since he is often mentioned with Trophimus of Ephesus, Tychicus was likely also a native of that city.

Tychicus delivered Paul's letter to Ephesus ([Ephesians 6:21](#)) as well as Paul's letters to Philemon and the Colossians ([Colossians 4:7](#)). Most believe that he was also one of the two Christians (with Trophimus) who accompanied Titus in the delivery of 2 Corinthians ([2 Corinthians 8:16-24](#)).

Paul mentioned Tychicus twice in his later letters, first sending him to Crete to be with Titus ([Titus 3:12](#)). Later he mentioned to Timothy that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus ([2 Timothy 4:12](#)). Evidently, Tychicus and Paul were close friends as well as coworkers, since Paul frequently referred to Tychicus as a "beloved brother."

Type

The English word "type" is derived from the Greek *tupos*, which has the basic meaning of "a visible impression or mark made by a blow or by pressure." In the Greek New Testament, the word

occurs 16 times, with various meanings. A type is formed as a copy, print, or a form cast in a mold. In [Acts 7:43](#) it is applied to "figures" of idols or false gods. A type can be a pattern according to which something is made (for example, the tabernacle, [Acts 7:44](#); [Hebrews 8:5](#)). It is an example or model, whether of evil to be avoided ([1 Corinthians 10:6-11](#)) or of good to be emulated ([Philippians 3:17](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [1 Timothy 4:12](#); [Titus 2:7](#); [1 Peter 5:3](#)). It is like a form for pouring concrete, which determines both the shape and content of what is made.

A type is also an entity found in the Old Testament that prefigures one found in the New Testament. The initial one is called the "type" and the fulfillment is designated the "antitype." Either type or antitype may be a person, thing, or event, but often the type is messianic (prefiguring the Messiah, God's anointed one) and frequently refers to salvation.

A type can be distinguished from a symbol in that a symbol is a timeless sign. It can refer to past, present, or future, while a type always foreshadows that which is to come.

Some examples help to identify some biblical types and antitypes. The serpent lifted up on a pole in the wilderness to give healing to the Israelites was a type of Jesus being lifted up on a cross to give salvation to the world ([John 3:14](#); compare [Numbers 21:9](#)). The Passover lamb ([Exodus 12:1-13](#)) is a type of Christ ([1 Corinthians 5:7](#)). The rock from which Israel drank in the wilderness ([Exodus 17:6](#)) prefigures Christ ([1 Corinthians 10:3-4](#)). In [Romans 5:14](#) Adam is called "a type of the one who was to come," that is, of Christ.

The book of Hebrews is full of examples of types that represent the Messiah. All of the sacrifices ordained by the ritual law that God gave at Sinai typify some aspect of the person and work of Jesus. The blood that was sprinkled on the altar spoke of the blood of the one who was slain once for all ([Hebrews 9:12-22](#)).

Tyrannus, Hall of

Place in Ephesus where Paul taught daily for two years ([Acts 19:9](#)). Paul's ministry in Ephesus had begun at the synagogue, where he had preached for three months. Finding increasing opposition there, Paul rented the Hall of Tyrannus (nasb "school of

Tyrannus"), where he began a ministry to both Jews and Greeks (v [10](#)).

In Greek, the term "hall" literally means "leisure" or "rest." It eventually became associated with the kind of activity carried on during times of leisure, that is, lectures, debates, and discussion. Finally, the term came to mean the place where these leisure activities occurred.

Virtually nothing is known about Tyrannus himself. Some scholars have suggested that he was a Greek rhetorician, sympathetic to Paul's preaching. This suggestion is made plausible by an addition in the Western text that states that Paul taught in the hall "from the fifth hour until the tenth," that is, from 11 am until 4 pm (nrsv mg). This would mean that Paul used the hall only during afternoon rest periods, for in all Ionian cities, work ceased at 11 am and did not resume until late afternoon because of the intense heat. Possibly these rest periods made the hall available for Paul's use, and Tyrannus himself lectured there before and after these hours.

Tyre

An ancient Phoenician city-state that ruled itself like a small independent country. Tyre is located on the Mediterranean coast 32.2 kilometers (20 miles) south of Sidon and 37 kilometers (23 miles) north of Acre. Tyre had two major areas:

- an older port city on the mainland
- an island city a half-mile (0.8 kilometers) from the coast where the majority of the population lived.

History of Tyre

According to Herodotus, Tyre was founded around 2700 BC. The earliest references to Tyre are in a 15th-century Ugaritic document and a similar Egyptian document. Tyre first appears in the Bible in the list of cities in Asher's inheritance ([Joshua 19:29](#)). At that time, it was described as a "strong city" and was evidently never conquered by the Israelites ([2 Samuel 24:7](#)). Tyre was most significant as a merchant center. Because of its location, the city had strong trade through sea routes around the Mediterranean region. Overland trade traffic with Mesopotamia and Arabia was also significant.

Tyre's Relationship with Israel

While David and Solomon ruled Israel, Tyre was a strong commercial ally. Both David and Solomon traded with Hiram of Tyre. They traded agricultural produce for timber, building materials, and skilled laborers ([2 Samuel 5:11](#); [1 Kings 5:1-11](#); [1 Chronicles 14:1](#); [2 Chronicles 2:3-16](#)).

After the division of the kingdom, Tyre was still on friendly terms with Israel for some time. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was the daughter of "Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians." This king is known elsewhere as Ithobal of Tyre ([1 Kings 16:31](#); the ancient historian Menander also mentions this king). At some point, Assyrian and Babylonian aggression created enough pressure on Tyre to reject the alliance. By the time Samaria fell, Tyre and Israel were no longer allies and became enemies not long after.

Prophecies About Tyre

In the later kingdom, Tyre was strongly criticized by the prophets ([Isaiah 23:1-18](#); [Jeremiah 25:22](#); [27:1-11](#); [Ezekiel 26:1-19](#); [Joel 3:4-8](#); [Amos 1:9-10](#)). Tyre was condemned for several reasons:

- Because of its commercial significance, Tyre was the focal point of Assyrian and Egyptian rivalries. Tyre played these rivals against each other while building its own wealth and exploiting its neighbors.
- Tyre was a city of greedy merchants.
- Tyre was also a center of religious idolatry and sexual immorality.
- Tyre was guilty of great pride in its great wealth and strategic location.

Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre offers a detailed picture of the city, its commercial empire, its sin, and its eventual fall ([Ezekiel 26:1-28](#); [29:18-20](#)). The final destruction of Tyre took almost 1,900 years. Not until AD 1291 was it totally destroyed. Tyre was surrounded and attacked by Nebuchadnezzar for 13 years, from 587 to 574 BC. Alexander the Great conquered the city in 332 BC after a seven-month siege. Alexander built a raised road across the water out to the island from the mainland. Ezekiel's description of Tyre's arrogance compares it to that of Satan's. Tyre's words "I am a god; I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the sea."

are the same expression that led to the fall of both Satan and Tyre ([Ezekiel 28:2](#)).

Tyre in the New Testament

Alexander conquered and destroyed portions of the city. But the New Testament indicates Tyre had regained some ground. Tyre was equal to or greater than Jerusalem in population and commercial power. Jesus visited the area around Tyre during his early ministry. He healed the Syrophoenician woman's daughter there ([Matthew 15:21-28](#); [Mark 7:24-31](#)). Jesus compared the Galilean towns that had rejected him to Tyre and Sidon. This comparison implied that Galileans had less reason for rejecting Jesus because of the great number of miracles he had done there ([Luke 10:13-14](#)).