

Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary

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wives at Ezra's request during the postexilic period ([Ezr 10:27, 33, 43](#)).

Zabbai

1. Bebai's son and one of the priests who divorced his foreign wife at Ezra's command ([Ezr 10:28](#)).
2. Father of Baruch. Baruch repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall during Nehemiah's day ([Neh 3:20](#)).

Zabbud

KJV form of Zaccur, Bigvai's descendant, in [Ezra 8:14](#). See Zaccur #5.

Zabdi

1. Zerah's descendant from Judah's tribe ([Jos 7:1](#)). Achan was a Zerahite of the family of Zabdi ([Jos 7:17-18](#)); alternately called Zimri (nlt mg, [1 Chr 2:6](#)).
2. Shimei's son and a descendant of Ehud from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:19](#)).
3. David's officer over the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars ([1 Chr 27:27](#)). He is called a Shiphmite, which likely means that he was a native of Shepham.
4. One of the temple musicians of the order of Asaph ([Neh 11:17](#)); alternately called Zicri ([1 Chr 9:15](#)).

Zabdiel

1. Father of Jashobeam, the commander of the first division of David's army ([1 Chr 27:2](#)).
2. Priest and overseer of 128 "mighty men of valor" (rsv, [Neh 11:14](#)). The notation that he was a "son of Haggadolim" might indicate that he was a "son of the mighty men."
3. Arab who beheaded Alexander (Balas) Epiphanes and sent the head to Ptolemy ([1 Macc 11:17](#)).

Zabud

A priest in the court of King Solomon and the "adviser to the king" ([1 Kings 4:5](#)). The phrase "adviser to the king" may be an official title. Hushai the Archite had a similar title ("friend") in the court of King David ([2 Samuel 15:37](#); [16:16](#)).

Zabulon

The King James Version spelling of Zebulun in [Matthew 4:13-15](#) and [Revelation 7:8](#).

See Zebulun, Tribe of.

Zaccai

Forefather of a family who returned with Zerubbabel to Judah following the exile ([Ezr 2:9](#); [Neh 7:14](#)).

Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was a Jewish tax collector who worked for the Romans in the city of Jericho. He became very wealthy by collecting taxes, often by dishonest means. He likely got this job either by paying for the right to collect taxes in that area or by working for another wealthy official. Jericho was an important city for trade because it was on a major road between Jerusalem and the lands east of the Jordan River.

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of how Zacchaeus met Jesus ([Luke 19:2-8](#)). Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he climbed a sycamore tree to watch Jesus pass by. Jesus surprised him by stopping under the tree. Jesus called to Zacchaeus and said he wanted to stay at his house that night. This changed Zacchaeus's life. He turned away from his dishonest ways and followed Jesus. He promised to pay back four times as much to anyone he had cheated. He also promised to give money to poor people. According to Clement of Alexandria, Zacchaeus later became a church leader in the city of Caesarea (*Homily 3.63*).

Zacchur

KJV spelling of Zaccur, Hammuel's son, in [1 Chronicles 4:26](#). See Zaccur #2.

Zaccur

1. A Reubenite and father of Shammua. Shammua was one of the 12 spies who explored Canaan ([Numbers 13:4](#)).
2. A Simeonite who was the son of Hammuel and the father of Shimei ([1 Chronicles 4:26](#)).
3. One of the descendants of Merari in the record of the divisions of the priests ([1 Chronicles 24:27](#)).
4. One of the sons of Asaph who had responsibilities for service in the temple ([1 Chronicles 25:2](#)). David assigned Zaccur and his sons and brothers the third lot among the various duties for the temple musicians ([1 Chronicles 25:10](#)). Descendants of Zaccur were present at the dedication of the city wall following the exile ([Nehemiah 12:35](#)).
5. One of the descendants of Bigvai who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra ([Ezra 8:14](#)).
6. A son of Imri who worked on repairing the wall of Jerusalem in the area of the Sheep Gate ([Nehemiah 3:2](#)).
7. One of the Levites who signed the covenant of Nehemiah to obey the law of God ([Nehemiah 10:12](#)).
8. A son of Mattaniah and father of Hanan. Hanan was the assistant to the storehouse treasurers during the time of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 13:13](#)). Some have suggested that he is the same person as #7 above.

Zachariah

1. KJV spelling of Zechariah, king of Israel, in [2 Kings 14:29](#) and [15:8, 11](#). See Zechariah (Person) #1.

2. KJV spelling of Zechariah, King Hezekiah's maternal grandfather, in [2 Kings 18:2](#). See Zechariah (Person) #2.

Zacharias

1. The King James Version spelling of Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, in [Matthew 23:35](#) and [Luke 11:51](#). See Zechariah (Person) #14.
2. The King James Version spelling of Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, in [Luke 1:5-67](#). See Zechariah (Person) #31.
3. The King James Version spelling of Zechariah, a proposed name for John the Baptist, in [Luke 1:59](#). See John the Baptist; Zechariah (Person) #32.

Zacher

KJV form of Zechariah, or Zeker, in [1 Chronicles 8:31](#). See Zechariah (Person) #5.

Zadok

Common OT name meaning "righteous one."

1. David's priest, probably the most famous and influential of Israel's high priests apart from Aaron. He first appeared at the time of Absalom's revolt, when he and his fellow priest Abiathar showed their loyalty to David by coming to him with the ark, fully prepared to share his exile ([2 Sm 15:24-29](#)). David refused their offer and sent them back to Jerusalem to act in his interests.

In [2 Samuel 8:17](#), Zadok is listed as the son of Ahitub, who is noted in [1 Samuel 14:3](#) as the grandson of Eli. In the genealogies of Chronicles, Zadok's descent through Ahitub is traced back to Eleazar, the eldest son of Aaron ([1 Chr 6:1-8, 50-53; Ezr 7:2-5](#)), but with no reference to Eli. A slight problem emerges in that Zadok replaces the

banished Abiathar, a descendant of Eli. This is regarded as the fulfillment of an earlier prophecy that the tenure of the high priestly office by Eli's family would be broken in favor of a different branch of Aaron's family ([1 Sm 2:30-36](#); [1 Kgs 2:26-27](#)).

In both summaries of David's court officials ([2 Sm 8:17](#); [20:25](#)), Zadok is listed as one of David's two principal priests, an office held throughout the latter part of David's reign. When David was near death, a power struggle over the throne was precipitated by Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son. With the support of Joab, the commander of the army, and the priest Abiathar, David's long-standing friend, Adonijah declared himself king ([1 Kgs 1:5-10](#)). Nathan the prophet promptly intervened with Bathsheba as Solomon's advocate. Zadok and Benaiah, the captain of the mercenary troops, supported Solomon. Adonijah's cause was hopeless once David had indicated his approval of Nathan's plans. Consequently, the discredited Abiathar was banished ([2:26-27](#)), leaving the loyal Zadok as Solomon's chief priest ([2:35](#); [4:4](#)).

In the centuries that followed, the descendants of Zadok preserved this dominance, and as Jerusalem's prestige increased, so did their status. Azariah, the chief priest in Hezekiah's reign, was a Zadokite ([2 Chr 31:10](#)). Ezekiel restricted the main priestly functions to the "sons of Zadok," demoting the Levites generally to the rank of "temple caretakers" because of their apostasy during the monarchy ([Ez 44:10-16](#)). When the Jews came under Seleucid domination in the early second century BC, the high priesthood, regarded as a political appointment, was taken away from the Zadokites. Conservative elements, however, like the Qumran covenanters, continued to look for its restoration.

See also David; Israel, History of.

2. Father-in-law of Uzziah and grandfather of Jotham, kings of Judah ([2 Kgs 15:32-33](#); [2 Chr 27:1](#)).

3. Descendant of Zadok, David's priest ([1 Chr 6:12](#); [9:11](#); [Neh 11:11](#)).

4. Young man of exceptional courage, the leader of a contingent that joined David at Hebron against Saul ([1 Chr 12:28](#)).

5. Son of Baana, who helped to repair the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time ([Neh 3:4](#)).

6. Son of Immer, who also shared in Nehemiah's rebuilding operations ([Neh 3:29](#)).

7. Signatory to Nehemiah's covenant ([Neh 10:21](#)) and perhaps identifiable with #5 or #6 above.

8. One of three treasurers appointed by Nehemiah during his second term of office, called the scribe ([Neh 13:13](#)).

9. Ancestor of Christ ([Mt 1:14](#)). *See* Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Zaham

One of Rehoboam's sons by his wife Mahalath ([2 Chr 11:19](#)).

Zair

Place where Joram attacked and defeated the Edomites ([2 Kgs 8:21](#)). In the parallel passage of [2 Chronicles 21:9](#), the phrase "to Zair" is replaced by the phrase "with his commanders" (the Hebrew words are similar). Many have therefore suggested that a copyist revision appeared in 2 Chronicles because the location of Zair was unknown. Others have suggested that Zair should be identified with Zoar on the southeast end of the Dead Sea, or with Seir in Edom. In any case, it was located in Transjordan on a principal road to Edom.

Zalaph

Hanun's father. Hanun repaired a section of the Jerusalem wall during Nehemiah's day ([Neh 3:30](#)).

Zalmon (Person)

One of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:28](#)). Another name for him is "Ilai the Ahohite" ([1 Chronicles 11:29](#)).

Zalmon (Place)

Mountain from which Abimelech took brush to burn down the tower of Shechem ([Jgs 9:48](#)). Since the mountain obviously was close to Shechem, it tentatively has been identified with es-Sulemiyeh (the modern name for the southeastern portion of Mt Ebal) or one of its surrounding hills. Zalmon is also mentioned in connection with the defeat of Israel's enemies in [Psalm 68:14](#). Because of the

mention of snowfall and the “mighty mountain of Bashan” in the following verse, the Septuagint and some commentators consider this Zalmon to be Mt Hermon in Lebanon. However, seasonal snowfalls also occur in the region of Mt Ebal.

Zalmonah

A place where the Israelites camped during their journey. They came to this place after they left Mount Hor ([Numbers 33:41–42](#)). The name “Zalmonah” suggests that it might have been a dark or shady valley. This valley probably led up to the high flat land of Edom

Zalmunna

See Zebah and Zalmunna.

Zamzummim, Zamzummites

The Ammonite name for the Rephaim. [Deuteronomy 2:20](#) describes them as “a people great and many, as tall as the Anakites.” The Zamzummites were forced out of their land by the Ammonites, just as the Horites were forced out by the Edomites and the Avvim by the Caphtorim. The comparison with the Anakim, the Rephaim, and the Emim shows that the Zamzummites were a race of giants. They lived in Transjordan (a region east of the Jordan River). Although their exact origin is unknown, they probably lived in the area near Rabbath-ammon.

See also Giants; Rephaim.

Zanoah (Person)

Descendant of Caleb from Judah’s tribe ([1 Chr 4:18](#)). Zanoah was the son of Jekuthiel and, depending on the translation of the Hebrew text, may have been related to Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh. Some have interpreted the text as indicating that Jekuthiel was the founder or principal settler of the city named Zanoah. In any case, Zanoah’s descendants may well have been connected with the city of that name.

Zanoah (Place)

1. One of the cities “in the lowland” that was part of Judah’s inheritance ([Jos 15:34](#)). The inhabitants of Zanoah worked with Hanun to rebuild the Valley Gate as well as about 1,500 feet (457.2 meters) of the city wall during the restoration of Jerusalem ([Neh 3:13](#); [11:30](#)). The city is probably identifiable with Zanu’a, which is located approximately 10 miles (16.1 kilometers) west of Jerusalem.

2. One of the cities in the Judean highlands south of Hebron that was part of Judah’s inheritance ([Jos 15:56](#)). It was probably inhabited by the descendants of Zanoah, Jekuthiel’s son.

Zaphenath-Paneah

Name given to Joseph by Pharaoh when Joseph assumed his governmental responsibilities in Egypt ([Gn 41:45](#)). The name most likely means “says the god, he will live.” *See* Joseph #1.

Zaphon

Town located east of the Jordan River ([Jos 13:27](#)) and included as part of the inheritance of Gad’s tribe (v [24](#)). Egyptian records (13th century BC) refer to a town known as *Dapuna*, while an Amarna text spells the name *Sapuna*.

Zara, Zarah

The King James Version alternate forms of Zerah, Judah’s son, in [Genesis 38:30](#), [46:12](#), and [Matthew 1:3](#).

See Zerah #2.

Zareah, Zareathite

KJV spelling of Zorah and Zorathite in [Nehemiah 11:29](#) and [1 Chronicles 2:53](#), respectively. *See* Zorah, Zorathite.

Zared

The King James Version spelling for the valley of Zered in [Numbers 21:12](#).

See Zered.

Zarephath

A village where the woman who provided food and lodging for Elijah lived ([1 Kings 17:9-10](#); [Luke 4:26](#)). Obadiah later prophesied that the Israelite exiles of Halah would “possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath” ([Obadiah 1:20](#)). Zarephath was under the control of Sidon at the time Elijah visited, thus serving as a safe haven from King Ahab of Israel. Zarephath is likely the modern Surafend, where a chapel marks the traditional site for the widow’s house.

Zareth-Shahar

KJV spelling of Zereth-shahar, a Reubenite city, in [Joshua 13:19](#). See Zereth-shahar.

Zarethan

City or region near the Jordan River north of Jericho. It is first mentioned in connection with the “cutting off” of the waters of the Jordan that occurred at Adam, “the city that is beside Zarethan” ([Jos 3:16](#)). Its location is more precisely defined in the list of Solomon’s administrative districts as being in the vicinity of Beth-shan below Jezreel ([1 Kgs 4:12](#)). Bronze utensils for Solomon’s temple were cast near there ([7:46](#); [2 Chr 4:17](#), “Zeredah”).

Zarhite

1. The King James Version spelling of Zerahite, which refers to a person who is a descendant of Zerah's family in the tribe of Simeon ([Numbers 26:13](#)).
See Zerah #3.
2. The King James Version spelling of Zerahite, which refers to a person who is a descendant of Zerah's family in the tribe of Judah ([Numbers 26:20](#)).
See Zerah #2.

Zartanah, Zarthan

Zartanah and Zarthan are different spellings found in the King James Version of the Bible. Zartanah appears in [1 Kings 4:12](#), and Zarthan appears in [7:46](#). Both names refer to the place called Zarethan.

See Zarethan.

Zatthu

KJV rendering of Zattu in [Nehemiah 10:14](#). See Zattu #2.

Zattu

1. Clan chief with whom 945 people returned with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:8](#); [Neh 7:13](#) cites 845 returnees). Of the priests who renounced their foreign wives, six are listed as “sons” of Zattu ([Ezr 10:27](#)).

2. One of the chiefs of the people who signed Nehemiah’s covenant ([Neh 10:14](#)); perhaps the same person as #1 above.

Zavan

KJV spelling of Zaavan, Ezer’s son, in [1 Chronicles 1:42](#). See Zaavan.

Zaza

Jonathan’s son, in the family of Jerahmeel, a member of Judah’s tribe ([1 Chr 2:33](#)).

Zealot

A zealot is someone who is very passionate about a cause or belief.

Simon the Zealot

In the Bible, this term is used to describe Simon, one of Jesus's twelve closest followers ([Luke 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#)). This Simon is different from Simon Peter, who was also one of the twelve.

Matthew and Mark use the word "Cananaean" instead of zealot ([Matthew 10:4](#); [Mark 3:18](#)). These words mean the same thing in different languages. They describe someone who is very eager to

defend or support something. The word comes from the idea of "burning with strong feelings" or "wanting something very much" ([Exodus 34:14](#); [2 Maccabees 4:2](#)).

Jesus himself showed zeal (strong enthusiasm) when he cleared the temple of people who were misusing it. The Bible says he had "zeal for God's house" ([John 2:17](#)).

In the early Christian church, some believers were zealous for spiritual gifts, good works, and following God's law ([Acts 21:20](#); [1 Corinthians 14:12](#); [Titus 2:14](#)). Paul, before he became a follower of Jesus, was very zealous for the traditions of his ancestors and for God ([Acts 22:3](#); [Galatians 1:14](#)).

Simon the Zealot was known for his strong religious enthusiasm. This is how people could tell him apart from Simon Peter and the other followers of Jesus.

How the Zealot Movement Began

By the time Luke wrote his gospel, the title "Zealot" had come to mean something more specific. It referred to a group of people who were strongly against Roman rule over their land. This group had both religious and political goals.

This Zealot group may have started around AD 6, after the death of King Herod the Great. It was possibly founded by Judas the Galilean and Zadok the Pharisee. The Zealots were inspired by the Maccabees, who had fought against foreign rule many years earlier ([1 Maccabees 2:15–28](#)).

The Zealots were very devoted to following God's law (called the Torah). They believed that God was the only true king. They saw themselves as agents of God's judgment and salvation. They strongly opposed anything they saw as going against God or cooperating with Rome. The Zealots thought that the Messiah (God's chosen leader) would become their leader.

Zealots in Jewish History and Their Fight Against Rome

As tensions grew between Rome and Judea (the Jewish homeland), the Zealots became more militant. They saw their fight as a "holy war." While the Maccabees had fought to defend themselves, the Zealots became more aggressive.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, called them robbers and criminals (*Antiquities* 18.1.1–6; *War* 4.3.9), though he may have been biased against them. The

Romans called them *sicarii*, which means "assassins." But their supporters would have called them patriotic fighters.

The Zealots played a big role in the revolt against Rome from AD 66 to 70. Their last stronghold was at a place called Masada. It fell to the Romans in AD 73, and the 960 Zealots there chose to die by suicide rather than be captured.

Simon the Zealot was probably part of this movement in its earlier days, around AD 30. It's less likely that other disciples like Judas Iscariot or the "sons of thunder" were Zealots ([Mark 3:17](#)). Judas the Galilean and even Paul were thought by some to be Zealots ([Acts 5:37–38](#); [21:38](#)).

See also First Jewish Revolt; Judaism.

Zealot, Simon the

See Simon #5.

Zebadiah

1. One of the sons of Beriah from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:15](#)).
2. One of the sons of Elpaal from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:17](#)).
3. One of the sons of Jeroham of Gedor, who came to David's support at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:7](#)).
4. Korahite Levite descended from Asaph, third of Meshelemiah's seven sons and a temple gatekeeper ([1 Chr 26:2](#)).
5. Son of Asahel, Joab's brother, who was the commander of the fourth division of David's army ([1 Chr 27:7](#)).
6. One of the Levites sent by Jehoshaphat into the cities of Judah to teach the law ([2 Chr 17:8](#)).
7. Ishmael's son and one of the leaders of the Levites whom Jehoshaphat appointed as governor of civil affairs for the house of Judah ([2 Chr 19:11](#)).
8. Michael's son from Shephatiah's house, who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem following the exile ([Ezr 8:8](#)).
9. One of the sons of Immer who renounced his foreign wife at Ezra's command ([Ezr 10:20](#)).

Zebah and Zalmunna

Two Midianite kings who slaughtered Gideon's brothers at Tabor. Gideon subsequently killed them in order to avenge his brothers' deaths ([Jgs 8:18-21](#)).

During Gideon's day, Midianite camel raiders annually made forays into Israelite territory at harvesttime, stealing crops and livestock ([Jgs 6:3](#)). So complete were their raids that nothing was left in Israel, including crops, sheep, oxen, or donkeys.

In this state of affairs God called Gideon to deliver Israel ([Jgs 6:16](#)). His well-known victory over Midian near Mt Moreh was an important step toward realization of this divine commission ([7:1-23](#)). In the operations following the battle, Ephraimite warriors captured and assassinated two Midianite leaders named Zeeb and Oreb ([7:24-8:3](#)).

Gideon determined to capture Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of the Midianite forces. In tracking them down, he crossed the Jordan River and traveled more than 100 miles (160.9 kilometers) from the site of the original battle. Along the way, two successive towns, Succoth and Penuel, refused to help Gideon and his men, doubtless fearing reprisal from the Midianite raiders should Gideon fail to defeat them.

Gideon routed the remaining Midianite warriors and captured Zebah and Zalmunna ([Jgs 8:12](#)). Because Zebah and Zalmunna had killed his brothers, Gideon killed the two Midianite kings ([vv 19-21](#)). [Psalm 83:11](#) indicates that Zebah, Zalmunna, and the Midianites were the enemies not merely of Israel but also of God.

Zebaim

KJV rendering of a place mentioned in [Ezra 2:57](#) and [Nehemiah 7:59](#). See Pochereth-Hazzebaim, Pochereth of Zebaim.

Zebedee

The father of the disciples James and John ([Matthew 26:37](#); [Mark 3:17](#); [10:35](#)). Zebedee was a fisher and may have been wealthy since he had servants and connections with the high priest ([John 18:15](#)). Although he personally appears only once in the narrative ([Matthew 4:21](#); [Mark 1:19-20](#)), his

wife, Salome, appears often as one of the believers who followed Christ.

Zebidah

The mother of Jehoiakim, who was a king of Judah. Zebidah was King Josiah's wife and the daughter of Pedaiah ([2 Kings 23:36](#)).

Zebina

Nebo's son, who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his foreign wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:43](#)).

Zeboiim

One of the "cities of the plain" that was destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah ([Dt 29:23](#); [Hos 11:8](#)). Zeboiim is first mentioned, with Sodom, Gomorrah, and Admah, as one of the Canaanite cities in the "table of nations" in [Genesis 10:19](#). It later appears confederated with the same states (including Zoar) in the battle against Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim ([Gn 14:2, 8](#)).

See also Cities of the Plain.

Zeboim

1. KJV spelling of Zeboiim in [Genesis 10:19](#), [Deuteronomy 29:23](#), and [Hosea 11:8](#). See Zeboiim.
2. Valley where one of the raiding parties of the Philistines turned toward the border of the wilderness ([1 Sm 13:18](#)). It may be identified with Shuk ed-Dubba.
3. One of the villages outside of Jerusalem where the Benjaminites settled after the exile ([Neh 11:34](#)).

Zebudah

The King James Version's spelling of Zebidah in [2 Kings 23:36](#). Zebidah was the wife of King Josiah.

See Zebidah.

Zebul

Ruler of Shechem who served as an officer of Abimelech ([Jgs 9:28-30](#)). Zebul apparently obtained his position when Abimelech was crowned king at Shechem. When Gaal the son of Ebed incited the Shechemites to rebel against Abimelech, Zebul played an instrumental role in Abimelech's victory. After he goaded Gaal into attacking Abimelech outside of the city, Zebul shut Gaal out of the city, preventing retreat into its confines. It is difficult to determine Zebul's fate when Abimelech later attacked and destroyed the city, but it is possible that he too met a treacherous fate.

Zebulun (Person)

One of Jacob's 12 sons ([Genesis 35:23](#); [1 Chronicles 2:1](#)). He was the sixth and last son of Jacob and Leah. She named him Zebulun, meaning "abode, dwelling." She said, "This time my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons" ([Genesis 30:20](#)). Later, he settled his family in Egypt with Jacob and his brothers ([Exodus 1:3](#)).

Jacob prophesied that Zebulun's descendants would live on the coast, with their border touching Sidon ([Genesis 49:13](#)). Zebulun's tribe was between Asher's and Naphtali's tribes. Asher's was by the Mediterranean, and Naphtali's was by the Sea of Galilee. Despite this, Zebulun prospered in trade with the Canaanite coastal cities. Zebulun fathered three sons ([Genesis 46:14](#)) and founded one of Israel's 12 tribes ([Numbers 1:30-31](#)).

See also Zebulun, Tribe of.

Zebulun, Tribe of

A tribe descended from Zebulun, Jacob's tenth son and Leah's sixth ([Genesis 30:19-20](#)). Zebulun's tribe was split into three clans named after his sons: the Seredites, Elonites, and Jahleelites ([Genesis 46:14](#); [Numbers 26:27](#)). During the census on the plains of Moab, the tribe had 60,500 men over 20 years old who were fit for military service ([Numbers 26:26-27](#)).

Land and Territory

Zebulun's land was in central Canaan and included the Jezreel Valley. However, the exact boundaries are hard to pinpoint because only the southeastern

and eastern borders are mentioned in [Joshua 19:10-16](#). The western border along the Mediterranean is not clearly defined. Moses's blessing suggests that Zebulun, with Issachar, would "feast on the abundance of the seas" ([Deuteronomy 33:18-19](#)). This implies access to the Mediterranean and its trade.

Despite this, Zebulun's territory does not seem to touch the sea, which appears to contradict [Genesis 49:13](#). However, Zebulun was in a good location along major trade routes to the sea. This allowed them to benefit from trade by sea, even if they were not directly on the coast. The land of Zebulun was good for growing crops and produced olive groves, vineyards, and plentiful harvests. In [1 Chronicles 12:40](#), the tribe provided generous supplies for David.

Military Strength

Zebulun maintained a strong position among its neighbors. Unlike Asher and Naphtali, which lived among the Canaanites ([Judges 1:32-33](#)), Zebulun had fewer Canaanites in their area. During the period of the judges, Zebulun was very active. For instance, Zebulun and Naphtali soldiers were key in the victory at the battle of Kishon ([Judges 4:6-10](#)). The Song of Deborah praises Zebulun for risking their lives ([Judges 5:18](#)). According to [Judges 6:35](#), the men of Zebulun fought bravely in Gideon's struggle with the Midianites on the plain of Jezreel. Judge Elon belonged to the tribe of Zebulun ([Judges 12:11-12](#)). Since Galilee was in the territory of Zebulun, Ibzan of Bethlehem was probably also from Zebulun ([Joshua 19:15](#)). Zebulun's fighting force was among the largest in David's western armies ([1 Chronicles 12:33](#)). This is another sign that Zebulun's tribe was both strong and important.

Zebulun in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Zebulun is mentioned twice. It is noted as a region where Jesus, described as a great light, appeared ([Matthew 4:13-15](#)). Zebulun is also listed among the 12 tribes in [Revelation 7:8](#) after Issachar.

See also Zebulun (Person).

Zebulunite

Any descendant of Zebulun, son of the patriarch Jacob ([Numbers 26:27](#); [Judges 12:11-12](#)).

See Zebulun, Tribe of.

Zechariah (Person)

An extremely popular name in the Bible. "Zechariah" means "the Lord remembers."

1. The son of King Jeroboam II, 15th king of Israel, and the last king from the Jehu's dynasty. He began his rule in 753 BC, the 38th year of Azariah's reign in Judah (792–740 BC). Zechariah ruled in Samaria for only six months before he was murdered by Shallum at Ibleam ([2 Kings 14:29; 15:8–11](#)). The Lord promised Jehu that his descendants would rule to the fourth generation ([2 Kings 10:30](#)). This promise was fulfilled with Zechariah's reign.
2. The father of Abi (or Abijah, [2 Chronicles 29:1](#)). Abi was the mother of Hezekiah, who later ruled Judah for 29 years ([2 Kings 18:2](#)).
3. A Reubenite and leader of his tribe ([1 Chronicles 5:7](#)).
4. A Korahite Levite, the firstborn of Meshelemiah's seven sons and a wise counselor. He was selected by lot to manage the gatekeepers of the sanctuary's northern entrance during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 9:21; 26:2, 14](#)).
5. A Benjaminite and descendant of Jeiel ([1 Chronicles 9:37](#)). He is also named Zeker in [1 Chronicles 8:31](#), which might be a short form of Zechariah.
6. One of the eight Levites who played a harp before the ark of God in the parade led by David when the ark was brought from Obed-edom's house to Jerusalem ([1 Chronicles 15:18, 20; 16:5](#)).
7. One of the priests who blew a trumpet in the parade led by David when the ark was brought to Jerusalem ([1 Chronicles 15:24](#)).
8. A levite and a descendant of Isshiah, who served in the sanctuary during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 24:25](#)).
9. A Merarite Levite and Hosah's son. He was one of the gatekeepers of the sanctuary's western entrance, at the gate of Halleketh, during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 26:11–12, 16](#)).
10. The father of Iddo. Iddo was the leader of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 27:21](#)).
11. One of the officials sent by King Jehoshaphat (872–848 BC) to teach the law in the cities of Judah ([2 Chronicles 17:7](#)).
12. A Gershonite Levite and Jahaziel's father ([2 Chronicles 20:14](#)).
13. One of King Jehoshaphat's seven sons and the brother of Jehoram. Jehoram became the only regent (temporary ruler) of Judah (848–841 BC) after his father's death ([2 Chronicles 21:2](#)).

14. The son of Jehoiada the priest. He criticized the princes of Judah for turning against the Lord and worshiping false gods. Enraged by Zechariah's rebuke, they conspired against him, and at King Joash's command, they stoned him to death in the court of the sanctuary ([2 Chronicles 24:20-22](#)). he Lord avenged Zechariah's death by allowing the Syrians to defeat Judah, kill the princes, and severely wound Joash, who was subsequently killed by two of his own servants.
In his criticism of his own generation of Jewish leaders, Jesus alluded to Zechariah's murder in the temple grounds: "And so upon you will come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar" ([Matthew 23:35](#)). Abel was the first and Zechariah the last of the recorded prophets of God who were unjustly slain, according to the Old Testament.
15. A man who counseled King Uzziah of Judah to walk in the fear of God ([2 Chronicles 26:5](#)).
16. Abijah's father. Abijah was the mother of King Hezekiah of Judah ([2 Chronicles 29:1](#)).
17. A Gershonite Levite descended from Asaph. He and Mattaniah, his kinsman, were chosen by King Hezekiah to help cleanse the house of the Lord ([2 Chronicles 29:13](#)).
18. A Kohathite Levite who was appointed to manage the repair of the temple during King Josiah's reign ([2 Chronicles 34:12](#)).
19. One of the chief officers of the house of God who generously gave animals to the priests for the celebration of the Passover feast during King Josiah's reign ([2 Chronicles 35:8](#)).
20. A prophet. Berechiah's son and the grandson of Iddo. He began prophesying as a young man in 520 BC during the reign of King Darius I of Persia ([Zechariah 1:1](#); compare [2:4](#)). Not much is known about him. We do know that he ministered with Haggai in Jerusalem during the time of Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the high priest ([Ezra 5:1](#)). This was after the exile in Babylon. Zechariah urged the Jews to finish building the second temple ([Ezra 6:14](#)) and led Iddo's priestly family during Joiakim's term as high priest ([Nehemiah 12:16](#)). Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah served as both a priest and a prophet ([Zechariah 1:1, 7; 7:1, 8](#)).
The accounts of Zechariah's family history do not match exactly. In Ezra and Nehemiah, Iddo is listed as his father, while in Zechariah, Berechiah is mentioned as his father. Some think Berechiah and Iddo might be different names for the same person, or that Berechiah's name ([Zechariah 1:1, 7](#)) was added later, confusing him with Jeberechiah's son (compare [Isaiah 8:2](#)). A more likely theory is that Iddo was Zechariah's grandfather. Iddo returned to Jerusalem from exile in 538 BC, and Zechariah may have been considered Iddo's successor due to Berechiah's early death or because of Iddo's prominence.
See also Prophet, Prophetess; Zechariah, Book of.
21. Parosh's descendant and the head of his father's household. He returned with Ezra to Judah following the exile in Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes I of Persia ([Ezra 8:3](#)).
22. Bebai's son and the head of a household. He returned with Ezra to Judah following the exile in Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes I of Persia ([Ezra 8:11](#)).

23. A Jewish leader. Ezra sent him and other to Iddo, the man in charge at Casiphia, to gather levites and temple servants for the caravan of Jews returning to Palestine from Babylon ([Ezra 8:15-17](#)).
24. One of the six descendants of Elam who was encouraged by Ezra to divorce his foreign wife after the exile in Babylon ([Ezra 10:26](#)).
25. One of the men who stood to Ezra's left when Ezra read the law to the people ([Nehemiah 8:4](#)).
26. A descendant of Perez and an ancestor of a Judahite family headed by Athaiah. They lived in Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 11:4](#)).
27. A descendant of Shelah and an ancestor of a Judahite family headed by Maaseiah. They lived in Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 11:5](#)).
28. A priest. A descendant of Malkijah and an ancestor of a family of priests headed by Adaiah. They lived in Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 11:12](#)).
29. Jonathan's son, a descendant of Asaph. He led a group of the priestly musicians who played trumpets at the dedication of the Jerusalem wall in Nehemiah's day ([Nehemiah 12:35](#)).
30. A priest who played a trumpet at the Jerusalem wall's dedication ([Nehemiah 12:41](#)).
31. Jeberechiah's son and an important man who, along with Uriah the priest, witnessed Isaiah's writing of the phrase "Maher-shalal-hash-baz." This phrase later revealed God's intended judgment on Damascus and Samaria ([Isaiah 8:2](#)).
32. John the Baptist's father. A priest of Abijah's division, and the husband of Elizabeth, a woman of priestly descent. His story is told in [Luke 1](#). They lived in the Judean hill country during the reign of King Herod the Great (37-4 BC; [Luke 1:5](#)). and were known for their righteous and devout lives, though they had no children and were advanced in years. Zechariah was selected to represent his division in their yearly service at the Jerusalem temple. The priests of Israel were divided into 24 orders, each serving two weeks annually. One day, Zechariah was chosen by lot to burn incense in the temple's Holy Place, an honor given to a priest only once in his lifetime. While he was performing this duty, the angel Gabriel appeared and told him that his wife, Elizabeth, would bear a son named John, who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Zechariah doubted this due to their old age, and as a result, he was made mute (unable to speak) until the prophecy was fulfilled. When Zechariah returned to the temple court, his gestures made the people realize he had seen a vision. Elizabeth became pregnant as the angel had promised. In her sixth month, she was visited by her relative Mary, who was also expecting a child. After the birth of their son, Zechariah confirmed that the child's name would be John. At that moment, his speech was restored, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, praising God and prophesying about the significant work God was about to do in Israel.
33. The original name proposed for John the Baptist, after his father's name ([Luke 1:59](#)). See John the Baptist.

Zechariah, Book of

Longest book of the Minor Prophets and the most difficult to understand. One reason for this difficulty is the numerous visions that call for an interpreter. At times an interpreting angel is present to tell what the vision means ([Zec 1:9-10, 19-20; 4:1-6; 5:5-6](#)), but at other times, when an interpretation is really needed, there is no angel to give one. The obscure meaning of many passages has spawned numerous theories concerning the date, authorship, unity, and interpretation of this book. One thing that makes the book of Zechariah significant for the Christian is its use in the NT. The last part of Zechariah (chs [9-11](#)) is the most quoted section of the Prophets in the Gospel Passion narratives, and, other than Ezekiel, Zechariah influenced the book of Revelation more than any other OT book.

Preview

- Author
- Date
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- Purpose and Message
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Author

The name Zechariah probably means “the Lord remembers” or “the Lord is renowned.” Zechariah is a common name in the OT and NT. At least 30 different people in the OT are named Zechariah. There is a problem in identifying the prophet’s father. In [Zechariah 1:1](#) and [1:7](#), the prophet is called “the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo,” but in [Ezra 5:1](#) and [6:14](#) he is called simply “the son of Iddo.” There was another Zechariah in Isaiah’s time whose father was named Jeberechiah ([Is 8:2](#)). Another prophet by the name of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, lived much earlier during the reign of Joash, king of Judah (835–796 BC). This prophet was stoned to death because he proclaimed that the Lord had forsaken his people because of their sins ([2 Chr 24:20-22](#)). Jesus seemed to refer to this or a similar unrecorded incident, but he calls the prophet the son of Berechiah, the last of the martyrs among the prophets ([Mt 23:35](#)). However, Luke’s account of what Jesus said about Zechariah ([Lk 11:51](#)) does not include the words “the son of Berechiah.” Since Jesus was quoting 2 Chronicles, which was the last book in the Hebrew Bible, he was simply indicating

the sweep of time from the first murder (Abel) to the last (Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada). There is no evidence that the prophet of the book of Zechariah was martyred; therefore, the best solution to the problem is to consider Berechiah the father, and Iddo the grandfather, of this prophet.

Date

The first part of the book of Zechariah (chs [1-8](#)) is easy to date. The first date is in the first verse, “the eighth month of the second year of Darius.” This was Darius, king of Persia (521–486 BC). The eighth month of Darius’s second year would be October 520 BC. This date seems to be the first time the “word of the Lord” came to Zechariah. The second date in Zechariah is in [1:7](#): “On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius . . .” (rsv). This date would be February 15, 519 BC. The word of the Lord that came to Zechariah on this date seems to include the account of eight night visions, along with some oracles, from an angel who talked with him. The third date in Zechariah is in [7:1](#): “In the fourth year of King Darius . . . on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev . . .” (rsv). This date would be the equivalent of December 7, 518 BC.

There are no dates in [Zechariah 9-14](#). Zechariah’s name is never mentioned, and neither is Darius or any king. A period of relative peace and stability gives place to war. The temple is standing ([11:13; 14:20](#)), and evidently Greek soldiers are present ([9:13](#)). Any attempt to assign specific dates to [Zechariah 9-14](#) would be speculation.

Background

The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar made several raids against Jerusalem before and after it fell, taking many captives to Babylon (cf. [2 Kgs 24:1-17; Dn 1:1](#)). On two occasions, Jeremiah had predicted that captivity would last 70 years ([Jer 25:11; 29:10](#); cf. [Dn 9:2](#)). In the time of Zechariah, the period of 70 years since the fall of Jerusalem was coming to an end ([Zec 1:12; 7:5](#)). It had been 66 years since Jerusalem fell, when the first “word of the Lord” came to Zechariah in the second year of Darius (520 BC). The Babylonian Empire had fallen to the Persians in 538 BC, and Cyrus the first king of Persia signed a decree permitting all captives to return to their homes ([2 Chr 36:23; Ezr 1:1-4](#)). Evidently, the first contingent of Jewish captives

returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest about 536 BC. One of the first objectives of the returnees was to rebuild the temple ([Ezr 1:3](#)), but internal strife and external opposition from the Samaritans prohibited the immediate rebuilding of the temple. After Darius I became king of Persia in 521 BC, a wave of expectation and enthusiasm swept over the Jewish communities in Jerusalem and Babylon. Two prophets, possibly from the Babylonian exiles, Haggai and Zechariah, began preaching so powerfully that work on the second temple began in 520 BC and was finished in 516 BC ([Ezr 5:1, 14–15](#); [Hg 1–2](#); [Zec 1–8](#)).

The book of Zechariah opens in the second year of Darius (520 BC). Some of the captives had been back in Jerusalem for 16 years, but nothing was being done about rebuilding the temple. Zechariah's first message called for the people to repent and not repeat the mistake of their fathers, whose sins and refusal to repent led to the exile and destruction of the temple ([Zec 1:1–6](#)). Then a series of eight night visions follows ([1:7–6:8](#)), assuring the people that the temple would be rebuilt by Zerubbabel ([1:16](#); [4:9](#); [6:15](#)). Two verses in Zechariah speak volumes concerning the hardships and difficulties in Jerusalem before the temple was rebuilt: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: Take heart and finish the task! You have heard what the prophets have been saying about building the Temple of the Lord Almighty ever since the foundation was laid. Before the work on the Temple began, there were no jobs and no wages for either people or animals. No traveler was safe from the enemy, for there were enemies on all sides. I had turned everyone against each other" ([8:9–10](#), nlt).

The first eight chapters of Zechariah are set against the social, political, and religious situations in Jerusalem from 520 to 518 BC. But beginning with chapter 9, historical moorings are lost. Chapter 9 opens with an oracle against Syria, including Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon, and against Philistia. Each of these places will be conquered and cleansed and will become like a clan in Judah. There is the promise of a new king coming triumphantly to Jerusalem, yet humbly riding on a donkey. His reign will be peaceful and universal. The next oracle speaks of setting the captives free, but this may not refer to the Babylonian captives, because of a reference to the Greeks. [Zechariah 9–12](#) is almost wholly concerned with the future. Some scholars call this part apocalyptic literature. The nations attack Jerusalem and are defeated (chs [12, 14](#)). The temple is standing ([11:13](#)), but it does not

seem to have a place of great prominence in the new Jerusalem and in the kingdom of God ([14:6–9](#)).

Purpose and Message

The purpose of the book is to reassure and encourage. The restored Jewish community of 520 BC needed the assurance that the temple would be rebuilt, and later groups of God's people needed to know that ultimately the kingdom of God would come in its fullness. There are three messages in the book of Zechariah: the need for repentance ([1:1–5:11](#)); the eight night visions ([1:7–6:8](#)) signifying that the temple would be rebuilt and God's glory would return to Jerusalem; and the coming kingdom of God (chs [9–14](#)).

Content

The book of Zechariah may be divided into two main parts: chapters [1–8](#) and [9–14](#). The first part is dated between 520 BC and 518 BC. It consists of oracles and visions of Zechariah the son of Berechiah. Mainly prose, its primary concern is to assure the restored Jewish community that the temple will be rebuilt. The second part (chs [9–14](#)) is undated. There are no references to Zechariah. The temple is standing, and much of the language is eschatological and apocalyptic. The second part itself has two parts: chapters [9–11](#) and [12–14](#). Chapters [9](#) and [12](#) begin essentially the same way: "The oracle of the word of the Lord."

The first part of Zechariah (chs [1–8](#)) has four main sections: superscription and first oracle ([1:1–6](#)); eight night visions and related oracles ([1:7–6:8](#)); the symbolic crowning of Joshua ([6:9–15](#)); and the question about fasting and morality ([7:1–8:23](#)).

The Superscription ([1:1](#))

This section is dated specifically "in the eighth month" of the Babylonian calendar, which was from mid-October to mid-November. The second year of Darius, king of Persia, was 520 BC. The date is important in relating the work of Zechariah to that of Haggai (cf. [Hg 1:1, 15](#); [2:1, 10, 18–20](#)) and to the reconstruction of the temple under Zerubbabel. The first oracle concerns the need for repentance. The first message of Zechariah came between Haggai's second and third message. He, like Haggai, probably attributed the failure of the crops and other hardships to a failure to rebuild the temple (cf. [Hg 1:6–11](#)). Zechariah calls for the people to repent so that they can persevere with work on the temple.

The Eight Night Visions and Related Oracles (1:7-6:8)

These visions that Zechariah saw in Jerusalem all seem to have been given on the night of the 24th day of the 11th month (Shebat) in the second year of Darius (mid-January to mid-February 519 BC). Seven of the eight visions have essentially the same form. Four of the visions begin with the words "Then I looked up and saw" (1:18; 2:1; 5:1; 6:1). One begins, "In a vision during the night" (1:8). Another begins, "Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke me, as though I had been asleep. 'What do you see now?' he asked" (4:1-2, nlt). Still another (the seventh) vision begins, "Then the angel who was talking with me came forward and said . . ." (5:5). However, the fourth vision is different from the other seven. It begins, "Then he showed me" (3:1, cf. Am 7:1, 4, 7). This message in the third person contains no interpreting angel nor any direct message to Zechariah, as if he were merely an observer. This fourth vision is so different from the other seven that it was not a part of the original series of eight.

An overall pattern to the eight visions is not evident. Some scholars have seen some significance in the fact that the visions move from the evening or night in the first vision to the sunrise in the last vision. Others have detected some relationships in pairs of visions. The first and last visions involve horses and riders or chariots. The second and third visions involve the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (1:18-21; 2:1-5). The fourth and fifth deal with the place of the two leaders in the restored community: Joshua will be cleansed and restored as the high priest (3:1-5) and Zerubbabel the governor will complete the temple (4:1-14). The sixth and seventh visions involve the cleansing of the land. A flying scroll enters the house of every thief and false witness and consumes it (5:1-4). Wickedness personified as a woman will be carried in an ephah (basket) to the land of Shinar (vv 5-11). Interspersed in the vision accounts are four oracles (1:14-17; 2:8-13; 3:6-10; 4:8-14). Each of these passages begins with the messenger formula, "Thus says the Lord," or the expression "Cry out" (1:14, 17). The first oracle assures the people that the temple, the cities, and the choice of Jerusalem will be renewed. The second oracle exhorts any exiles remaining in Babylon to return to Judah and Jerusalem (2:7-12). Zechariah 2:12-13 are interesting. Verse 12 is the only OT reference to Palestine as "the Holy Land," and verse 13 is similar to the call to worship in Habakkuk 2:20: "Be silent before the Lord, all

humanity, for he is springing into action from his holy dwelling" (Zec 2:13, nlt). The third oracle in the visionary accounts concerns Joshua the high priest as a sign of the coming of God's servant, the Branch who removes the guilt of the land in a single day (3:6-10).

The Symbolic Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)

Zechariah is told to go into the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah, take silver and gold from some returnees from Babylon, make a crown, and put it on the head of Joshua the priest as a symbol of the royal and priestly king, the Branch, the builder of the temple. After the ceremony the crown is to be hung in the temple as a memorial of those who gave the silver and the gold. The last verse (6:15) seems to say that just as gold and silver from exiles was used to symbolize the crowning of the coming king of the kingdom, so exiles, "those who are far off," will also participate in the completion of the temple. Then Zechariah's hearers will know God sent him to prophesy. This will all take place when and if they will diligently obey the voice of the Lord.

The Question about Fasting and Morality (7:1-8:23)

A delegation from Bethel (10 miles or 16.1 kilometers north of Jerusalem) came to Jerusalem in the fourth year of Darius (518 BC). Work on the temple had been going on for two years. The purpose of this visit was to entreat the favor of the Lord (7:2) and to ask the priests and the prophets if they should continue to fast as they had done since the temple was destroyed 70 years earlier (v 3). The Lord told Zechariah to ask why they were fasting—for the Lord or for selfish motives? The answer to the question of fasting seems to be that God desires truth, justice, and covenant-love more than fasting. Zechariah reiterates the message the Lord had already given his people by the former prophets. The last section in the first part of Zechariah is a decalogue of promises (8:1-23). The ten promises begin with the words "Thus says the Lord" or "The word of the Lord came to me." The last word of God is not judgment but promise, hope, forgiveness, and restoration.

The Oracles of the Lord (chs 9-12)

The last half of the book of Zechariah (chs 9-14) falls into two nearly equal parts: chapters 9-11 (46 verses) and chapters 12-14 (44 verses). Each part begins with the words "An oracle" (9:1; 12:1). Both "oracles" are primarily eschatological. The first

part (chs [9-11](#)) is concerned with the restoration of the tribes to Palestine ([9:11-17](#); [10:6-12](#)). In order to accomplish this, the Lord will rid Palestine and Syria of opponents to his rule ([9:1-8](#); [11:1-3](#)), remove the evil shepherds (rulers; [10:2b-5](#); [11:4-17](#)), and the Prince of Peace will come ([9:9-10](#)). The last "oracle" of Zechariah ([12:1-14:21](#)) is also eschatological. This time the concern is primarily that of Jerusalem and Judah. Twice Jerusalem is attacked by the nations ([12:1-8](#); [14:1-5](#)). Each time the Lord fights for Jerusalem, Judah, and the house of David. Jerusalem weeps and mourns for an unidentified martyr ([12:10-14](#)). The martyr could be called the "good" shepherd who is killed and his sheep scattered ([13:7-9](#)). Jesus referred to this passage in connection with his arrest ([Mt 26:31](#); [Mk 14:27](#)). A fountain will be opened for the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be cleansed from sin, idolatry, and false prophets ([Zec 13:1-6](#)). The new Jerusalem will remain aloft on its site and the land around it will be turned into a plain ([14:10-11](#)). There will be no night nor extreme temperatures in the new Jerusalem. Living waters will flow from Jerusalem, and the Lord will become King of all the earth. Those who fight against Jerusalem will be destroyed, but those who survive will worship the Lord year by year by keeping the Feast of Booths.

The last scene in the book of Zechariah is a picture of the world after Armageddon, a new world cleansed of sin. It will be a time of peace and security. When God comes to reign, everything will become holy. The warhorses will become as holy as the priest's turban, and the ordinary cooking vessel will be as temple vessels. The Canaanite or trader will be eliminated. There will be no difference between Jew and Gentile, as long as one worships the Lord of Hosts as King.

See also Israel, History of; Postexilic Period; Prophecy; Prophet, Prophetess; Zechariah (Person) #20.

Zecher, Zeker

Alternate form of Zechariah, Gibeon's son, in [1 Chronicles 8:31](#). *See* Zechariah (Person) #5.

Zedad

One of the geographical landmarks of Israel's northern boundary, mentioned between Hamath and Ziphron ([Nm 34:8](#); [Ez 47:15](#)).

Zedekiah

1. Judah's last king and a key political figure in the fateful final decade of the southern kingdom. His reign (597-586 BC) spanned Nebuchadnezzar's two attacks on Jerusalem, in 597 and 586. The first attack was in reprisal for the rebellion of Josiah's son, Jehoiakim (609-598 BC), against Nebuchadnezzar; however, by the time his forces captured Jerusalem, Jehoiakim was dead and had been succeeded by his 18-year-old son Jehoiachin. Nebuchadnezzar deposed the young king and deported him to Babylon, along with the elite of the nation: government officials, army officers, and craftsmen. As Jehoiachin's replacement, Nebuchadnezzar appointed his uncle Mattaniah, a younger brother of Jehoiakim and of the earlier, short-lived King Jehoahaz (609 BC). Mattaniah was thus the third son of Josiah to occupy the throne of Judah. The Babylonian king named him Zedekiah, which means "the Lord is my righteousness."

Zedekiah found himself in a difficult position as Judah's king. Many evidently still regarded Jehoiachin as the real king (cf. [Jer 28:1-4](#)). Certainly the Judeans deported to Babylonia dated events by reference to Jehoiachin ([2 Kgs 25:27](#); [Ez 1:2](#)). Though the Babylonians exacted from Zedekiah an oath of loyalty ([2 Chr 36:13](#); [Ez 17:13-18](#)), evidence suggests that they too viewed Zedekiah's predecessor as the legitimate king and Zedekiah as regent. They may have been holding him in reserve for possible restoration to power, should events require it.

Judah was filled with a false optimism that could hardly have helped the new king. It was confidently expected that the deportation of the leading citizens would be only temporary; prophets were guaranteeing that Babylon's power would be broken within two years ([Jer 28:2-4](#)). They were opposed by a few prophets led by Jeremiah, whose message found little support.

Pressure both from within the nation and from without was put on Zedekiah to change his political allegiance. In the fourth year of his reign (593 BC), the neighboring states of Ammon, Moab, Tyre, and Sidon formed a coalition to fight for independence

from Babylon. Envoys were sent to Zedekiah ([Jer 27:1-3](#)). However, Jeremiah advised the king not to get involved. In the same year, according to [Jeremiah 51:59](#), Zedekiah visited Babylon. He may have been summoned to affirm his loyalty and to explain his role in the political situation. The planned rebellion did not occur, perhaps because aid from Egypt failed to materialize.

Within the Judean court a strong pro-Egyptian party existed. This party saw Egypt as an ally for breaking away from their eastern master, just like the advisers of King Hezekiah a century before (cf. [Is 31:1-3](#); [36:6](#)). Zedekiah, finding it difficult to resist this political pressure, eventually transferred his allegiance to Egypt.

Hophra (589–570 BC), Psammetichus's heir to the Egyptian throne, organized a joint rebellion in the west against Babylon. According to [Ezekiel 21:18-32](#) and [25:12-17](#), Judah and Ammon supported him, while Edom and Philistia shrewdly abstained. Zedekiah was rebuked by the prophet Ezekiel ([Ez 17:13-18](#)) for breaking his oath to Nebuchadnezzar (cf. [2 Chr 36:13](#)) and rebelling against him by sending envoys to Egypt to negotiate for military support.

In the face of this western uprising engineered by his Egyptian rival, Nebuchadnezzar was forced to march westward. Setting up headquarters at Riblah in northern Syria, he decided to make Jerusalem his prime target ([Ez 21:18-23](#)). The ensuing siege of Jerusalem was temporarily lifted due to an Egyptian attack but afterward was resumed until the city fell. Zedekiah, fleeing eastward with his troops, was caught near Jericho and taken north to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. There he was put on trial for breaking his promises of vassalage. By way of punishment, his sons were killed before his eyes. This tragic sight was the last he ever saw, since his eyes were then put out. He was taken in chains to Babylon, where he eventually died in prison ([2 Kgs 25:5-7](#); [Jer 39:7](#); [52:8-11](#); cf. [Ez 12:13](#)).

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

2. Kenaanah's son and one of the prophets who spoke falsely to kings Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah, telling them that the Lord would give Ahab victory over the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead ([1 Kgs 22:11](#)). After hearing Micaiah's contrary prediction that Ahab would in fact be killed in the battle, Zedekiah, in anger, struck Micaiah (v [24](#)).

3. Jeconiah's son and a descendant of David through Solomon's line ([1 Chr 3:16](#)).

4. Leading priest who affirmed Nehemiah's covenant during the postexilic era ([Neh 10:1](#)).

5. Maaseiah's son, who, according to Jeremiah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon would kill by roasting in fire for his adultery and lying words ([Jer 29:21-23](#)).

6. Hananiah's son and a prince in Judah during King Jehoiakim's reign ([Jer 36:12](#)).

Zeeb

One of two Midianite princes executed by Gideon's army ([Jgs 7:25](#)).

Zela, Zelah

A city of the tribe of Benjamin where they buried the bones of King Saul and his son Jonathan ([Joshua 18:28](#); [2 Samuel 21:14](#)). Zela was probably the native town of Saul's father, Kish. It may have been the home of Saul before Samuel anointed him king.

Zelek

An Ammonite warrior among the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:37](#); [1 Chronicles 11:39](#)).

Zelophehad

Zelophehad was the son of Hepher from the tribe of Manasseh. Zelophehad had five daughters but no sons ([Numbers 26:33](#)). Because Zelophehad had no sons, his daughters asked Moses to give them the inheritance of their father ([27:1](#)). Moses made a ruling that daughters should receive the inheritance in such cases. But, the daughters must marry men from within their own tribe so that the tribal allotments would remain unchanged ([Numbers 27:7](#); [36:2](#); [Joshua 17:3](#)).

Zelotes

The King James Version spelling of "Zealot" in [Luke 6:15](#) and [Acts 1:13](#). Zealot was the additional name of Simon, one of Jesus's 12 disciples.

See Simon #5.

Zelzah

Place near Rachel's tomb where Saul met two men in fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy concerning the events that would confirm Saul's anointing ([1 Sm 10:2](#)). Rachel's tomb is traditionally located at the northern border of Benjamin, but no precise identification of Zelzah has been made. Some have argued that Zelzah and Zela are the same place, but this is unlikely.

Zemaraim

1. Town near the northern border of the territory of Benjamin ([Jos 18:22](#)). The most likely location is Ras ez-Zeimara, about five miles (8 kilometers) northeast of Bethel in the hill country between et-Taiyibeh and Rammum.

2. Mountain in the hill country of Ephraim ([2 Chr 13:4](#)) and the scene of Abijah's speech of rebuke against Jeroboam and the Israelites.

Zemarites

One of the families of the Canaanites in the ethnological lists of [Genesis 10](#) (v [18](#)) and [1 Chronicles 1](#) (v [16](#)). The Zemarites were a Hamitic tribe mentioned in connection with the Arvadites and the Hamathites. They were probably located near the Mediterranean in the vicinity of Tripoli.

Zemirah

Beker's firstborn son, from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 7:8](#)).

Zenan

One of the cities of the Shephelah inherited by Judah ([Jos 15:37](#)).

Zenas

Lawyer whom Paul asked Titus to help with his travels in Crete ([Titus 3:13](#)).

Zephaniah (Person)

1. Priest during the reign of Zedekiah who was executed at Riblah by the king of Babylon ([2 Kgs 25:18](#); [Jer 52:24](#)). He was the second priest under Seraiah the chief priest and served as Zedekiah's envoy to Jeremiah during the period prior to the fall of Jerusalem ([Jer 21:1](#); [29:25-29](#); [37:3](#)).

2. Ancestor of Heman who was among the Kohathite Levites whom David placed in charge of the service of music in the house of the Lord ([1 Chr 6:33-36](#)). Zephaniah is listed as the father of Azariah and the son of Tahath.

3. Author of the book of Zephaniah ([Zep 1:1](#)). Though little is known about Zephaniah, it is possible that his ancestor Hezekiah is the same as the king by that name. See Zephaniah, Book of.

4. Father of Josiah in whose house Joshua was crowned as high priest ([Zec 6:10-14](#)).

Zephaniah, Book of

One of the books of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament.

Preview

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

Author

According to the editorial heading ([Zephaniah 1:1](#)), Zephaniah prophesied during King Josiah's reign, which lasted from 640 to 609 BC. His family tree is unusually detailed. Some scholars suggest his great-great-grandfather was King Hezekiah, who reigned from 715 to 686 BC. However, no Jewish or Christian tradition supports this claim, which likely would exist if true. His name, meaning "he whom the Lord protects or hides," was common and showed God's protective power.

Date, Origin, and Destination

Zephaniah likely prophesied around 630 BC. The fall of Nineveh in 612 BC had not yet happened

([Zephaniah 2:13-15](#)). Josiah's reign has two periods, divided at 622 BC. In that year, while clearing the temple of pagan items, they found the Book of the Law. This discovery boosted Josiah's religious reforms ([2 Kings 22](#)). The unreformed conditions described by Zephaniah ([Zephaniah 1:4-12](#); [3:1-4](#)) suggest a date before 622 for his criticisms. The prophet spoke to Judah, the southern kingdom, focusing on the civil and religious leaders in Jerusalem. He most likely prophesied during Josiah's reign, who became king at eight years old.

The negative parts of the book about Judah's sin and punishment, now fulfilled, warn against disobeying God. Also, Zephaniah's fulfilled threats highlight the book's positive side, confirming hope for a new generation of God's people.

Background

The Assyrian Empire expanded west and controlled Palestine. During Manasseh's long reign, from 696 to 642 BC, the region was completely under Assyrian control. Being an Assyrian vassal also meant adopting their religious practices, especially worshiping celestial bodies ([2 Kings 21:5](#)). Zephaniah criticized this sin ([Zephaniah 1:5](#)). Accepting one foreign religion led to others entering. Once the exclusive worship of the God of Israel ended, Palestinian cults gained acceptance. The Canaanite god Baal was openly worshiped ([2 Kings 21:3](#)), as Zephaniah noted ([Zephaniah 1:4](#)). Zephaniah condemned those who worshiped Molech ([Zephaniah 1:5](#)), who sacrificed children to the Ammonite god ([1 Kings 11:7](#); [2 Kings 23:10](#)). International imperialism weakened national culture, leading to the adoption of foreign customs, likely with religious significance ([Zephaniah 1:8-9](#)).

Josiah's reign brought significant changes, marking a political and religious turning point. Assyria faced problems on its eastern and northern borders and could not strengthen its control in the west. This weakness led Josiah to start a national liberation movement. He freed his nation from Assyrian control and expanded his influence northward into the old northern kingdom. Religiously, he separated himself and his country from the prevailing religions in Judah, bringing the nation back to a pure and exclusive faith in the God of Israel. The book of Zephaniah shows that at least one person shared his ideals. Zephaniah's prophetic work likely prepared the way for Josiah's later reforms. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah,

at least during the early part of Jeremiah's career (Jeremiah began prophesying in 627 BC).

Scholars think Zephaniah's prophesying may have been influenced by Scythian attacks. The Greek historian Herodotus described how the Scythians invaded western Asia and reached the Egyptian border around Zephaniah's time. However, people now doubt Herodotus's story and its connection to Zephaniah's work. There is no solid evidence of Scythian attacks on the scale Herodotus described. Zephaniah likely spoke from a theological need, as he claimed (for example, [Zephaniah 1:17](#)). From his inspired view, he saw an inevitable clash involving divine intervention and human downfall.

Purpose and Teaching

Zephaniah, speaking in God's name, condemned the religious sins of Judah and the widespread corruption among both civil and religious leaders. He predicted the nation's fall, which happened in 586 BC. The moral and religious decline could only lead to a political disaster that would destroy the nation. Zephaniah called this disaster "the Day of the LORD." This term was not new, and the prophet knew it would frighten his listeners. Amos used it, and even in his time, it was well known ([Amos 5:18-20](#)). Isaiah was the first to use the expression in the southern kingdom ([Isaiah 2:6-22](#), see verse [12](#)). In this way, Zephaniah was like a modern-day Isaiah, called by God to restate truths Isaiah had prophesied to a later generation.

The Day of the Lord refers to a time when God will take action in the world to show his power. He will remove hostile forces. God will expose and punish those who sin against his moral will. This includes those who do not recognize God's authority, especially non-Jewish people, but also sinful Israelites. The focus on the suffering of God's people aims to correct the belief that only other nations will face divine judgment.

The "day" would also prove that those loyal to God were right. It promised to restore his oppressed supporters. Zephaniah explained this two-sided event to share God's truth with his generation. It is "the Day of the LORD's wrath" ([Zephaniah 1:15, 18; 2:2](#)), when God would respond to human sin. Its focus was not only on other nations but also on Judah, including Jerusalem, the capital ([Zephaniah 1:10-13](#)), and other cities of Judah.

Zephaniah also shared a hopeful message with the people of Judah. For the prophets, salvation did not erase the message of doom. Judgment would come

first, followed by salvation. However, they could not avoid the period of hardship. The prophet's stark descriptions of "the day of wrath" serve as serious warnings and indirect pleas for the people of Judah to change their complacent, sinful ways.

Zephaniah's role under God was to remind his generation of earlier forgotten truths. He foresaw God's judgment on Judah and the world. He also shared lasting truths about God's nature, his guiding role in the world, and the responsibilities of God's people.

The book of Zephaniah is important to the New Testament because it talks about the Day of the Lord. There are several references to this in his message ([Matthew 13:41](#) [[Zephaniah 1:3](#)]; [Revelation 6:17](#) [[Zephaniah 1:14](#)]; [Revelation 14:5](#) [[Zephaniah 3:13](#)]; [Revelation 16:1](#) [[Zephaniah 3:8](#)]). These references highlight Zephaniah's significance beyond his own era. He helped shape the biblical view of a God who acts in human history and will create his kingdom. Zephaniah's descriptions serve as a model for events that will signal the end of history.

Content

The heading ([Zephaniah 1:1](#)) introduces Zephaniah, provides the historical context, and emphasizes his reflection on God's word.

The first major part of the book is [Zephaniah 1:2-2:3](#). It divides into four sections:

1. [Zephaniah 1:2-7](#)
2. [Zephaniah 1:8-13](#)
3. [Zephaniah 1:14-18](#)
4. [Zephaniah 2:1-3](#)

[Zephaniah 1:2-7](#) include Judah in a prediction of worldwide destruction. Zephaniah used traditional material to emphasize that God's people were not exempt, contrary to their belief (see [Amos 5:18-20](#)). The prophet supported his surprising message with logical statements about the religious wrongdoings in Jerusalem. The image of sacrifice was used ironically, showing Judah as the victim.

The national leaders and the royal family were guilty ([Zephaniah 1:8-13](#)). They followed superstitions carefully, but ignored basic divine commands against stealing and fraud. Zephaniah saw the enemy attack from the north of Jerusalem as a sign of God's punishment for dishonest traders (see [Amos 8:5-6](#); [Micah 6:10-11](#)).

The following is a shocking and frightening description of the grimness of the coming "Day" ([Zephaniah 1:14-18](#)). The prophet awakened a complacent people who did not want to hear God's message. He forced them to face reality with a relentless message of doom and destruction. Judah would become the demoralized target of God's anger. Their wealth had brought luxurious imports but could not stop divine judgment.

The prophet ended his sermon by urging people to repent ([Zephaniah 2:1-3](#)). He moved his audience from indifference and shared the hopeful message that not everything was lost. A gathering at the temple for repentance and prayers from the faithful could prevent disaster. The second main part of the book describes God's punishment of foreign nations ([Zephaniah 2:4-15](#)). It names key regions to the west, east, south, and north of Judah. This highlights the global impact of the Day of the Lord. Like the first part, it divides into four sections:

1. [Zephaniah 2:4-7](#)
2. [Zephaniah 2:8-11](#)
3. [Zephaniah 2:12](#)
4. [Zephaniah 2:13-15](#)

The first passage discusses the Philistines. In the cities of Gaza and Ekron, Hebrew prophecy uses wordplay. The names of these cities sound like doom. The Philistines are called trespassers because they illegally moved from Crete to the Promised Land, which was meant for God's people.

Zephaniah predicted that Moab and Ammon would face attack because of their arrogance and taking Judean land ([Zephaniah 2:8-11](#)). God would help his covenant people.

The first two main sections delivered a detailed message of judgment for both Judah and nearby nations. This message is repeated briefly in the third main section ([Zephaniah 3:1-8](#)). Zephaniah criticized Jerusalem for its dual role as political capital and religious center. Government and temple officials did not take their responsibility as God's representatives seriously. Civil leaders abused power by demanding bribes and even killing political opponents. Instead of guiding the people (see [Ezekiel 34](#)), they acted like predators (see [Ezekiel 22:25-27](#)). The prophets used their gifts for selfish reasons, and the priests ignored temple rules. They did not learn from history's lessons of caution and reverence. The conclusion is clear: Judah could not avoid punishment on the

coming Day of the Lord and would suffer with other nations.

The final main section ([Zephaniah 3:9–20](#)) shows God's plan for Judah and other nations from a new perspective. Punishment is not God's final word for his people or the nations. God's ultimate goal is salvation, not destruction ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). This section has three parts:

1. [Zephaniah 3:9–10](#)
2. [Zephaniah 3:11–13](#)
3. [Zephaniah 3:14–20](#)

[Zephaniah 3:9–10](#) focus on the conversion of the nations. This passage confidently predicts that Gentiles will willingly submit to the God of Israel. Their conversion will not come from human effort but from God's providence. Lips once used for pagan worship will be purified to praise the God of Israel. People from distant lands, symbolized by the far south beyond the Ethiopian Nile, will come as worshippers, like scattered Jews returning home.

God's people would show a change of heart ([Zephaniah 3:11–13](#)). By now, they would have removed the proud people who prioritized themselves over God in politics and religion. They would become a purified group who humbly trusted in God. They were promised the blessings of paradise.

The last passage talks about future happiness ([Zephaniah 3:14–20](#)). The prophet imagines a future when God's judgment ends and salvation begins. God's people will celebrate in his presence. Fear and sadness will disappear because of God's strong presence and joy. His joy will spread to them, making them happy too. This joy will come from the changes God makes in their lives ([Zephaniah 3:17](#); "He will quiet you with His love"). Part of this change will include justice for God's suffering people. They will gain honor as visible representatives of the glorious God. In the end, God's power will show through a powerful people.

See also Israel, History of; Josiah #1.

Zephath

Zephath was a Canaanite city that was conquered by the tribes of Judah and Simeon. After they captured it, they renamed it Hormah ([Judges 1:17](#)). was the place where the Israelites first tried to enter Canaan but failed. This happened when they

disobeyed the command of Moses. As a result, the Amalekites and the Canaanites defeated them ([Numbers 14:45](#)).

See also Hormah.

Zephathah

Valley where Asa defeated Zerah the Ethiopian ([2 Chr 14:10](#)). The valley of Zephathah is located in the vicinity of Mareshah and thus in southwestern Judah.

Zepho

Eliphaz's son and a descendant of Esau ([Gn 36:11, 15](#); [1 Chr 1:36](#)).

Zephon

Firstborn son of Gad and the father of the Zephonite family ([Gn 46:16](#); [Nm 26:15](#)).

Zer

One of the fortified cities of Naphtali's tribe ([Jos 19:35](#)). From the surrounding names in the list, it may be inferred that it was located on the southwest side of the Sea of Galilee.

Zerah

1. One of the chiefs of the Edomites ([Genesis 36:17](#); [1 Chronicles 1:37](#)). He is the son of Reuel, Esau's son by his wife Basemath. He was likely the ancestor of Jobab, who later became king of the Edomites ([Genesis 36:13, 33](#)).

2. One of the twin sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar ([Genesis 38:30](#); [46:12](#); [Matthew 1:3](#)). Although Zerah thrust out his hand first, he drew it back, allowing his brother, Perez, to be born first. The descendants of Zerah (the Zerahites) became one of the most influential clans of Judah ([Numbers 26:20](#); [Joshua 7:1, 18](#); [22:20](#); [1 Chronicles 2:4–6](#); [9:6](#)). Because Ethan and Heman are listed as sons of Zerah in [1 Chronicles 2:6](#), the Ezrahites mentioned in [1 Kings 4:31](#) and the titles to [Psalms 88](#) and [89](#) are also considered to be Zerahites. However, Ethan and Heman are listed as Levites in [1 Chronicles 15:17](#). It is more likely that the Ezrahites were a Levite clan.
3. One of the sons of Simeon from whom the Zerahite clan descended ([Numbers 26:13](#); [1 Chronicles 4:24](#)). He is also called Zohar in [Genesis 46:10](#) and [Exodus 6:15](#).
4. One of the sons of Iddo, from the Gershonite branch of Levi's tribe ([1 Chronicles 6:21](#)).
5. One of the ancestors of Asaph from Levi's tribe. He is the son of Adaiah and the father of Ethni ([1 Chronicles 6:41](#)). Several believe him to be the same individual as #4 above.
6. The commander of the Ethiopians (Cushites) who fought against Asa, king of Judah ([2 Chronicles 14:9](#)). It is hard to identify this person or the event with any certainty. The most common identification has been with Usarkon II of Egypt. The battle account matches Usarkon's reign in Egypt. So do the troops' numbers and nationalities.

Zerahiah

1. Uzzi's son and ancestor of Ezra from the priestly line of Eleazar ([1 Chr 6:6, 51](#); [Ezr 7:4](#)).

2. Father of Eliehoenai, who was head of a family who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra ([Ezr 8:4](#)).

Zerahite

1. Any descendant of Zerah, son of Simeon ([Numbers 26:13](#)). *See* Zerah #3.
2. Any descendant of Zerah, son of the Judah by Tamar ([Numbers 26:20](#)). *See* Zerah #2.

See also Izrahite.

Zered

Valley and brook by which the Israelites encamped, listed between Iye-abarim and a stopping place near the Arnon River to the north ([Nm 21:12](#)). Though its exact location remains in question, Zered is probably identifiable with the modern Wadi el-Hesa, a streambed that formed a natural border between the ancient countries of Moab and Edom and, following a northwestward course, emptied into the southern end of the Dead Sea. The crossing of the Zered Brook by the Israelites marked 38 years since Israel rebelled against God at Kadesh-barnea ([Dt 2:13–14](#)).

Zereda

The King James Version spelling of Zeredah in [1 Kings 11:26](#).

See Zeredah #1.

Zeredah

1. Birthplace (or hometown) of Jeroboam, Israel's first king during the period of the divided kingdom ([1 Kgs 11:26](#)).
2. City in the Jordan Valley ([2 Chr 4:17](#); [1 Kgs 7:46](#) "Zarethan"). *See* Zarethan.

Zeredathah

KJV rendering of Zeredah in [2 Chronicles 4:17](#). *See* Zeredah #2.

Zererah

City mentioned in connection with Gideon's defeat of the Midianites ([Jgs 7:22](#)); perhaps also identifiable with Zarethan.

Zeresh

The wife of Haman the Agagite. She told him to build the gallows (a tall wooden structure) for hanging Mordecai ([Esther 5:10, 14](#)).

Zereth

Asshur's son by his wife Helah from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:7](#)).

Zereth-Shahar

One of the cities inherited by Reuben's tribe ([Jos 13:19](#)), described as being on "the hill of the valley."

Zeri

One of the sons of Jeduthun who prophesied with the lyre in thanksgiving to the Lord ([1 Chr 25:3](#)). He may be the same person as Izri (v [11](#)).

Zeror

Benjaminite, Becorath's son, the father of Abiel, and an ancestor of King Saul ([1 Sm 9:1](#)).

Zeruah

The mother of Israel's King Jeroboam I ([1 Kings 11:26](#)).

Zerubbabel

A Jewish man born in Babylon. He returned to Palestine in 538 BC to be the Persian-appointed governor of Jerusalem. His name likely means

"seed [offspring] of Babylon," indicating his birthplace in Babylon.

There is some uncertainty about Zerubbabel's biological father. Most biblical references identify Shealtiel as his father ([Ezra 3:2, 8](#); [5:2](#); [Nehemiah 12:1](#); [Haggai 1:1, 12-14](#); [2:2, 23](#); [Matthew 1:12-13](#); [Luke 3:27](#)), making Zerubbabel the grandson of King Jehoiachin of the Davidic line. However, [1 Chronicles 3:19](#) names Pedaiah, Shealtiel's brother, as his father.

Two possible explanations have been suggested:

1. Shealtiel died without having children, and Pedaiah fathered Zerubbabel with Shealtiel's widow according to the levirate marriage law, where a brother would marry his dead brother's widow ([Deuteronomy 25:5-10](#)). In this case, Zerubbabel would be listed as Shealtiel's son to preserve his lineage. However, the text does not strongly support this theory. The Chronicler does not mention this detail if it was meant to clarify Zerubbabel's parentage.
2. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) lists Shealtiel as Zerubbabel's father in [1 Chronicles 3:19](#). This aligns with the other references and may resolve the discrepancy.

Zerubbabel was of Davidic descent, whether his father was Shealtiel or Pedaiah. He was seen as a potential leader to restore the Israelite community.

In 538 BC, Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return home. He then appointed Zerubbabel as governor of Jerusalem. By around 529-520 BC, he began work on rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. However, progress was slow due to various setbacks, and significant progress did not occur until 520 BC.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah show Zerubbabel's key role in the community. They viewed Zerubbabel and Jeshua (the high priest) as God's chosen leaders for the task of rebuilding. Their support is evident in their writings (for example, [Haggai 2:21-23](#); [Zechariah 3:8](#); [4:6-7](#); [6:12](#)), where the work of these two men is depicted as having messianic significance. This is clear in Zechariah's vision ([Zechariah 4:11-14](#)). Two olive

branches beside the lampstand are "the two anointed ones who are standing beside the Lord of all the earth." These are Jeshua and Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel's work to rebuild Jerusalem's temple earned him great honor in Jewish tradition. Some scholars believe the Persians might have known Zerubbabel as Sheshbazzar.

See Sheshbazzar.

Zeruiah

A daughter of Nahash and the sister of Abigail ([2 Samuel 17:25](#)). Zeruiah later gave birth to three sons: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. All of them were friends of David when he was king of Israel ([2 Samuel 2:18](#); [3:39](#); [8:16](#); [18:2](#)).

Zetham

One of Ladan's descendants, a Gershonite, in charge of the temple treasuries ([1 Chr 23:8](#); [26:22](#)).

Zethan

Bilhan's son from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 7:10](#)).

Zethar

One of seven trusted palace officials (called chamberlains) who served King Ahasuerus of Persia. The king ordered Zethar and the other officials to bring Queen Vashti to a feast so everyone could see her beauty ([Esther 1:10](#)).

Zeus

Chief god of the Greek pantheon (Roman Jupiter). Zeus was initially worshiped as part of an animistic cult, as the sky god with thunder as his principal manifestation. Well before the time of Homer, however, Zeus had become the preeminent personal god of the Greek residents of Thessaly, with Mt Olympus serving as the focal point of the cult. By NT times, Zeus was considered the Greek father god who possessed supreme powers. The quotation Paul used in [Acts 17:28](#) from Cleanthes (and/or Aratus) was originally ascribed to Zeus ("in him we live and move and have our being").

Zeus is most significant in biblical writings as a result of Paul and Barnabas's encounter with the priest of Zeus at Lystra ([Acts 14:8-18](#)). Because Paul and Barnabas had healed a lame man, the residents of Lystra attempted to worship them, identifying Barnabas with Zeus and Paul with Hermes, the messenger of the gods. It was not unusual that this misidentification should take place, since the Greek gods were frequently represented as taking on human appearances and intervening directly in human affairs. Unlike the true God, Zeus and his consorts were often viewed as capriciously bestowing favor or disfavor. The attribution of "divinity" to Paul and Barnabas allowed them to identify the key differences between Greek and Christian theology.

Zia

One of the clan leaders of Gad's tribe dwelling in Bashan ([1 Chr 5:13](#)).

Ziba

Ziba was a former servant of King Saul. After Saul died, David became king. David asked Ziba to find any people still alive from Saul's family. David wanted to show kindness to them ([2 Samuel 9:2-12](#)).

During the time after Saul's death, Ziba gained his freedom. He also became a wealthy landowner. But this changed when Ziba told David about Mephibosheth, the disabled son of Jonathan. David gave Mephibosheth back the land that had belonged to Saul's family.

Later, Ziba and Mephibosheth had a disagreement. It happened when David had to flee from Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion. Ziba met David with supplies and claimed that Mephibosheth stayed behind because he hoped to take back the throne ([2 Samuel 16:1-4](#)). When David returned, Mephibosheth came to meet him. He said that Ziba had lied and had left him behind on purpose because he could not travel easily ([19:17, 24-29](#)).

Most Bible scholars think Ziba lied and spoke badly about Mephibosheth. But the Bible does not clearly say who was guilty. It seems unlikely that Mephibosheth thought he could become king, even though Ziba said this ([2 Samuel 16:3](#)). Mephibosheth also seemed loyal to David. However, David may have brought him to

Jerusalem to keep a close watch on him. On the other hand, David believed Ziba's claim without asking questions. This shows David may have thought Mephibosheth wanted the throne. Ziba also continued to support David, even though David's decision had taken away Ziba's land and freedom ([2 Samuel 16:1; 19:17](#)).

Ziba may have been unhappy about losing his freedom. This could have led him to say false things about Mephibosheth. In the end, David seemed unsure about who was telling the truth. So he did not fully support either one. Instead, he decided to divide the land between them ([2 Samuel 19:29](#)).

Zibeon

Ancestor of Oholibamah, the Canaanite wife of Esau ([Gn 36:2, 14](#)). He is listed as a Hivite in [Genesis 36:2](#) but is probably the same as Zibeon the son of Seir the Horite ([Gn 36:20, 29; 1 Chr 1:38](#)). Possibly "Hivite" designated his tribal affiliation, while "Horite" indicated the fact that he dwelt in caves. It is also possible that "Hivite" is a transmission error in [Genesis 36:2](#).

Zibia

One of the seven sons borne to Shaharaim by his wife Hodesh ([1 Chr 8:9](#)).

Zibiah

The mother of King Jehoash of Judah. She was from the town of Beersheba ([2 Kings 12:1; 2 Chronicles 24:1](#)).

Zichri, Zicri

1. A Kohathite Levite and a descendant of Izhar ([Exodus 6:21](#)).
2. One of Shimei's sons from the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:19](#)).
3. One of Shashak's sons from the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:23](#)).
4. One of Jeroham's sons from the tribe of Benjamin ([1 Chronicles 8:27](#)).

5. An ancestor of Mattaniah. Mattaniah returned with Zerubbabel to Israel following the exile in Babylon ([1 Chronicles 9:15](#)). Zicri is probably Zabdi from [Nehemiah 11:17](#).
6. A descendant of Eliezer, the son of Moses. His son, Shelomoth, was in charge of the treasuries of the dedicated gifts ([1 Chronicles 26:25](#)).
7. The father of Eliezer, the chief officer of the Reubenites during David's reign ([1 Chronicles 27:16](#)).
8. The father of Amasiah, a volunteer in charge of 200,000 men during Jehoshaphat's reign ([2 Chronicles 17:16](#)).
9. The father of Elishaphat, a member of the conspiracy against Athaliah led by Jehoiada ([2 Chronicles 23:1](#)).
10. A mighty man from Ephraim who participated in Pekah's domination of Judah. Zicri killed Ahaz's son Maaseiah, Azrikam the commander of the palace, and Elkanah the king's deputy ([2 Chronicles 28:7](#)).
11. The father of Joel, overseer of the Benjaminites who returned to Jerusalem following the exile in Babylon ([Nehemiah 11:9](#)).
12. A Levite who served as a priest and the head of the clan of Abijah during the days of Joiakim the high priest ([Nehemiah 12:17](#)).

Ziddim

Fortified city in the land assigned to Naphtali's tribe ([Jos 19:35](#)).

Zidkijah

KJV form of Zedekiah, a priest in [Nehemiah 10:1](#). See Zedekiah #4.

Zidon, Zidonian

KJV forms of Sidon and Sidonian, a city and its inhabitants in Asher's territory. *See* Sidon (Place), Sidonian.

Zif

KJV form of Ziv, the name of the Hebrew month, corresponding to about mid-April to mid-May ([1 Kgs 6:1, 37](#)). *See* Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

Ziggurat

A word meaning "temple tower." A ziggurat looked similar to the step pyramid of Egypt and was used for worship.

Ziggurats were often built in the major cities of Mesopotamia. The Tower of Babel is believed to have been based on this kind of building ([Genesis 11:1-9](#)).

It was widely believed that gods lived in high places. Therefore, worship was more appropriate on hills or mountains. But there were no hills or suitable building stones in Mesopotamia, so the Mesopotamians built with mud bricks. The ziggurats of mud brick were constructed to be like hills where the worshiper or priest could get closer to the gods.

Like the pyramids of Egypt, these temple towers were square. Instead of having sloping sides, it had a series of terraces that decreased in size as they ascended. Stairways or ramps provided access to each level, and the top level housed a shrine or altar where priests conducted religious ceremonies. The great seven-story ziggurat at Babylon measured nearly 300 feet (91.4 meters) on a side at the base and rose to about the same height.

Ziha

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

2. Overseer of the temple servants living at Ophel during the postexilic era ([Neh 11:21](#)). If Ziha is simply a family name, then this person is likely the same as #1 above.

Ziklag

Philistine city ruled by David for 16 months before he moved to Hebron to become the king of Judah. Ziklag was deeded to David by Achish of Gath, presumably to ensure David's continued neutrality ([1 Sm 27:6](#); [1 Chr 12:1](#)). The location of Ziklag is difficult to determine despite its prominence in the early history of Israel. In the record of the land allotments following the Conquest, Ziklag appears to be located in the extreme south of Judah ([Jos 15:31](#)). It is later described as part of the allotment within western Judah that was granted to Simeon ([Jos 19:5](#); [1 Chr 4:30](#)). Ziklag was most likely located somewhere on the frontier between Philistia and Judah, southeast of Gaza (possibly Tell el-Khuweilfeh).

Zillah

Second wife of Lamech and mother of Tubal-cain and Naamah ([Gn 4:19-23](#)).

Zillethai

1. One of Shimei's sons from Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chr 8:20](#)).

2. One of the "chiefs of thousands" who deserted Saul and came to David at Ziklag ([1 Chr 12:20](#)).

Zilpah

Mother of Jacob's sons Gad and Asher. Laban had given her to his daughter Leah as a handmaid ([Gn 29:24](#); [46:18](#)). Later, at Leah's insistence, she became Jacob's concubine for the purpose of bearing sons ([30:9](#); [37:2](#)).

Zilthai

KJV spelling of Zillethai in [1 Chronicles 8:20](#) and [12:20](#). *See* Zillethai #1 and #2.

Zimmah

Gershonite Levite and ancestor of Joah ([1 Chr 6:20](#)); possibly the same Joah who assisted Hezekiah ([2 Chr 29:12](#)).

Zimran

One of the sons of Abraham by Keturah ([Gn 25:2](#); [1 Chr 1:32](#)). Unlike the other sons of Abraham by Keturah, there is little evidence that Zimran is associated with a later tribal group.

Zimri (Person)

1. A leader of the Simeon tribe who was killed by Phinehas for having an improper relationship with a Midianite woman at Peorr ([Numbers 25:14](#)). Zimri's sin was considered worse because he did it openly, he was a tribal leader, and the woman was the daughter of an important Midianite prince.
2. A king of Israel who ruled for only seven days (in 885 BC). He became king after he killed King Elah and all of Baasha's family ([1 Kings 16:9-12](#)). Zimri was the commander of half of the chariot forces, but he failed to get support from the people. Instead, the people supported Omri, who was the commander of the army. When Omri attacked Zimri at Tirzah, Zimri killed himself by setting fire to his palace ([16:15-18](#)). Later, Queen Jezebel referred to Zimri's cruelty when she accused Jehu of being like Zimri ([2 Kings 9:31](#)).
3. One of the sons of Zerah. Zerah was a son of Judah by Tamar ([1 Chronicles 2:6](#)). Another name for him is Zabdi in the parallel passage in [Joshua 7:1, 17](#). See Zabdi #1.
4. A descendant of King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. [1 Chronicles 8:36](#) lists him as the son of Jehoaddah and the father of Moza. This Zimri is likely the same as Zimri the son of Jadah ([9:42](#)).

Zimri (Place)

Place and peoples of the East, listed along with Elam and Media, against whom God's wrath would fall ([Jer 25:25](#)). Zimri's location and history are unknown; some identify its progenitor with Zimran, Abraham and Keturah's son ([Gn 25:2](#)).

Zina

Alternate form of Ziza, Shimei's son, in [1 Chronicles 23:10](#). See Ziza.

Zinc

See Minerals and Metals.

Zion

The Jebusite fortress in Jerusalem conquered by David. Thereafter, Zion was used by biblical writers to identify other areas of Jerusalem and was used as a designation of the entire city. Zion was also used to describe, spiritually speaking, the eternal city of God.

Geographical Sites

The Jebusite Fortress

The first occurrence of the word "Zion" is in the narrative of David's conquest of Jerusalem ([2 Sm 5:6-10](#); [1 Chr 11:4-9](#)). David captured the "fortress of Zion," which was thereafter known as the "city of David." The "fortress of Zion" may refer to the entire walled perimeter of the approximately 11-acre (4.5-hectare) site on the southeastern ridge (the Ophel Ridge), or to a smaller fortified area within that site.

The Temple Mount

Changes in the perimeter of the city by incorporating more territory within the walls extend the term Zion. When Solomon built the temple and his palace and extended the walls north of the Ophel Ridge to encompass the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite ([2 Sm 24:16-18](#); [1 Chr 21:15-18, 28](#)), the name Zion was applied to these areas as well. The transfer of the ark "from the city of David which is Zion" ([1 Kgs 8:1](#); [2 Chr 5:2](#)) to the temple hill brought both an extension and a

reduction of the territory embraced by the term “Zion.” The whole city could still be called Zion, but from this point on, there would be a close identification between Zion and the temple hill. The temple precincts became the primary Zion; references to Zion in the poetic books and the preaching of the prophets are primarily to the temple area as the dwelling place of God.

The Entire City

The word “Zion” can be used as a designation of the entire city or its population without any particular reference to the temple area. This use is clearest in poetic passages where Zion is the parallel term to Jerusalem ([Pss 51:18; 76:2; 102:21; 135:21; 147:12; Is 2:3; 30:19; 33:20; 37:32; 40:9; 41:27; 62:1; Jer 26:18; 51:35; Am 1:2; Zep 3:14](#)) or to the villages of Judah ([Pss 69:35; 97:8; Is 40:9](#)).

Theological Motifs

In the Old Testament

Many theological motifs attach to the Zion theme as it develops in redemptive history. The dominant motif of Zion as the dwelling place of God, the place where God is in the midst of his people, is conjoined to the larger theme of Immanuel, “God in our midst.” Just as the pillar of fire and cloud stood above the tabernacle during the wilderness wandering, so once Israel had attained the place of God’s choosing ([Dt 12:5–14](#)), he would dwell there. When Jerusalem became David’s capital and Solomon had completed the temple, the glory cloud filled the temple ([1 Kgs 8:10; 2 Chr 5:13–14](#)) and Jerusalem became the dwelling place of God ([Pss 74:2; 76:2; 135:21; Is 8:18; Jl 3:17–21](#)). The Lord loved and chose Zion ([Pss 78:68; 132:13](#)). His glorious presence was there, and from there he would speak ([50:1–2](#)). His fire was in Zion, his furnace in Jerusalem ([Is 31:8–9](#)). There he was enthroned above the cherubim ([Pss 9:11; 99:1–2](#)) and ruled over his people and the nations ([Is 24:23](#)). His chosen king ruled from that holy hill ([Pss 2:6; 48:1](#)).

Though the size of the site of ancient Jerusalem is not particularly impressive and ordinarily would not be considered a large hill, for the psalmist Zion is God’s holy hill ([Ps 99:9](#)). The prophets describe it as “chief among the mountains, raised above the hills” ([Is 2:2; Mi 4:1](#)). The Canaanite god Baal was thought to dwell on a great mountain to the north, Mt Zaphon, so the psalmist describes Zion as “beautiful in its loftiness, like the utmost heights of

Mt Zaphon” ([Ps 48:1–2](#)). God’s sanctuary is “like the high mountains” ([Ps 78:68; Ez 40:2](#)).

An adequate water supply has been a problem for Jerusalem throughout its history. During the OT period, the city’s water came from one small spring. But in the eyes of the poets and prophets, Zion is gladdened by a great river that brings life wherever it flows ([Ps 46:4; Ez 47:1–12; Jl 3:18; Zec 13:1; 14:8](#); see [Rv 22:1–2](#)). The threatening waters of chaos cannot shake the city of God ([Ps 46:1–3](#)).

Because Zion is the city of God, it is the object of pilgrims, Jew and Gentile alike, who thirst to be in the presence of God in Zion’s temple ([Pss 42:1–2; 63:1](#)). The pilgrim psalms give vivid expression to their longing ([84; 122; 125–128](#)). All humanity will come to God in Zion ([65:1–4](#)). The Gentiles will make annual pilgrimages bringing gifts ([Ps 76; Is 18:7; Zep 3:9–10](#)); even former enemies will be regarded as native-born citizens of Zion ([Ps 87; Is 60:14; Zec 14:21](#)). The nations will stream into Jerusalem to inaugurate an era of peace ([Is 2:1–5; Mi 4:1–8](#)). Year after year the festivals of Israel will be celebrated in Zion by Gentiles ([Zec 14:16–19](#)).

In the New Testament

The NT further develops the emphasis on both the heavenly and the eschatological Zion. For example, the author of Hebrews said that the OT saints looked “forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God . . . longing for a better country—a heavenly one” ([Heb 11:10, 16, niv](#)), but none of them received the promises because God had planned something even better (vv [39–40](#)). The church now enjoys what believers of the old covenant could never know: unlimited access to the presence of God in that Holy City, “Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God” ([12:22](#); see vv [18–24](#)). Earthly Zion is but a shadow of the heavenly reality. The present city of Jerusalem is likened to a slave woman, but the heavenly Jerusalem is free and the mother of both Jew and Gentile ([Gal 4:21–27](#); see [Is 49:14–23; 54:1](#)). The NT also looks forward to the eschatological expectation of the re-creation of heaven and earth and the revelation of the new Jerusalem ([Rv 21:2](#)). It is a city on a great high mountain ([Rv 21:10](#); see [Pss 48:1–2; 78:68; Is 2:2; Ez 40:2; Mi 4:1](#)), and a river of life flows within ([Rv 22:1–2](#)).

See also Jerusalem; Jerusalem, New.

Zion, Daughter of

A term in prophetic literature. It designates the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zion) and nearby areas. It also referred to those in Babylon exiled from Jerusalem and Judea ([Isaiah 1:8](#); [Jeremiah 4:31](#); [6:2](#), [23](#)). Ancient cities were seen as the mother of their inhabitants. So, it was appropriate to call the people of Jerusalem the "daughters of Zion," especially in poetry. Israel was to be the "virgin daughter" of spiritual Zion ([2 Kings 19:21](#); [Isaiah 37:22](#); [Lamentations 2:13](#)). But, many prophetic contexts judge the unfaithful "daughters" ([Isaiah 3:16–17](#); [4:4](#); [Micah 1:13](#)). God judged the "daughters of Zion" for their unfaithfulness. But, God promised to deliver them ([Isaiah 52:2](#); [62:11](#); [Zechariah 9:9](#); [Matthew 21:5](#); [John 12:15](#)).

See also Zion.

Zior

One of the cities of the hill country allotted to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:54](#)). Since it is associated with Hebron in the text, Zior is likely identified with modern Sa'ir, the traditional location for Esau's tomb.

Ziph (Person)

1. Descendant of Caleb from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:42](#)).
2. One of the sons of Jehallelel from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:16](#)).

Ziph (Place)

1. One of the cities in the extreme south assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:24](#)).
2. One of the cities in the hill country belonging to Judah's tribe ([Jos 15:55](#)), mentioned with Maon, Carmel, Jezreel, and most prominently with Hebron (cf. [1 Chr 2:42](#)). Ziph has been identified with a site three miles (4.8 kilometers) south of Hebron. The surrounding wilderness region is probably the "wilderness of Ziph" where David hid from Saul ([1 Sm 23:14–15](#); [26:2](#)). The Ziphites who betrayed David to Saul were residents of this city and the surrounding region ([1 Sm 23:19](#); [26:1](#); [Ps 54 title](#)). Ziph is later mentioned as one of the cities fortified by Rehoboam ([2 Chr 11:8](#)).

Ziphah

Jehallelel's second son (or possibly daughter, since the form is feminine), listed in [1 Chronicles 4:16](#).

Ziphims

KJV rendering of Ziphites, the inhabitants of Ziph, in the title of [Psalm 54](#). *See* Ziph (Place) #2.

Ziphite

Inhabitant of Ziph ([1 Sm 23:19](#); [26:1](#); [Ps 54 title](#)). *See* Ziph (Place) #2.

Ziphron

A geographical landmark defining the northern boundary of the Canaanite land that Israel would possess ([Numbers 34:9](#)).

Zippor

The father of Balak, who was the king of Moab. Balak asked a man named Balaam to curse the Israelites ([Numbers 22:2](#), [10](#), [16](#); [23:18](#); [Joshua 24:9](#); [Judges 11:25](#)).

Zipporah

The wife of Moses and mother of his sons, Gershom and Eliezer ([Exodus 2:21](#)). Zipporah is listed as the daughter of Reuel ([Exodus 2:18](#)). But, Reuel was probably the father of Hobab, who was the father of Zipporah ([Numbers 10:29](#); called Jethro in [Exodus 3:1](#); [4:18](#)). So, Reuel would have been Zipporah's grandfather.

Zipporah circumcised Gershom to prevent Moses' death before his return to Egypt ([Exodus 4:25](#)). Apparently at that point Zipporah and the children left Moses and went back to live with her father, returning later during the time Israel wandered in the wilderness ([Exodus 18:2](#)).

Zither

See Musical Instruments.

Zithri

The King James Version spelling of Sithri, Uzziel's son, in [Exodus 6:22](#).

See Sithri.

Ziv

Name of the Hebrew month corresponding to about mid-April to mid-May ([1 Kgs 6:1, 37](#)). *See* Calendars, Ancient and Modern.

Ziz, Ascent of

Mountain pass going up from the Dead Sea to the Judean highlands. This ascent was the route used by the Ammonites and the Moabites prior to their defeat by Jehoshaphat as prophesied by Jehaziel ([2 Chr 20:16](#)). It is likely that Ziz should be identified with Ain Jidy, a pass that still provides an important route from the Dead Sea into the Judean interior.

Ziza

1. Chief of Simeon's tribe descending from Shemaiah ([1 Chr 4:37](#)).
2. Son of Rehoboam and Maacah ([2 Chr 11:20](#)).
3. Second of Shimei's sons and a clan chief within the Gershonite branch of Levi's tribe ([1 Chr 23:11](#)); perhaps the same as Zina in [1 Chronicles 23:10](#).

Zoan

One of the principal cities in the delta region of ancient Egypt. Zoan, which was variously known as Zoan, Tanis, Avaris, and possibly Rameses (the towns were either the same or contiguous), was located on the south shore of Lake Menzaleh at the northeastern edge of the Egyptian Delta. Zoan was rebuilt during or shortly before the Hyksos period (c. 1730 BC; [Nm 13:22](#)). Because of its strategic location on the Tanitic branch of the Nile and near Egypt's northeastern frontier, Zoan was an

important military and political base during the entire period of Egyptian native rule. It served as the capital city during the Hyksos period, as well as serving as the effective capital during the 21st through the 23rd dynasties (c. 1090–718 BC) and as the northern capital during the 25th dynasty (c. 712–663 BC).

Zoan was significant to the Israelites during each of its periods of ascendancy. Whether the exodus occurred early (c. 1441 BC) or late (1290 BC), the Israelite settlement in Egypt would have been in the general vicinity of Zoan. The Israelites built the store cities of Pithom and Rameses, and possibly the latter should be identified with Zoan. In the account of the exodus in [Psalm 78](#), the city of Zoan is poetically parallel to Egypt, indicating that it was either the capital or at least a significant city. During the period of Isaiah, Zoan was again significant, being designated as the home of the "princes" and "officials" of Egypt ([Is 19:11–13](#); [Ez 30:14](#)).

See also Rameses (Place).

Zoar

One of the "cities of the plain" confederate with Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim ([Gn 14:2, 8](#)). Zoar, also known by its earlier name Bela, is best known as the town that served as a temporary refuge for Lot and his daughters during the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain ([19:22–23, 30](#)). Despite the fact that Zoar was evidently a small town (v [22](#); Zoar means "little"), this place was evidently considered a significant geographical landmark in ancient times. When Abraham and Lot divided the land, Lot selected the land close to Zoar ([13:10](#)). When Moses surveyed the Promised Land from Mt Pisgah, Zoar was reckoned as the southern terminus of the plain of the valley of Jericho ([Dt 34:3](#)). During the prophetic period, Zoar was evidently considered to be on the southern boundary of Moab ([Is 15:5](#); [Jer 48:4, 34](#)).

See also Cities of the Plain.

Zobah

Zobah was an Aramean nation that was defeated by Israel during the early kingdom period. King Saul won battles against the kings of Zobah ([1 Samuel 14:47](#)).

Soon after David became king of Israel, he defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah ([2 Samuel 8:3-5, 12](#); [1 Chronicles 18:3-10](#); [Psalm 60 title](#)). Later, the Ammonites hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from Beth-rehob and Zobah for an anticipated attack by the military forces of David. Joab led Israel's army and defeated the combined forces of the Ammonites and their hired Aramean allies ([2 Samuel 10:6-14](#)). Afterward, Hadadezer sent reinforcements, but David himself led Israel to another victory over the Arameans ([2 Samuel 10:15-19](#); [1 Chronicles 19:16-19](#)).

Zobebah

One of the sons of Koz (or possibly a daughter, since the noun is feminine) from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 4:8](#)). The genealogy is obscure.

Zodiac

A circle of twelve groups of stars (called constellations) used in astrology to predict events or describe personality. In the ancient world around Israel, the zodiac was part of pagan worship and fortune-telling. The Bible forbids God's people to seek guidance from these practices ([Isaiah 47:13-14](#)).

See Astrology; see also Constellation.

Zohar

1. The father of Ephron the Hittite. Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron ([Genesis 23:7-9](#); [25:9](#)).
2. An alternate spelling of Zerah, Simeon's son, in [Genesis 46:10](#) and [Exodus 6:15](#). *See Zerah #3.*
3. An alternate spelling of Izhar in [1 Chronicles 4:7](#).

Zoheth

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

Zophah

Helem's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:35-36](#)).

Zophai

Alternate form of Zuph, one of Samuel's ancestors, in [1 Chronicles 6:26](#). *See Zuph (Person).*

Zophar

One of the "counselors" of Job who is listed as a Naamathite ([Jb 2:11](#); [11:1](#); [20:1](#)). He offers the most direct accusations against Job but later offers sacrifice for Job as commanded by the Lord ([42:9](#)).

Zophim

A place from which Balaam pronounced his second blessing upon Israel ([Numbers 23:13-16](#)). Zophim must have been on or near Mount Pisgah.

Zorah, Zorathite

A city of the Shephelah and its people, attributed to both the tribe of Dan and of Judah ([Jos 15:33](#); [19:41](#)). It was part of Judah's original allocation but was settled by Danites until they established their own territory near Laish ([Jgs 18:1-11](#)). Originally Zorah and nearby Eshtaol seem to have been settled by residents of Kiriath-jearim ([1 Chr 2:53](#); [4:2](#)). The city was the home of Manoah, the father of Samson ([Jgs 13:2](#)). Samson's ministry was focused in the region surrounding Zorah and Eshtaol, and he was ultimately buried there. Zorah is traditionally identified with Tell Sur'ah, which is strategically located at the entrance to a large valley leading toward the Mediterranean plain.

Zorites

Descendants of Salma from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:54](#)). They possibly represent half of the Manahathite clan.

Zorobabel

The King James Version form of Zerubbabel, Jerusalem's governor after the exile in Babylon, in [Matthew 1:12-13](#) and [Luke 3:27](#).

See Zerubbabel.

Zuar

The father of Nethanel. Nethanel was the leader of the tribe of Issachar when the Israelites began their journey through the wilderness after leaving Egypt ([Numbers 1:8](#); [2:5](#); [7:18, 23](#); [10:15](#)).

Zuph (Person)

Ancestor of Elkanah, the father of the prophet Samuel ([1 Sm 1:1](#)). Zuph was a member of the Kohathite branch of Levites and is listed as the son of Elkanah (different than above) and the father of Toah ([1 Chr 6:35](#)). He is the same as Zophai listed in [1 Chronicles 6:26](#). It is evident that Zuph was a Levite, even though he is listed as an Ephraimite in the 1 Samuel passage.

Zuph (Place)

Place where Saul looked for his father's donkeys prior to his meeting with Samuel ([1 Sm 9:5](#)). It was near the tomb of Rachel, which is traditionally placed near the northern border of Benjamin. Zuph is apparently linked with Samuel, as one of his ancestors bore the name (see [1 Sm 1:1](#); [1 Chr 6:35](#)), and his native town was called Ramathaim-zophim.

Zur

1. A prince of Midian and the father of Cozbi, a Midianite woman who was killed by Phinehas. Cozbi was in an improper relationship with Zimri, an Israelite man, during the incident at Baal-peor ([Numbers 25:15](#)). Zur was later killed by the Israelites, along with four other Midianite kings and Balaam, as part of God's judgment on Midian ([31:8](#)). He seems to have been under the authority of Sihon, the Amorite king, since he is listed as one of Sihon's "princes" ([Joshua 13:21](#)).
2. A son of Jeiel, who established the town of Gibeon ([1 Chronicles 8:30](#); [9:36](#)). He was from the tribe of Benjamin and was a distant relative of King Saul.

Zuriel

The son of Abihail and the head of the Merari family of Levites during the wilderness wanderings of Israel ([Numbers 3:35](#)).

Zurishaddai

The father of Shelumiel. Shelumiel was the leader of the tribe of Simeon when the Israelites began their journey through the wilderness after leaving Egypt ([Numbers 1:6](#); [2:12](#); [7:36, 41](#); [10:19](#)).

Zuzim, Zuzites

One of the kingdoms attacked and defeated by Kedorlaomer's confederation ([Gn 14:5](#)), mentioned as residents of Ham. They were likely located somewhere north of the Arnon River, since the general path of Kedorlaomer was from north to south along the King's Highway. Possibly these Zuzites are associated with the Zamzummites of [Deuteronomy 2:20](#), since both are linked to the same geographical proximity. Furthermore, both passages speak of them in connection with races of giants, including the Horites, the Emim, and the Rephaim.