

Resource: Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary

This work is an adaptation of Tyndale Open Bible Dictionary © 2023 Tyndale House Publishers, licensed under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license. The adaptation, Aquifer Open Bible Dictionary, was created by Mission Mutual and is also licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

This resource has been adapted into multiple languages, including English, Tok Pisin, Arabic (عربي), French (Français), Hindi (हिंदी), Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), Portuguese (Português), Russian (Русский), Spanish (Español), Swahili (Kiswahili), and Simplified Chinese (简体中文).

Bible Dictionary (Tyndale)

R

Raama, Raamah, Raamiah, Raamses, Rabbah, Rabbah of the Ammonites, Rabbi, Rabbith, Rabboni, Rabmag, Rabsaris, Rabshakeh, Raca, Racal, Rachab, Rachal, Rachel, Rachel's Tomb, Raddai, Ragau, Raguel, Rahab (Monster), Rahab (Person), Raham, Rahel, Rain, Rainbow, Raisin, Raisin Cake, Rakem, Rakkath, Rakkon, Ram, Ram (Person), Ram's Horn, Rama, Ramah, Ramah of the Negev, Ramah of the South, Ramath of the South, Ramath-Lehi, Ramath-Mizpeh, Ramathaim, Ramathaim-Zophim, Ramathite, Rameses (Person), Rameses (Place), Ramiah, Ramoth (Person), Ramoth (Place), Ramoth of the Negev, Ramoth of the South, Ramoth-Gilead, Ramses (Person), Ramses (Place), Ransom, Rape, Rapha, Raphael, Raphah, Raphanah, Raphon, Raphu, Rapture, Rassis, Rassisites, Rathamin, Raven, Ravenous Birds, Razis, Razor, Reaia, Reaiah, Reaper, Reaping, Reba, Rebecca, Rebekah, Rebirth, Recab, Recabite, Recah, Rechab, Rechabite, Rechah, Reconciliation, Recorder, Red, Red Heifer, Red Sea, Redeemer, Redemption, Reed, Reeds, Sea of, Reelaiah, Refuge, Cities of, Regem, Regemmelech, Regeneration, Rehabiah, Rehob (Person), Rehob (Place), Rehoboam, Rehoboth, Rehoboth-Ir, Rehum, Rei, Rekem (Person), Rekem (Place), Religion, Remaliah, Remeth, Remission of Sins, Remmon, Remmon-Methoar, Remnant, Remphan, Repentance, Rephael, Rephah, Rephaiah, Rephaim, Rephaites, Rephan, Rephidim, Reptile, Resen, Resheph, Rest, Resurrection, Reu, Reuben (Person), Reuben (Place), Reuben, Tribe of, Reubenite, Reuel, Reumah, Revelation, Revenge, Revenger, Reward, Rezech, Rezia, Rezin, Rezon, Rhegium, Rhesa, Rhoda, Rhodes, Rhodocus, Ribai, Riblah, Riches, Riddle, Right Hand, Righteousness, Rimmon (Person), Rimmon (Place), Rimmon-perez, Rimmon, Rock of, Rimmono, Rinnah, Riphath, Rissah, Rithmah, River of Egypt, River of the Wilderness, Rizia, Rizpah, Robber, Robbery, Roboam, Rock Badger, Rodanim, Roe, Roebuck, Rogelim, Rohgah, Roll, Romamti-Ezer, Rome, City of, Root of Jesse, Rose, Rosetta Stone, Rosh, Ruby, Rue, Rufus, Ruhamah, Ruler, Ruler of the Synagogue, Rumah, Rush, Ruth (Person), Ruth, Book of

Raama, Raamah

One of Cush's five sons and a descendant of Ham's line. He was the father of Sheba and Dedan ([Gn 10:7](#); [1 Chr 1:9](#)). [Ezekiel 27:22](#) mentions the people of Sheba and Raamah trading spices and precious stones with the merchants of Tyre. Raamah's name was later given to a town perhaps identifiable with Ma'in in southwest Arabia.

Raamiah

One who returned with Zerubbabel to Palestine following the Babylonian captivity ([Neh 7:7](#), nlt mg). Raamiah is alternately spelled Reelaiah in [Ezra 2:2](#). The correct form of the word is uncertain. See Reelaiah.

Raamses

Alternate spelling of Ramses and Rameses. See Ramses (Person); Rameses (Place).

Rabbah

One of the towns in the hill country assigned to Judah's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 15:60](#)). Its location is uncertain. Some identify it with Rubute, mentioned in the Amarna tablets, or Khirbet Bir al-Hilu.

Rabbah of the Ammonites

Rabbah was the capital city of the ancient kingdom of the Ammonites.

The city was about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the Jordan River. It was near the beginning of the Jabbok River. Rabbah stood on the main trade road that went from Damascus in the north to the southern part of the land east of the Jordan River.

This road was called the King's Highway ([Numbers 20:17; 21:22](#)).

Today, the city of Amman in Jordan is built on the same location. During the third century BC, Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt rebuilt the city and renamed it Philadelphia. Later, in 63 BC, the Romans took control of the area and included Philadelphia in a group of cities called the Decapolis. In AD 106, the city became part of the Roman province of Arabia.

Rabbah in the Bible

Rabbah in the Time of Joshua

Rabbah first appears in the Bible as the place where Og, king of Bashan, kept his large iron bed ([Deuteronomy 3:11](#)). The King James Version calls it "Rabbath of the children of Ammon." When the Israelites divided the land east of the Jordan River (called Transjordan) among the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the land of Gad reached near Rabbah. But the tribe of Gad did not take Rabbah itself ([Joshua 13:25](#)).

Gezer in the Time of King David

Rabbah is most important in the Bible during the time of King David.

Joab, the commander of David's army, attacked Rabbah. During the battle, David gave the order that led to the death of Uriah the Hittite ([2 Samuel 11:1; 12:26-29](#)).

The city had two parts—an upper city and a lower city. Joab captured the lower city, which may have included the water supply ([12:27](#)). Then he waited for David to come and finish the battle (verses [27-28](#)). After defeating Rabbah, David took many valuable things from the city. But he did not leave Israelite soldiers there. Instead, he allowed the Ammonites to stay in the city. They had to serve Israel as vassals (people under Israel's rule).

Rabbah in the Time of the Prophets

About 250 years later, the prophet Amos spoke a message of judgment against Rabbah. At that time, the city was rich and powerful ([Amos 1:13-14](#)). Later, Nebuchadnezzar passed through Rabbah when he invaded the land east of the Jordan River ([Ezekiel 21:20](#)). The city was still important then.

It was in Rabbah that Baalis, king of the Ammonites, planned the murder of Gedaliah ([Jeremiah 40:14ff.](#)). Gedaliah was the Babylonian governor of

Judea. After his death, many people fled, and the prophet Jeremiah was taken to Egypt. Jeremiah also gave a prophecy against Rabbah ([Jeremiah 49:2-3](#)).

Remains of the City Today

Today, the modern city of Amman covers the site of ancient Rabbah. Because of this, archaeologists cannot dig in most parts of the old city.

In the center of Amman, there is a Roman theater that could hold about 6,000 people. Nearby, there are also broken remains of a Roman music hall (called an odeum) and a fountain from the same time.

Most of what can be seen on the old hilltop (called a citadel) comes from the Roman, Byzantine, or Arab periods. But in the northeast corner, part of the city wall from the Iron Age is still visible.

The Romans built a temple in the southwest corner of the citadel to honor Hercules.

See also Decapolis; Philadelphia #1.

Rabbi

A title of respect meaning "my great one" or "my superior one." Jewish people used this title for their religious teachers in Jesus's time.

According to [Matthew 23:7](#), "rabbi" was used as a title to address the Jewish scribes and Pharisees. However, in the New Testament, it is most commonly used as a title of respectful address when others were speaking to Jesus. In many stories in the Gospels, people called Jesus "Rabbi." For example:

- Nathanael in [John 1:49](#)
- Peter and Andrew in [John 1:38](#)
- Nicodemus in [John 3:2](#)
- The disciples (as a group) in [John 9:2; 11:8](#)
- A general crowd in [John 6:25](#)

Mary Magdalene and blind Bartimaeus both use the longer form, "rabboni," to address Jesus directly ([Mark 10:51; John 20:16](#)). This shows even more profound respect than the use of the shorter title "rabbi." By the time John's Gospel was written, the

title "rabbi" meant "teacher." John explicitly states this in [1:38](#) and implies it in [3:2](#).

Jesus condemns the scribes and the Pharisees for the pride they took in the title, insisting people call them "rabbi" in public places ([Matthew 23:7-8](#)). Jesus prohibited the use of the title for his own disciples, saying, "You are not to be called rabbi." Jesus did not prohibit the legitimate possession of the title but rejected pridefully seeking the honor associated with it. When people did use the title of Jesus in a reverent way, they were not rebuked.

Rabbith

Town defining the border of Issachar ([Jos 19:20](#)) and perhaps identifiable with the Levitical town called Daberath ([Jos 19:12](#); [21:28](#); [1 Chr 6:72](#)). If so, its site is near Mt Tabor at modern Deburiyeh. See Daberath.

Rabboni

A variation on the title of respect, *rabbi*, which means "my great one" or "my superior one." This title was used to address teachers. Rabboni is used only in [Mark 10:51](#) and [John 20:16](#).

See Rabbi.

Rabmag

Title given to a certain Babylonian officer, Nergal-sharezer, who was in charge of Jeremiah's safety during the fall of Jerusalem ([Jer 39:3, 13](#)). The meaning of the title is uncertain.

Rabsaris

The title of a high-ranking Assyrian and Babylonian court official, usually a eunuch and sometimes supervisor of the royal harem. A rabsaris was:

- part of the Assyrian delegation ([2 Kings 18:17](#)),
- a judge at the gate ([Jeremiah 39:3](#)),
- the official who released Jeremiah from prison (verse [13](#)), and
- one of Nebuchadnezzar's officials ([Daniel 1:3, 7](#)).

Rabshakeh

An important Assyrian official. This role was first a cupbearer or household manager. But later, it was a powerful palace official. The "rabshakeh" was the ambassador of King Sennacherib. He demanded with insults that Hezekiah and Jerusalem abandon their reliance on both Egypt and God and surrender to Assyria. Hezekiah refused. The rabshakeh returned to Assyria to find his king at war against Libnah ([2 Kings 18:17-37](#); [19:4, 8](#); [Isaiah 36:2-22](#); [37:4, 8](#)).

Raca

A derogatory expression used by Jews of the first century AD to show open contempt for another. *Raca* is derived from an Aramaic and Hebrew term meaning "empty" or "worthless." *Raca* means "empty-headed." It likely insults one's intellect, not morals.

In the Old Testament, it is comparable to:

- The worthless lot that Abimelech hired to follow him ([Judges 9:4](#))
- The idle men who gathered around Jephthah ([Judges 11:3](#))
- The scoundrels who joined Jeroboam ([2 Chronicles 13:7](#))

Michal accused David of acting like a vulgar fellow [*raca*] who shamelessly exposed himself ([2 Samuel 6:20](#)). Rabbinic literature used this term to describe an immoral, untrained person.

Jesus warned against calling a brother "*Raca!*" ([Matthew 5:22](#)). Jesus said to judge the insulter and punish them with the highest penalty. The commandment against murder ([Exodus 20:13](#)) banned the act, angry thoughts, and contempt.

Racal

One of the towns in southern Judah in which David distributed the spoils taken from the defeated Amalekites ([1 Sm 30:29](#)). The city is named Carmel in the Septuagint.

Rachab

The King James Version form of Rahab in [Matthew 1:5](#).

See Rahab (Person).

Rachal

KJV form of Racal, a Judean town, in [1 Samuel 30:29](#). *See* Racal.

Rachel

Beautiful younger daughter of Laban; she was the favorite wife of Jacob. He first met her as he arrived at Haran in Paddan-aram. There, he helped her by tending to her father's sheep. He removed a stone from a well to water them ([Genesis 29:10](#)). Jacob loved Rachel deeply. He agreed to work seven years for Laban for her hand in marriage. His seven years' service seemed like only a few days because of his great love for her. Laban, deceitful, broke his bargain. He made Jacob marry Leah, his older, less attractive daughter, before giving him Rachel. Unlike Leah, Rachel was barren in the early years of her marriage to Jacob ([Genesis 30:1](#)). So, she gave her servant, Bilhah, to Jacob to have children. Thus, through this commonly accepted ancient custom, Dan and Naphtali were born. In time, Rachel herself conceived and bore Joseph ([Genesis 30:22-25](#)). After this, Jacob took his wives, children, and possessions away from Haran.

Somewhere between Bethel and Bethlehem, Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin ([Genesis 35:16, 19](#)). Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb there, a landmark known even in the days of Saul ([1 Samuel 10:2](#)). Rachel and Leah are highly regarded as those who built up the house of Israel ([Ruth 4:11](#)). In [Jeremiah 31:15](#), Rachel is pictured as crying for her children being carried off into captivity. Later, Matthew recalls Jeremiah's words

in Herod's slaughter of the male infants ([Matthew 2:18](#)).

See also Jacob #1.

Rachel's Tomb

A landmark set up by Jacob at the site of Rachel's grave ([Genesis 35:19-20](#)). It still existed at the time of Samuel ([1 Samuel 10:2](#)).

Two persisting traditions make its original location still questionable:

1. The older tradition locates the tomb near Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem ([Genesis 35:19](#); [48:7](#); [Matthew 2:18](#)). This option has strong support from Josephus, Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, and the Talmudists.
2. A second site is Ephrath ([Genesis 35:19](#)), which was on the northern border of Benjamin, 16.1 kilometers (ten miles) north of Jerusalem ([1 Samuel 10:2](#); [Jeremiah 31:15](#)), near ancient Bethel.

Rachel's tomb is the first recorded instance in the Bible of a "sepulchral monument" (a large statue in memory of the dead). A picture of the tomb is a common decorative piece in Jewish homes throughout the world.

Raddai

Fifth of Jesse's seven sons and the brother of David from Judah's tribe ([1 Chr 2:14](#)).

Ragau

The King James Version spelling of Reu, Peleg's son, in [Luke 3:35](#).

See Reu.

Raguel

1. The King James Version spelling of Reuel. Reuel was another name for Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses ([Numbers 10:29](#)).
See Jethro.
2. A member of the tribe of Naphtali living in Ecbatana. According to [Tobit 3:7](#), Raguel was the father of Sarah, soon to become the wife of Tobias. This was due to the intervention of the angel Raphael.

Rahab (Monster)

A mythological sea monster that symbolized Egypt ([Psalm 87:4](#)). "Egypt's help is futile and empty; therefore I have called her Rahab Who Sits Still" ([Isaiah 30:7](#)). The writers of the Bible described how God helped the people of Israel cross the Red Sea while the Egyptian army drowned there (compare [Isaiah 51:10](#)). They used the image of God fighting and defeating a powerful monster to tell this story ([Job 26:12](#); [Psalm 89:10](#); [Isaiah 51:9](#)).

See also Egypt, Egyptian.

Rahab (Person)

The heroine of the battle of Jericho ([Joshua 2-6](#)). Soon after Moses' death, God told Joshua to cross the Jordan and occupy the promised land. Before the crossing, Joshua sent two spies to scout the land. He wanted to check the fortified city of Jericho. Upon entering the city, the spies found their way quickly to Rahab's house, which was perhaps an inn and/or a brothel. She apparently was a prostitute.

The king of Jericho soon learned of the spies' arrival. He naturally demanded that Rahab reveal their whereabouts. She cleverly admitted seeing them but insisted that they had left the city at nightfall. Actually, the spies were hiding under the stalks of flax on the roof of her house. When the king's search party left Jericho to hunt the spies, Rahab confessed to the spies why she helped the Israelites. She feared the God of the Jews, believing that he would surely give them victory ([Joshua 2:11](#)).

For her help, the spies agreed to save Rahab and her family. The sign was to be a cord of scarlet thread hanging from her window, the same avenue the spies used to escape the city. Rahab and her family were indeed the only survivors of the later battle. They were led to safety, on Joshua's command, by the very men Rahab had saved.

Rahab became the wife of Salmon and mother of Boaz. Thus, she was an ancestor of Jesus ([Matthew 1:5](#)). Rahab is listed, along with Moses, David, Samson, and Samuel, as an example of faith ([Hebrews 11:31](#)). Her deed is an example of good works and justification ([James 2:25](#)).

See also Conquest and Allotment of the Land; Joshua, Book of.

Raham

Son of Shema, and father of Jorkeam ([1 Chr 2:44](#)). He was a descendant of Judah.

Rahel

KJV spelling of Rachel, Jacob's wife, in [Jeremiah 31:15](#). *See* Rachel.

Rain

See Palestine (Climate).

Rainbow

Sign of God's covenant with Noah following the flood ([Gn 9:8-17](#)). The normal Hebrew word for "war bow" is used. Jewish tradition interpreted this as a symbol that God's anger had ceased since the rainbow pointed downward, just as an antagonist lowers his bow to declare peace. In the NT, the rainbow forms part of the heavenly vision ([Rv 4:3](#); [10:1](#)).

See also Flood, The.

Raisin

A basic food in biblical lands made by drying grapes on housetops. They used raisins as gifts ([1 Samuel 25:18](#); [2 Samuel 16:1-3](#)). They sometimes offered

them to false gods ([Hosea 3:1](#)). Raisins were considered a source of nourishment ([1 Samuel 30:12](#); [1 Chronicles 12:40](#)).

See also Food and Food Preparation.

Raisin Cake

A special food of ancient people ([Isaiah 16:7](#)). The cakes did not spoil. This made them useful for soldiers and travelers ([2 Samuel 6:19](#)). They were used as offerings to idols ([Hosea 3:1](#)). Sometimes they were served as aphrodisiacs to increase sexual desire ([Song of Solomon 2:5](#)).

Rakem

Manasseh's grandson ([1 Chr 7:16](#)).

Rakkath

One of 19 cities allotted to Naphtali's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:35](#)). The city served as a buffer against military attack on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jewish tradition identifies Rakkath with Tiberias, but modern scholars prefer its location at either Khirbet el-Quneitireh or Tell Eklatiyah.

Rakkon

One of the cities assigned to Dan's tribe ([Jos 19:46](#)). It is identified today with Tell er-Ragguat, one and a half miles (2.4 kilometers) north of the mouth of the Yorkon River.

Ram

A ram is an adult male sheep, usually with large curved horns. Rams are stronger and larger than female sheep. In Bible times, people kept rams for breeding, meat, and wool. Rams were also offered as sacrifices to God ([Genesis 22:13](#); [Exodus 29:15](#)).

The horn of a ram, called a ram's horn or shofar, was sometimes used as a trumpet in worship and war ([Joshua 6:4-5](#)).

See Sheep; *see also* Animals.

Ram (Person)

1. An ancestor of King David ([Ruth 4:19](#); [1 Chronicles 2:9-10](#)), listed in Matthew's family list of Christ ([Matthew 1:3-4](#); called Arni in [Luke 3:33](#)).
See Genealogy of Jesus Christ.
2. Jerahmeel's eldest son ([1 Chronicles 2:25-27](#)), and perhaps the nephew of #1 above.
3. Head of the family of Elihu, one of Job's friends ([Job 32:2](#)).

Ram's Horn

Primitive musical instrument made from an animal horn ([Jos 6:4-6](#), [13](#)). *See* Musical Instruments (Shophar).

Rama

The King James Version spelling of Ramah, a Benjaminite city, in [Matthew 2:18](#).

See Ramah #1.

Ramah

1. One of the cities located in the territory given to Benjamin's tribe for an inheritance, listed between Gibeon and Beeroth ([Joshua 18:25](#)). Rachel, Jacob's wife, was buried near this town ([Matthew 2:18](#); compare [Genesis 35:16-21](#); [Jeremiah 31:15](#)). Ramah, which was near Bethel, was the place where Deborah judged Israel ([Judges 4:5](#)). This city was a temporary resting place for a Levite and his concubine traveling north from Bethlehem ([Judges 19:13](#)). During the period of the divided kingdom, from 930 to 722 BC, King Baasha of Israel strengthened Ramah. From Ramah, Baasha was able to prevent an invasion of King Asa's Judean army. Baasha later left the city and hurried his army north to fight against a Syrian attack led by King Ben-hadad I around 885 BC. Asa destroyed Ramah's military defences and used the material to build the towns of Geba and Mizpah ([1 Kings 15:17-22](#); [2 Chronicles 16:1-6](#)). The Assyrian army, led by Sennacherib, invaded Judah through the cities of Geba, Ramah, and Gibeah in 701 BC against King Hezekiah and Jerusalem ([Isaiah 10:29](#)). Later, King Nebuchadnezzar used Ramah to detain Jews being deported to Babylon. Here Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, released Jeremiah from among the captives ([Jeremiah 40:1](#)). After the Babylonian captivity, the people who lived in Ramah returned with Zerubbabel to Palestine and rebuilt the city ([Ezra 2:26](#); [Nehemiah 7:30](#)). Some suggest that after the exile in Babylon, Ramah was another Benjaminite town located farther west near the coastal plain ([Nehemiah 11:33](#)). The site of Ramah is identified with the modern village of er-Ram, 8 kilometers (five miles) north of Jerusalem.
2. A city in the Negev marking the southern border of the tribe of Simeon inside Judah's land ([Joshua 19:8](#)). It is also called Ramoth of the Negev ([1 Samuel 30:27](#)) and Baalath-beer ([Joshua 19:8](#); compare [1 Chronicles 4:33](#)).
See Baalath-beer.
3. A town on the border of the tribe of Asher. It is mentioned as being between Sidon and Tyre ([Joshua 19:29](#)).
4. One of 19 strong cities given to the tribe of Naphtali. It is mentioned as being between Adamah and Hazor ([Joshua 19:36](#)). It is the modern town of er-Rameh, about 17.7 kilometers (11 miles) northwest of the Sea of Galilee.
5. The home of Samuel's parents, Elkanah and Hannah and the birthplace of Samuel ([1 Samuel 1:19](#); [2:11](#)). It became his home later ([1 Samuel 7:17](#); [16:13](#)). Samuel judged Israel from Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah ([1 Samuel 7:17](#)). Saul first met Samuel at this city ([1 Samuel 9:6-10](#)). Here, the elders of Israel asked Samuel to appoint a king for them ([1 Samuel 8:4](#)). Later, David took refuge here from King Saul ([1 Samuel 19:18-20:1](#)). Samuel was buried at Ramah ([1 Samuel 25:1](#); [28:3](#)). Ramah is alternately called Ramathaim-zophim in [1 Samuel 1:1](#).
6. A shortened name for Ramoth-gilead ([2 Kings 8:29](#); [2 Chronicles 22:6](#)).
See Ramoth-gilead.

Ramah of the Negev, Ramah of the South

Alternate names for Baalath-beer, a town in Simeon's territory, in [Joshua 19:8](#). See Baalath-beer.

Ramath of the South

KJV rendering of Ramah of the Negev, an alternate name of Baalath-beer, in [Joshua 19:8](#). *See* Baalath-beer.

Ramath-Lehi

Place where Samson routed the Philistines with an ass's jawbone ([Jgs 15:17](#), nlt mg). *See* Lehi.

Ramath-Mizpeh

Alternate name for Mizpah, a town in Gad's territory, in [Joshua 13:26](#). *See* Mizpah #4.

Ramathaim

Alternate translation of Greek "Rathamin" ([1 Macc 11:34](#), nlt mg). *See* Rathamin.

Ramathaim-Zophim

Alternate name for Ramah, Samuel's hometown, in [1 Samuel 1:1](#). *See* Ramah #5.

Ramathite

Inhabitant of Ramah ([1 Chr 27:27](#)), though which Ramah is uncertain.

Rameses (Person)

Alternate form of the Egyptian Ramses of the 19th and 20th dynasties. *See* Ramses (Person).

Rameses (Place)

A place (also called Ra'amses or Ramses) mentioned with Pithom in [Exodus 1:11](#). It is one of the locations where the Hebrews were forced to work on building projects for the pharaoh. Here they suffered under heavy burdens placed on them by the pharaoh's officers. Later, they escaped from this oppression and began their journey to the promised land ([Exodus 12:37](#); [Numbers 33:3](#)). The

exact location of this place is important for determining when the exodus from Egypt happened.

The powerful king Ramses II (who ruled from 1290 to 1224 BC) constructed many buildings in the east Delta region. The ambitious pharaoh wanted to create a new center for his kingdom. He chose Avaris, his family's old home, as the starting point. His father had already built a summer palace there. On the north side of Avaris, Ramses II built a magnificent palace that he named Pirameses.

Experts have debated where this site was actually located. Some suggested it was at Pelusim (on the Mediterranean Sea) or at Tanis (also called Zoan). The Tanis suggestion is now rejected because the stonework there was reused material taken from other places and not original construction.

However, 30.6 kilometers (19 miles) south of Tanis, near the town of Qantir, archaeologists have found significant remains. These include:

- a palace started by Seti I (Ramses' father)
- a nearby glazing factory
- homes of princes and high officials
- traces of a temple and public meeting halls

These findings are now recognized as the site of Ra'amses (Pirameses). The original center built by the Hyksos (a group of foreign rulers) was destroyed when these foreigners were forced out of Egypt early in the 18th dynasty (around 1552–1306 BC). The place was abandoned for a time but later rebuilt during the 19th dynasty. Ramses II extensively decorated his father's palace and established nearby areas for his military forces:

- a gathering place for his chariots,
- a training ground for his infantry, and
- a docking area for his ships.

See also Egypt, Egyptian; Pithom.

Ramiah

Parosh's son, who obeyed Ezra's exhortation to divorce his foreign wife after the exile ([Ezr 10:25](#)).

Ramoth (Person)

KJV form of Jeremoth, Bani's son, in [Ezra 10:29](#). *See* Jeremoth #8.

Ramoth (Place)

1. Abbreviated form of Ramoth-gilead. *See* Ramoth-gilead.
2. Alternate name for Baalath-beer, a city in the Negev, in [1 Samuel 30:27](#). *See* Baalath-beer.
3. Alternate name (or textual alteration) of Jarmuth, a Levitical city, in [1 Chronicles 6:73](#). *See* Jarmuth #2.

Ramoth of the Negev, Ramoth of the South

Alternate names for Baalath-beer, an unknown site in Simeon's territory, in [1 Samuel 30:27](#). *See* Baalath-beer.

Ramoth-Gilead

City lying in the Transjordan area of Gilead and probably identifiable with Tell Ramith, although the site of Tell el-Husn has also been suggested. Initially, biblical references pertain to Ramoth in Gilead ([Dt 4:43](#); [Jos 20:8](#); [21:38](#)), while later it is called Ramoth-gilead. Combined names were used to avoid confusion with cities of the same name in other locations.

Ramoth-gilead, a possession of the tribe of Gad, first appears in the biblical narrative as one of three Transjordan cities of refuge ([Dt 4:43](#)) later included in the six cities of refuge for all Israel ([Jos 20:8](#)). It was allotted to the Merarites as one of 48 Levitical cities ([21:38](#)) and was most likely located along the King's Highway, which transversed that area.

During the time of Solomon, Ramoth-gilead enjoyed a place of prominence as the central city in his sixth administrative district and the residence of Ben-geber, chief officer of that district ([1 Kgs 4:13](#)). After the division of the kingdom, this border town was taken by the Arameans and became a site of contention between Israel and Aram. King Ahab's final battle began with his desire to retake Ramoth-gilead. In seeking to convince his ally

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to support him in this maneuver, he produced many prophets who spoke favorable and victorious words to the king ([1 Kgs 22](#); [2 Chr 18](#)). Unconvinced, Jehoshaphat inquired of the word of the Lord through Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, who warned of impending disaster. The message was ignored and Ahab was killed at Ramoth-gilead. Ahab's son Joram also fought with Aram here and was wounded in battle ([2 Kgs 8:29](#); [2 Chr 22:6](#); also called Ramah). Shortly thereafter, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead, where he anointed Jehu to be king over Israel ([2 Kgs 9:1-14](#)).

See also Cities of Refuge; Levitical Cities.

Ramses (Person)

The name of 11 kings who ruled Egypt during the 19th and 20th Egyptian dynasties (also spelled Rameses).

Ramses II

Ramses II ruled for about 67 years (from around 1290 to 1224 BC). He was known as Ramses the Great, mainly because he built many important structures. These included:

- his burial temple at Thebes (called the Ramasseum),
- the temple carved into rock at Abu Simbel in Nubia, and
- additions to the temples of Karnak and Luxor.

The pictures on his temple walls show him as a great military leader. He fought against the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes River. During this battle, he made a serious mistake that almost cost him his life. The battle ended without a clear winner, but Ramses portrayed it as an Egyptian victory in his temples at the Ramasseum and Abu Simbel. His peace agreement with the Hittites is the earliest known international peace treaty. Some people have suggested he was the pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites, but this is not likely ([Exodus 1:8-11](#)).

Ramses III

Ramses III, who ruled from 1195 to 1124 BC, was part of the 20th dynasty. He protected Egypt from an invasion by the Sea Peoples in a battle that took place both on land and sea in the Nile Delta. He built

a large burial temple complex and royal home in the Theban area, at a place called Medinet Habu.

On the northern outer wall of the temple area are the first known pictures of a naval battle. Among the captured enemies are the Peleset, who many believe were the Philistines. The outer walls also show excellent carved scenes of lion and wild-bull hunts.

From late in Ramses III's rule comes the famous Harris Papyrus, which lists all the gifts the king gave to the god Amon. During this time, workers in the royal burial grounds went on strike because they were not paid. Similar strikes happened during the times of Ramses IX and Ramses X. Records from the end of Ramses III's rule tell about a court trial for a conspiracy in the royal women's quarters that apparently resulted in Ramses III being killed

Other Ramses Kings

The other kings named Ramses were minor rulers who did not play important roles in history. The instability of Egypt during this time is shown by widespread theft from royal tombs. A complicated and questionable investigation of these robberies was conducted during the reign of Ramses IX.

See also Egypt, Egyptian.

Ramses (Place)

Alternate form of the Egyptian place-name Rameses. *See* Rameses (Place).

Ransom

The price paid to free slaves, captives, property, or a life. Jesus said his whole work was to serve by giving his life as a ransom for many people ([Matthew 20:28](#); [Mark 10:45](#)). "Ransom" is closely connected to words like "redemption" and "salvation." It relates to how Christ paid for sin.

In the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God gave his people rules for buying back (or redeeming) life and property by paying a ransom (compare [Leviticus 25-27](#)). A ransom was a payment made to replace something or someone that was redeemed or set free.

The Old Testament uses three different Hebrew words for ransom or redemption. These words are translated as "ransom" only when the text clearly shows that a price was paid. Even when English translations use other words like "redemption," they often still mean that a ransom price was paid.

One of the Hebrew terms (*kopher*) means a "cover" or a "covering." It was a payment made instead of punishment. For example:

- If an ox killed someone, its owner could pay a ransom to save their own life ([Exodus 21:30](#)).
- God required each Israelite to pay half a shekel as ransom during a census to prevent a plague ([Exodus 30:12](#)). This "atonement money" was an offering used in the tabernacle service.
- A murderer could not be ransomed, and anyone who found safety in a city of refuge could not be taken back by ransom ([Numbers 35:31-32](#)).
- It was impossible to avoid death by paying a ransom ([Psalm 49:7-9](#)).

In a few instances, this word is used to mean a payment made to influence someone unfairly or to keep them quiet ([1 Samuel 12:3](#); [Proverbs 6:35](#); [Amos 5:12](#)).

A second Hebrew word for "ransom" and "redemption" is related to *go'el*. *Go'el* means a "redeemer" or someone who takes back what was lost. It comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to restore, repair, deliver, or rescue." This term refers to God's family laws that required relatives to help each other ([Leviticus 25:25-55](#)). A close relative (kinsman) had several duties:

- A kinsman was responsible for buying back family property that someone had to sell ([Leviticus 25:25-34](#); [Ruth 4:4-6](#)).
- A kinsman was responsible for freeing a relative who had to sell himself as a slave because of poverty ([Leviticus 25:47-55](#)).
- A kinsman was responsible for seeking justice for a dead relative by punishing the person who killed them ([Numbers 35:19-27](#); [Joshua 20:3-5](#)).
- A kinsman was also obligated to marry the wife of a dead brother who had no children so that the family line would continue ([Ruth 3:9-13](#); [4:1-12](#)).

In general, the *go'el* was someone who helped or defended others. For example, Job called on God to defend him ([Job 19:25](#)).

In the highest sense, God is the kinsman and *go'el* (redeemer) of Israel. He redeemed them from:

- the bondage of Egypt ([Exodus 6:5-7](#)),
- from captivity in Babylon, and
- from distress in general (the word *go'el* occurs 13 times in [Isaiah 40-46](#)).

Thus Israel is called “the redeemed of the LORD” ([Isaiah 35:10](#)), having been redeemed “without money” ([52:3](#)). In these cases, however, the “payment” was God's great power and strength.

The Old Testament uses a third Hebrew word (*pidyon*) for ransom or payment. This word comes from business laws. In the Old Testament, it is used in three main ways:

- It was used for firstborn sons. God saved the firstborn Israelites during Passover in Egypt. After this, all firstborn animals and sons belonged to God. People had to pay a ransom to keep their firstborn sons ([Exodus 13:12-15](#); [34:20](#); [Leviticus 27:27](#); [Numbers 18:15-17](#)). Later, God chose the Levites to serve Him instead of all firstborn sons. Since there were 273 more firstborn than Levites, a payment of five shekels was paid in ransom for each ([Numbers 3:40-48](#)).
- This word was also used for the price paid to ransom a slave from slavery ([Deuteronomy 15:15](#); [24:18](#)). It also applied to freeing a female slave who was a concubine ([Exodus 21:8-11](#); [Leviticus 19:20](#)). God justifies these rules by reminding the Israelites that he freed them from slavery in Egypt ([Deuteronomy 15:15](#); [24:18](#)).
- The Bible also uses this Hebrew word when talking about God freeing Israel from Egypt ([Deuteronomy 7:8](#); [9:26](#); [13:5](#); [2 Samuel 7:23](#); [1 Chronicles 17:21](#); [Psalm 78:42](#)) and from Babylon ([Isaiah 35:10](#); [51:11](#)). Sometimes the Bible talks about God ransoming people without mentioning a specific event ([Hosea 7:13](#); compare [Deuteronomy 21:8](#); [Nehemiah 1:10](#); [Isaiah 1:27](#); [Jeremiah 31:11](#)). God also ransoms people from death ([Hosea 13:14](#)), from sins ([Psalm 130:8](#)), and from troubles ([25:22](#)). This deliverance always implies some sort of payment or cost, such as “the mighty power” or “strong hand” of God needed for the redemption.

In the New Testament

In the New Testament, there is only one group of related words used for ransom. The basic meaning of this word is “to set free” or “to release.” It means freeing someone by paying a price. In English Bibles, the word “ransom” is used about eight times. These are cases where the text clearly describes paying a price to free someone. The

Greek Old Testament (called the Septuagint) used this word carefully. They only used it when the three Hebrew words clearly meant paying a ransom.

The most important use of “ransom” in the New Testament is when Jesus talks about his own death. Jesus said his death would be “a ransom for many” ([Matthew 20:28](#); [Mark 10:45](#)). There are three important things Jesus meant by this:

1. Jesus came to serve by paying a ransom.
2. The ransom price was his own life.
3. His ransom is substitutionary (Jesus took our place by paying this ransom).

Other parts of the New Testament explain this more:

- Jesus Christ “gave Himself as a ransom for all” ([1 Timothy 2:6](#)).
- Jesus Christ “gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness” ([Titus 2:14](#)).
- The ransom price was “the precious blood of Christ,” who was a lamb without any faults ([1 Peter 1:18–19](#)).

This reminds us of the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament that pointed to Jesus. But there’s a big difference:

- The blood of goats and calves was not able to save people.
- But Christ’s blood provides eternal freedom from sin ([Hebrews 9:12](#)).

The Bible tells us that in heaven, the saved people sing a new song. They praise Jesus (called the Lamb) because his blood paid the ransom for them ([Revelation 5:9](#); compare [14:3–4](#)).

See also Atonement; Redeemer, Redemption.

Rape

The act of a man forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will. The Bible records two clear examples in the Old Testament:

1. Shechem the son of Hamor, a Hivite, raped Dinah (see [Genesis 34:2–7](#))

2. The son of King David, Amnon, raped his sister Tamar ([2 Samuel 13:14](#))

In both examples, the brothers of the women took revenge for the rape of their sister.

See also Dinah; Tamar (Person) #2.

Rapha

1. Benjamin’s fifth son ([1 Chr 8:2](#)). His name is omitted in the earlier list of [Genesis 46:21](#).

2. KJV spelling of Raphah, an alternate name for Rephaiah, Binea’s son, in [1 Chronicles 8:37](#). *See* Rephaiah #4.

Raphael

Major character in the deuterocanonical book of Tobit. When God heard the prayers of Tobit and Sarah, the angel Raphael was sent to their aid ([Tb 3:17](#)). This angel, posing as a dependable relative named Azarias (nlt “Azariah”), accompanied Tobit’s son Tobias on his journey to retrieve a sum of money from Gabael ([5:1ff.](#)). Traveling with Tobias’s dog, Toby, the two made camp by a river ([6:1ff.](#)). A fish leapt from the water and tried to swallow Tobias’s foot. At the suggestion of Raphael, Tobias eviscerated the fish and set aside its gall, heart, and liver for future use as remedies. When queried by Tobias, the angel revealed that “the gall is for anointing a person’s eyes when white patches have spread over them” (v [8](#)). This happened to be the very malady that was plaguing Tobias’s father, Tobit ([2:9–10](#)).

The journey continued, and Raphael became matchmaker to Tobias and Sarah ([6:9ff.](#)). At Sarah’s home the two were married. In the bride’s chamber, the fish’s heart and liver came in handy for exorcising the demon that had prevented the success of Sarah’s previous seven marriages ([8:2](#)).

Meanwhile, Raphael continued on the errand to recover Tobit’s money from Gabael ([9:1ff.](#)). He succeeded at this task. Finally, Tobias and his new wife, Sarah, accompanied by the angel Raphael, with the dog Toby faithfully following at their heels, returned at long last to the home of Tobit ([11:1ff.](#)). There Tobias applied the angel’s fish-gall remedy to his father’s eyes. Tobit’s eyesight was immediately restored. At the urging of Tobit, Tobias offered to reward the disguised Raphael half of the money retrieved from Gabael. At this

point the angel made his true identity known to them saying, “I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in attendance on the Lord,” and adding, “Take note that I ate no food; what you saw was an apparition” ([12:15, 19](#)). Raphael then ascended out of sight.

Raphah

Alternate form of Rephaiah, Binea’s son, in [1 Chronicles 8:37](#). See Rephaiah #4.

Raphanah

One of the original 10 Greek cities rebuilt by Rome after Pompey’s conquest of Palestine and Syria around 63 BC. Raphanah (also spelled Raphana) was situated in the Decapolis region. See Decapolis.

Raphon

A town where Judas Maccabeus and his troops defeated the Syrian commander Timothy ([1 Macc 5:37-43](#)). It was near Carnaim, and since Carnaim is the same as Ashteroth-karnaim (the modern Sheikh Sa’ad), Raphon is probably er-Rafeh on the Nahr el-Ehreir.

Raphu

A Benjaminite and the father of Palti. Palti was one of the 12 spies Moses sent to explore the land of Canaan ([Numbers 13:9](#)).

Rapture

Christian term used to denote the ascension (or lifting up) of Christians at the time of Christ’s second coming. This is the noun corresponding to the verb used in [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#), where those believers who are still alive at the coming of Christ are described as being “caught up” together with their resurrected fellow Christians to meet him “in the air.” (It may be relevant to note that the verb of [1 Thes 4:17](#) is used in [2 Cor 12:2-3](#) to denote Paul’s mysterious experience of being “caught up” into the third heaven, or paradise.) Differences of interpretation about the chronology of the rapture at the time of Christ’s second coming in relation to

other end-time events has led to the emergence of distinct schools of eschatological thought.

See also Eschatology; Second Coming of Christ.

Rassis, Rassisites

A place and its people, probably in Cilicia, which was devastated by the army of Holofernes ([Idt 2:23](#)).

Rathamin

A territory transferred from the dominion of Samaria to Judah by Demetrius of Syria. A letter from Demetrius to his adjutant Lasthenes authorizing the transfer is mentioned in [1 Maccabees 11:34](#). The word is sometimes translated Ramathaim (nlt), the birthplace of Samuel and home of Elkanah and Hannah ([1 Sm 1:1, 19; 2:19](#)). In that case, it figures prominently in OT history, for there Saul first made acquaintance with Samuel ([9:6, 10](#)), there Samuel retreated after his last break with Saul, and there Samuel’s grave is located ([25:1](#)). Textual variants Armathaim (tev “Arimathea”) and Ramatha are partly explained by the transposition of *m* and *th* in the Septuagint version. Two modern sites are recommended for the ancient district: Beit Rime, 13 miles (20.9 kilometers) east and north of Lydda, and Ramallah, 8 miles (12.9 kilometers) north of Jerusalem.

Raven

A raven is a large black bird in the crow family (Corvidae). The Hebrew word for “raven” means “black one.” The common raven (*Corvus corax*) weighs about 1.36 kilograms (3 pounds) and is 56–66 centimeters (22–26 inches) long. Its tail is wider in the middle than at the ends.

There are eight species in Israel:

- three ravens,
- two jackdaws,
- one crow,
- one rook, and
- one chough.

The crow is smaller than the raven (about 50.8 centimeters or 20 inches long) and has a tail that is the same width along its length. The raven's feathers are glossy black and shine in the light.

Ravens and crows are intelligent birds and can live in many places. Ravens are bold and curious. They can solve problems, remember tasks, and even learn to speak some words. They sometimes use these skills to steal food or shiny objects.

They are excellent fliers and migrate during the day in large groups. Sometimes these flocks number hundreds of thousands. Ravens build stick nests for two to seven eggs. They mate for life. Ravens often live in empty or wild places but travel far to find food.

Ravens in the Bible

The raven that Noah released from the ark did not return, which showed that it had found food and likely a dry place to rest ([Genesis 8:7](#)). Ravens are scavengers (they eat dead animals and other waste), so they were ceremonially unclean for Israelites ([Leviticus 11:15](#); [Deuteronomy 14:14](#)).

God used ravens to bring food to Elijah ([1 Kings 17:4-6](#)). God provides food for ravens ([Job 38:41](#); [Psalm 147:9](#); [Luke 12:24](#)). In the Song of Solomon, the bride compares her beloved's hair to a raven's black feathers ([Song of Solomon 5:11](#)). Isaiah mentions ravens living in deserted places ([Isaiah 34:11](#)).

See also Birds.

Ravenous Birds

KJV translation for "birds of prey" in [Isaiah 46:11](#) and [Ezekiel 39:4](#). *See* Birds (Kite or Gledé; Vulture, Griffon).

Razis

A fiercely patriotic Jewish elder sought by the Syrian general Nicanor for opposition to Hellenism ([2 Macc 14:37-46](#)). He committed suicide, throwing his own innards at spectators, rather than face arrest by Syrian soldiers.

Razor

A sharp tool used for shaving off the beard or hair ([Nm 8:7](#); [Ez 5:1](#)). Use of the razor was proscribed for those under the Nazirite vow ([Nm 6:5](#); [1 Sm 1:11](#)). The instrument played a central role in Samson's life ([Jgs 13:5](#); [16:17](#)).

The razor is a simile for a slanderous tongue ([Ps 52:2](#)) and a metaphor for judgment ([Is 7:20](#)).

Reaia

KJV spelling of Reaiah, Micah's son, in [1 Chronicles 5:5](#). *See* Reaiah #2.

Reaiah

1. Shobal's son and the father of Jahath from the tribe of Judah ([1 Chr 4:2](#)), perhaps identifiable with Haroeh ([2:52](#)).

2. Reubenite, Micah's son and the father of Baal ([1 Chr 5:5](#)).

3. Head or founder of a family of temple servants who returned with Zerubbabel from captivity in Babylon ([Ezr 2:47](#); [Neh 7:50](#)).

Reaper, Reaping

See Agriculture.

Reba

Reba was one of five kings of Midian. Moses had these kings killed at God's command because they had led the Israelites into worshipping false gods ([Numbers 31:8](#); [Joshua 13:21](#)).

Rebecca, Rebekah

Daughter of Bethuel and the wife of the patriarch Isaac. Her name, which means “well fed” or “choice,” appears 31 times in Genesis (primarily in chs [24–27](#)) and once in [Romans 9:10](#).

Rebekah’s father was Bethuel, who in turn was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother ([Gen 22:20–23](#)). Abraham was her great-uncle and eventually, of course, her father-in-law. Laban, the father of Leah and Rachel, was her brother. Thus her son Jacob married his two cousins, who were sisters.

[Genesis 24](#) is the account of the successful search by Abraham’s servant for a wife for Isaac. He went to Aram-naharaim (northwest Mesopotamia) in obedience to Abraham, who did not want his son to marry a local Canaanite. In answer to the servant’s prayer, Rebekah not only gave a drink to the man but also watered his camels. After a certain amount of hospitality was extended and payment was made, Rebekah willingly went to meet her new husband.

Rebekah bore twins, Esau and Jacob ([25:20–27](#)). She preferred Jacob, the younger, over Esau and was a party to the deception of her husband in securing the right of the firstborn for Jacob. Disguising Jacob to feel, look, and smell like Esau the outdoorsman was her idea. She also prepared Isaac’s favorite dish in order to facilitate the event ([27:5–17](#)).

Scripture records little more of her life but does report that she was buried next to her husband in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre ([49:31](#)).

See also Isaac.

Rebirth

Rebirth is a new beginning of spiritual life. In the Bible, rebirth happens when God gives someone new spiritual life. In Christian teaching, rebirth is another word for regeneration.

See Regeneration.

Recab

1. A son of Rimmon. With his brother Baanah, Recab commanded bands of raiders under Ishbosheth, the son of King Saul. Hoping to please David, they killed Ishbosheth. But, they angered David with this killing. David had the two men put to death ([2 Samuel 4:1–3, 5–12](#)).
2. The father of Jehonadab (or Jonadab). Jehonadab helped Jehu kill many of the people who followed King Ahab in Samaria ([2 Kings 10:15–27](#)). The prophet Jeremiah refers to the followers and descendants of Recab as *Recabites*. They obeyed Jehonadab’s command not to drink wine, build houses, plant crops, or grow vineyards. Instead, they lived in tents as nomads (people who move from place to place). Jeremiah praised the Recabites for staying loyal to their family’s teaching. He said they were more faithful than the people of Judah and Jerusalem, who had not obeyed God. Jeremiah said that God would bring judgment against Judah and Jerusalem. But he promised that the Recabites would be kept safe. ([Jeremiah 35:1–19](#)).

Recabite

Descendants of Recab, Jonadab’s father ([Jer 35:2–18](#)). *See* Recab #2.

Recab

Town in Judah occupied by Eshton, Beth-rapha, Paseah, Tehinnah, Ir-nahash, and their families ([1 Chr 4:12](#)).

Rechab, Rechabite

Alternate spelling for Recab, Recabite. *See* Recab; Recabite.

Rechah

KJV spelling of Recah, a Judean town, in [1 Chronicles 4:12](#). See Recah.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is restoring friendly relations and peace after hostility. Typically, it also involves removing the cause of the conflict that disrupts peace and harmony. This is especially true in the relationship between God and humanity. Christ removed the hostility between God and people through his sacrifice. The Bible first says that Christ's death reconciled God and sinners. It then explains how sinners can accept this gift by faith. This leads to forgiveness and salvation through God's grace. Finally, it discusses how people are reconciled with God ([Romans 5:10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:19](#); [Ephesians 2:16](#)).

The term *katalassein* (used in [Romans 5:10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:19](#)) primarily means the reconciliation of God with the world. It expresses how God's attitude toward sinners changed because of Christ's sacrifice. This is not about questioning whether God, who is unchanging, ever changes his mind. Instead, it is about how Christ's sacrifice altered the relationship between God and sinners. Because of Christ, God now treats sinners as if they had never offended him. This reconciliation is complete and perfect, covering all people and all sins. The barrier between God and sinners is gone, despite humans' feelings. While sinners were still under God's anger, Christ intervened, agreeing with his Father's will. He sought to restore harmony.

This truth is so important that, without reconnection, there is no salvation. There is no new life in Christ, no faith, and no Christian living. Only God can prompt this reconnection. Through his Word and the gospel, God reveals to sinners that he is fully reconciled with them because of Christ.

Christ's sacrifice, called vicarious atonement, is the basis for God's work to reconcile us. Reconciliation did not happen because God said it was so by his power. Instead, it happened because Christ took humanity's place. He bore the punishment we deserved under the law. This substitutionary sacrifice is essential for understanding biblical reconciliation. Christ "became sin for us." It means he took on the law's full responsibilities. He perfectly obeyed it. And he fully bore the guilt and

punishment. Our sins and guilt were placed on him, and his righteousness under the law was credited to us.

The human condition was one of complete inability to repair the broken, hostile relationship with God. Christ was the bridge. His mission of substitution was the reason for his incarnation (coming to Earth as a human). His suffering and sacrificial death, confirmed by his resurrection, redeemed humanity ([Romans 4:25](#)). Christ did not suffer death as a common fate shared by all people. He suffered death as the penalty for sin.

His substitutionary atonement for all sins is central to Scripture. Everything depends on the fact that the turning point for humanity came from God, who reconciled the world to himself through Christ. This is not just a hopeful idea but a real event ([Isaiah 53:6](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Hebrews 9:12-14](#); [1 Peter 1:19](#)). It was God's solution to the terrible conflict between a righteous, angry God and sinful, offending people.

Scripture consistently emphasizes the comprehensive nature of Christ's work, which atoned for the sins of all people ([John 3:16](#); [1 John 2:2](#)). Christ is the shield protecting sinners from God's just anger. Christ's atonement was not just enough because God accepted it. It was, in truth, the complete payment for sin ([Matthew 20:28](#); [Romans 3:25](#); [Hebrews 7:26-28](#); [1 Timothy 2:6](#); [1 John 2:2](#)).

The gospel is the message that tells sinners of God's reconciliation with them through Christ. It powerfully persuades sinners to accept this truth in faith. As the apostle Paul puts it: "That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God!" ([2 Corinthians 5:19-20](#)).

Recorder

The title of a high government official who served in the royal courts from King David's time until the end of the kingdom of Israel. The Old Testament does not clearly state what this person did, but the recorder probably kept the official records and gave advice to the king based on this information.

[2 Samuel 8:16](#), [20:24](#), and [1 Kings 4:3](#) mention a recorder with other leading officers. The recorder

spoke for King Hezekiah in his dealings with Rabshekah ([2 Kings 18:18](#)). During the rule of King Josiah, a recorder supervised temple repairs ([2 Chronicles 34:8](#)).

Red

See Color.

Red Heifer

See Animals (Cattle).

Red Sea

The Red Sea is a narrow stretch of water that connects the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. It is about 2,172 kilometers (1,350 miles) long and 290 kilometers (180 miles) wide. The Red Sea lies between Africa and Asia. On the east side is the Arabian Peninsula. On the west side are the countries of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

At the northwest end, the Sinai Peninsula extends into the sea. This creates the Gulf of Suez to the west and the Gulf of Aqaba to the east. The city of Suez is at the Gulf of Suez's northwestern end. The Suez Canal connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. At the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba are the ports of Eilat (in Israel) and Aqaba (in Jordan). The Red Sea is full of fish and other sea creatures that could provide food for people living in this region. However, there are few cities, roads, or farmable land along its shores.

Biblical Names and References

The Hebrew Old Testament refers to the Red Sea as the "Sea of Reeds" or "Sea of Rushes." Most English translations use "Red Sea," following the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The body of water referenced in the Bible might be different from what is known today as the Red Sea. The New Testament mentions the Red Sea only in Stephen's speech before the Jewish council ([Acts 7:36](#)) and in the "heroes of faith" chapter ([Hebrews 11:29](#)).

Crossing the Red Sea

One of the most celebrated events in Jewish history is the crossing of the Red Sea during the exodus

from Egypt. The Jewish people still remember it today. The exact location of the crossing is debated by scholars. What is clear is that the water was too deep to walk across and too wide to swim across. It was deep enough to cover and drown the entire Egyptian army.

When the Israelites reached the sea, they were trapped between the water and the pursuing Egyptian army, which was the most powerful military force of that time. God saved the Israelites by using a strong east wind to create a dry path through the sea ([Exodus 14:10-31](#)). The Egyptians had the best army in the world at that time.

When God caused the waters to close over the Egyptian forces, the Israelites were completely freed from Egyptian control. The Israelites celebrated this victory with songs ([Exodus 15:1-21](#)). This event was often remembered when telling about God's help for Israel (see [Joshua 4:23; 24:6-7; Psalms 106:7-9; 136:13-15](#)). Even the people of Jericho heard what God did at the Red Sea and were afraid ([Joshua 2:9-10](#)).

Journey Through the Wilderness

After leaving Egypt, the Israelites traveled along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez for some distance. After they left Elim, they camped beside the sea ([Numbers 33:9-11](#)). Then they turned inland toward Mount Sinai.

From Sinai, they traveled northeast, following the Gulf of Aqaba as closely as possible. They likely reached the Red Sea at Ezion-geber ([Numbers 33:35](#)). They failed to enter Canaan from Kadesh-barnea and were defeated at Hormah. After that, they turned south to where Mount Seir comes close to the Gulf of Aqaba (compare [Deuteronomy 2:8](#)).

The Red Sea in Israel's Later History

The Red Sea is on the southern border of the promised land ([Exodus 23:31](#)). Solomon's kingdom extended to the Gulf of Aqaba, where he built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber near Eloth. These ships sailed to Ophir, bringing back gold and other treasures ([1 Kings 9:26-28](#); compare [2 Chronicles 8:17-18](#)). Later, Jehoshaphat tried to do the same. But his ships were destroyed at Ezion-geber ([1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chronicles 20:36-37](#)).

See also Exodus, The; Exodus, Book of.

Redeemer, Redemption

The English words *redeemer* and *redemption* come from a Latin root that means “to buy back.” They describe the release of a person, object, or possession, often by paying a price called a ransom. *A redeemer is a person who sets someone or something free by paying a price.*

In Greek, the main word for redemption is *lytroō*. It means “to set free” or “to rescue.” The word was often used for freeing someone from slavery, chains, or prison. The “redeemer” is the one who redeems or performs redemption.

Old Testament and New Testament Words

To fully understand the concept of redemption, we must examine the Old Testament. In Hebrew, three different words describe redemption, each used in specific situations. These terms rely on legal, social, and religious customs that are not familiar to modern culture. Understanding the culture helps us understand the terms and their use.

1. The first term for redemption has a legal context. The Old Testament uses the Hebrew verb *padah* when an animal replaces, or redeems, a person or another animal. A related noun refers to the ransom or price that is paid. When a living being, whether a person or animal, needs redemption, a substitution must occur or a price paid. Otherwise, they must kill the animal ([Exodus 13:13; 34:20](#)). However, the law never allowed a person to be killed in these cases. A person had to be redeemed without exception.

The word *padah* is also used for other kinds of ransom or rescue. For example, it can describe when someone pays the price to free an Israelite slave. It can also mean paying a ransom to save a person in danger ([Exodus 21:8; Job 6:23](#)).

The idea of redemption was important for the “firstborn.” The firstborn male, whether human or animal, belonged to God. In theory, they must sacrifice the firstborn to him. This actually happened with many animals, but humans and some animals became redeemed, in other words, rescued from sacrifice ([Exodus 13:13; 34:20; Numbers 18:15–16](#)). For redeeming the firstborn son, they used an animal as a substitute. Later, people paid money instead ([Numbers 18:16](#)).

2. The second term is the Hebrew root *ga'al*. The Bible uses it mainly for family rules and obligations, especially about property rights and duties. For example, if a family member loses a piece of property, the next of kin has both the right and the duty to redeem it. This right of redemption protects the family inheritance. The noun from this root has a similar meaning to the English word "redemption." The person who buys back or releases the property is the *go'el* or "redeemer."

An Israelite who had to sell himself into slavery to pay debts could become released by a close relative or by himself ([Leviticus 25:47-49](#)). They could also redeem land in the same way ([Leviticus 25:25-28](#); [Jeremiah 32:6-9](#)).

The right of redemption also applied to people in special situations. A man had an obligation to marry his brother's widow, a relative had the right to redeem both property and family members. Boaz did this when he redeemed the land and married Ruth ([Ruth 3:13](#); [4:1-6](#)).

3. The third Hebrew term is the root verb *kaphar*, which means "to cover." From this root, we get terms that mean to cover sin, like "atone" or "expiate." In a religious context, the noun *kopher* which derives from this root means "the price paid to cover sin."

The term refers to the payment made for a life one should surrender. For example, if an ox killed someone, the owner had to surrender his own life in exchange. However, he could save himself by paying the ransom required ([Exodus 21:28-32](#)).

The three Hebrew terms are translated into different Greek words in the Septuagint. The roots *padah* and *ga'al* are often translated with *lutroō* ("to redeem, set free, rescue") and its related noun *lutron* ("ransom"). The root *kaphar* is usually

translated with words meaning "to make atonement," such as *exilaskomai*. Although the Hebrew words are distinct, the Greek highlights their shared focus: redemption always involves a price being paid, a rescue taking place, or someone being set free.

God as Redeemer

In the Old Testament, God's redemption usually focuses on the entire nation or people, not just individuals. This idea of national redemption starts with God freeing the people from slavery in Egypt. Even though they were in slavery, God rescued them ([Exodus 6:6](#); [Deuteronomy 15:15](#)).

The terms for redeeming or ransoming often involve paying a set price or substituting another life. When applied to God, he delivers without payment, using his power: "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment" ([Exodus 6:6](#); see also [Deuteronomy 15:15](#)). This idea continues in other times of need and deliverance, such as during the exile in Babylon. God acts as the national savior (for example, [Isaiah 29:22](#); [35:10](#); [43:1](#); [44:22](#); [Jeremiah 31:11](#)).

There is no suggestion that God paid an actual price to free his people. God redeems by his own power. "For this is what the LORD says: 'You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed'" ([Isaiah 52:3](#)). When King Cyrus freed the people, it was also without payment ([45:13](#)).

In the early centuries of the church, some Christians taught that Christ's death was a ransom. They believed it freed humanity from the power of sin, death, and the devil. At times, this was even described as a ransom "paid to Satan," because people were thought to be under his control.

However, the Bible never shows God making a payment to Satan. Instead, it describes Christ's death as an atonement (a sacrifice that removes sin) and as a victory over the powers of evil. The word ransom points to freedom and rescue, not a business exchange with the devil.

In the end, the redeeming work of the cross is a divine mystery, greater than human explanation.

Redemption and the Messiah

In the Old Testament, redemption closely links to the hope for the Messiah, God's chosen one. From

the time of the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the Scripture shows God as one who rescues. The hope for redemption is very strong during the Israelite captivity in Babylon. The prophets often speak of God as a "redeemer" or "deliverer." God's anointed one, or Christ, would fulfill this hope, who would come from the family line of King David ([Isaiah 9:1-6](#); [11:1-9](#); [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#)).

The hope for the Christ became stronger during times of exile and abuse. During these long centuries, this hope for a savior was stronger than ever. This time, known as the intertestamental period (between the Old and New Testaments), lasted about four centuries. It spanned from the last of the prophets to the time of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Christians believe that Jesus the Christ, or the Messiah, fulfills the Old Testament's idea of redemption. This image of redemption is obvious in the gospels. John the Baptist described Jesus of Nazareth as fulfilling God's kingdom and as the Christ of Israel ([Matthew 3:12](#)). Jesus, the Son of Man, came to offer himself "as a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#); [Mark 10:45](#)). Christ did his work on behalf of others and in their place.

This idea appears often in the apostle Paul's writings. Christ serves as "an atoning sacrifice" to God ([Romans 3:25](#)). Redemption for humanity comes through his death to gain a chosen people ([Acts 20:28](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#); see also [1 Corinthians 7:22-24](#); [2 Corinthians 5:14-17](#)). These words and expressions convey the main idea of redemption or atonement. Jesus Christ fulfilled the redemption concept in Scripture and through his sacrifice, provided redemption for sinners.

The concept of redemption has deep meaning for God's people. In the Old Testament, it shows that God is the savior of his people with whom he made a covenant (or agreement). Although Israel sinned by denying God's law, God did not destroy them. Instead, he restored them to favor when they turned to him in obedience (repented).

In the prophets, God's plan for redemption was to be completed through the Messiah and his sacrifice. The followers of Jesus believed he was the Messiah who would redeem the whole world. Redemption is rooted in God's love, which restores people to him ([John 3:16](#)). God will free whoever trusts in Christ from the slavery of sin. Then they will find favor again with the God who redeems.

See also Atonement; Ransom; Salvation.

Reed

Tall grass that grows in damp places and beside bodies of water. Numerous species of rush and bulrush grow in the region of Palestine. There are at least 21 varieties of rushes. The common soft rush or bog rush (*Juncus effusus*) is found in wet places, even in the Sinai and other deserts. The sea or hard rush (*Juncus maritimus*) is found in damp places throughout the region of Palestine and even in Sinai.

At least 15 kinds of bulrushes (*Scirpus*) are known in the region of Palestine. The cluster-headed club rush (*Scirpus holoschoenus*) is common in damp places throughout the region of Palestine to the Sinai. The lake club rush or tall bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris*) is found in swamps and ditches throughout northern Africa to the Dead Sea. The sea club rush or salt marsh club rush (*Scirpus maritimus*) is found in ditches and swamps in many places of the region of Palestine. Any of these species may be the one referred to in [Job 8:11](#); [Isaiah 9:14](#); [19:6, 15](#).

The reference in [Genesis 41:2](#) to the feeding of cattle in the meadow seems to be to the tall reed (*Arundo donax*), which grows 5.5 meters (18 feet) or more in height. This plant is also known as the Persian reed and is common throughout the region of Palestine, Syria, and the Sinai peninsula. It is a giant grass that may have a stem diameter of 5.1 to 7.6 centimeters (2 or 3 inches) at the base. At the top, it has a plume of white flowers similar to those of sugarcane or pampas grass.

Ancient people used this plant for many purposes, including:

- walking sticks,
- fishing rods,
- measuring rods, and
- musical pipes.

It is therefore quite possible that the "reed" mentioned in [Matthew 27:48](#) and [Mark 15:36](#) was a carpenter's reed or measuring rod.

See also Papyrus.

Reeds, Sea of

Hebrew designation for the body of water crossed by the Israelites during the exodus from Egypt. *See* Red Sea.

Reelaiah

Head of a family who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel after the exile ([Ezr 2:2](#)); alternately called Raamiah ([Neh 7:7](#)). *See* Raamiah.

Refuge, Cities of

See Cities of Refuge.

Regem

Jahdai's son and a descendant of Caleb ([1 Chr 2:47](#)).

Regemmelech

One of the delegation sent to inquire whether fasting to commemorate the temple destruction should continue ([Zec 7:2](#)). The name may refer to a person or could be a title meaning "friend of the king."

Regeneration

Spiritual rebirth that produces a new beginning. It describes the new life of the believer in Christ ([Titus 3:5](#)) and the new order that will begin at Christ's return ([Matthew 19:28](#)). It occurs in the King James Version of the Bible in only these two places. This does not mean, however, that the concept is unimportant. A variety of other words and figures are used frequently by the biblical writers to describe the same inner renewal of the heart.

Nonreligious writers also speak of regeneration. For the Stoic philosophers, regeneration meant a return to a former state of existence. They referred to the yearly cycle of the seasons as a regeneration. For the biblical writers, however, regeneration means a more significant renewal. It is a radically new beginning rather than a mere restoration of previous conditions. This renewal involves a

mighty change in the person. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, breaking the power of sin and implanting proper attitudes and desires. The regenerated person freely and joyously does the will of God.

The ultimate goal of regeneration is the creation of a new heaven and earth that will be totally righteous and without sin ([2 Peter 3:13](#)). The present working of the Holy Spirit in the believer is a foretaste of this future cosmic regeneration ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)). The new heavens and earth are still future. But God's renewal of his people, foreseen by the Old Testament prophets, is already a reality ([Isaiah 65:17](#); [66:22](#); [2 Peter 3:13](#); [Revelation 21:1](#)).

The believer now possesses a new life from God through the process of spiritual birth. Christians are born of God ([John 1:12-13](#)). And it is only through this spiritual birth that one may participate in the kingdom of God and receive his Spirit. Those born into God's family reflect his righteous character ([1 John 2:29](#)). They are freed from habitual sin ([3:9](#); [5:18](#)). In [James 1:18](#), this process of new birth is attributed to the power of the Word of God.

Extending this metaphor for regeneration, Jesus taught Nicodemus about the absolute necessity of being born again, or born from above, as a prerequisite to entering the kingdom of God. Those who are thus reborn possess a living hope ([1 Peter 1:3](#)). Again, this new birth is brought about through the power of the word of God (verse [23](#)).

The initial experience of regeneration is followed by a continuing renewal in the life of the Christian. The newborn are to desire the pure milk of the word of God in order to grow ([1 Peter 2:2](#)). Paul commands an ongoing transformation by the renewing of the mind ([Romans 12:2](#); [Ephesians 4:23](#)). The new person remains in a process of constant renewal ([Colossians 3:10](#)), and the inner self is renewed daily ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#)).

The present result of the new birth is a new person or new creation for whom old things are replaced by new ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). It is this new creation, rather than superficial participation in religious practices, that is the goal of the Christian life ([Galatians 6:15](#)). It involves laying aside the old nature ([Ephesians 4:22](#)) and putting on the new nature (verse [24](#)). In the final analysis, however, this is never the result of human effort alone. We are God's workmanship ([2:10](#)).

See also Atonement; Conversion; Redeemer, Redemption; Repentance; Salvation.

Rehabiah

Levite, son of Eliezer the priest and Moses' grandson ([1 Chr 23:17](#); [24:21](#); [26:25](#)).

Rehob (Person)

1. The King of Zobah. King David defeated his son, Hadadezer, at the Euphrates River ([2 Samuel 8:3, 12](#)).
2. One of the Levites who signed his name on Ezra's covenant agreement ([Nehemiah 10:11](#)).

Rehob (Place)

1. The farthest northern area explored by the Israelite spies before they entered Canaan ([Numbers 13:21](#)). This place matches the location of Beth-rehob ([Judges 18:28](#)). Rehob is also mentioned along with Zobah and Maacah as enemies who fought against King David during the war with the Ammonites ([2 Samuel 10:6–8](#)).
2. Two cities that belonged to the tribe of Asher ([Joshua 19:28–30](#)). One of these cities was given to the Levites from the family of Gershon ([Joshua 21:31](#)). It became a city of refuge ([1 Chronicles 6:75](#)). The other city remained under the control of the Canaanites ([Judges 1:31](#)). Some scholars think these references might actually be talking about the same city.

See also Cities of Refuge; Levitical Cities.

Rehoboam

King (930–913 BC) especially remembered for his part in perpetuating the split of the Hebrew kingdom and for being the first king of the separate kingdom of Judah.

Split of the Kingdom

When Solomon died (930 BC), his son Rehoboam ascended to the throne. Perhaps as a concession to the Ephraimites, who often seemed to have been piqued at their inferior status, Rehoboam agreed to hold his coronation in their town of Shechem instead of in Jerusalem, a traditional place of meeting on which “all Israel” could agree ([1 Kgs 12:1](#)).

At the conclave, leaders of the northern tribes, accompanied by Jeroboam, approached the new king for concessions. Jeroboam—an official under Solomon's administration who had fled to Egypt when Solomon suspected him of treason—had returned to Israel to assume a position of leadership. Jeroboam was destined to be the ruler of Israel because of Solomon's apostasy ([1 Kgs 11](#)). Solomon's numerous building projects and his ostentation seem to have bankrupted the kingdom, resulting in an intolerable tax burden. Especially objectionable was forced labor on various projects (see [1 Kgs 12:4](#); [2 Chr 10:4](#)). The populace sought relief from high taxes.

The new king asked for a three-day grace period in which to study the request. Advisers from Solomon's administration counseled concessions; the younger men urged no moderation but an even greater tax burden. Following the advice of his peers, Rehoboam arrogantly threatened even higher taxes. The restless northern tribes broke away to establish a separate kingdom under the leadership of Jeroboam. Judah and Benjamin were the only tribes loyal to Rehoboam.

The separate existence of the northern kingdom was not a new development. After Saul's death, the north had gone its own way while David ruled in Hebron. Some 30 years later, it had briefly supported Sheba in a revolt against David. Now under the leadership of Jeroboam, the rupture was to become permanent.

Not accepting the apparent success of the secession, Rehoboam sent his tribute master or treasurer, Adoram (Adoniram), to try to heal the division. North Israelite partisans stoned him to death, and Rehoboam and his party fled to Jerusalem. Rehoboam immediately tried to subjugate the rebellious tribes. Raising a force of 180,000 men from Judah and Benjamin, he prepared to march north, but the prophet Shemaiah brought word from God to abandon the project since the breakup of the kingdom was part of the judgment of God on Israel for the sinfulness

of the nation during Solomon's reign. Rehoboam promptly abandoned his military efforts, but intermittent military skirmishes plagued the relations of Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout their reigns.

Reign of Rehoboam

In the face of constant threat of attack, Rehoboam set about to fortify his kingdom. He built extensive fortifications with adequate supplies of weapons and food at Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, Gath, Maresha, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron.

Military preparedness was supplemented by spiritual underpinning. As a result of the establishment of a new apostate religion in the northern kingdom, priests and Levites streamed to the south, where they greatly strengthened the spiritual fiber of the realm. Apparently, they helped to maintain the stability of Judah for three years.

However, the people built high places and pagan sanctuaries throughout the land. They began to engage in the corrupt religious practices of the heathen nations around them, including homosexuality ([1 Kgs 14:22-24](#)).

Soon Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel followed him ([2 Chr 12:1](#)). Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, a preoccupied father who himself grew increasingly lax about spiritual things. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, a pagan Ammonite princess who presumably lacked any spiritual perception ([1 Kgs 14:21](#)). His father's example of keeping a harem and having numerous children likewise had an impact on him. Rehoboam had 18 wives, 60 concubines, 28 sons, and 60 daughters. He spent a considerable amount of time providing living arrangements for them in the fortified cities of Judah ([2 Chr 11:21-23](#)).

At length, the apostasy of Judah became so great that God brought judgment on the nation in the form of a foreign invasion. In the fifth year of Rehoboam (c. 926 BC), Shishak I (Sheshonk I) of Egypt invaded Palestine with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 men ([1 Kgs 14:25](#); [2 Chr 12:2-3](#)).

After Shishak's initial successes, the prophet Shemaiah made it clear to the king and the nobility that the invasion was direct punishment for their sinful ways. When they repented of their waywardness, God promised to moderate their punishment. They were subjected to either heavy tribute or a plundering of their cities. The national

treasury and the temple treasury were emptied to satisfy the demands of the Egyptians.

Shishak's invasion continued into the northern kingdom, for his inscription in the temple of Karnak at Luxor tells of his conquest of 156 towns in the two kingdoms. Only a fraction of the names listed can be identified.

Rehoboam's repentance was only temporary. Scripture indicates that his latter years were characterized by evil ([2 Chr 12:14](#)), and that his son and successor, Abijam, "walked in all the sins which his father did before him" ([1 Kgs 15:3](#)). Probably the sins of his father would not have been condemned if Rehoboam's last 12 years had been a good example to his maturing son.

Rehoboam was 41 when he ascended the throne, and he reigned for 17 years.

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

Rehoboth

1. KJV name for Rehoboth-Ir, a city built by Nimrod, in [Genesis 10:11](#). *See* Rehoboth-Ir.

2. Site of the third well dug by Isaac ([Gn 26:22](#)). This time Abimelech and the herdsmen of Gerar did not lay claim to it, and Isaac named the well "broad places" or "room." The well was located about 20 miles (32.2 kilometers) southwest of Beersheba.

3. Home of Shaul, an Edomite ruler ([Gn 36:37](#); [1 Chr 1:48](#)). The place is identified as "on the river," a frequent biblical reference to the Euphrates. Hence, versions such as the nasb, rsv, and nlt insert "Euphrates" into the text.

Rehoboth-Ir

Name meaning "broad places of the city." It was the second city built by Nimrod the hunter (kjb "Asshur") in Assyria ([Gn 10:11](#); kjb "Rehoboth"). Opinion differs as to whether it was a distinct municipality (a suburb of Nineveh) or, since the name of the town is not mentioned in Assyrian literature, open squares or broad streets within Nineveh itself.

Rehum

1. One of the 12 Jewish leaders who returned from captivity with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:2](#); [Neh 7:7](#), where "Nehum" is apparently a copyist's error). *See* Nehum.
2. Persian commander who, with Shimshai the scribe, wrote to Artaxerxes I, complaining of the Jews' temple-rebuilding project and promising dire consequences should the project be completed. The king's response halted construction until the second year of Darius's reign ([Ezr 4:8-23](#)).
3. Levite identified as Bani's son, who helped repair the Jerusalem wall under Nehemiah's direction ([Neh 3:17](#)).
4. Leader who set his seal on Ezra's covenant ([Neh 10:25](#)).
5. Priest who accompanied Zerubbabel ([Neh 12:3](#)); elsewhere he was called Harim (see nlt mg). *See* Harim #5.

Rei

Officer who supported Solomon when Adonijah attempted to become king near the end of David's reign ([1 Kgs 1:8](#)).

Rekem (Person)

1. The prince or king of Midian who was killed with his four partners in a battle led by Moses at the command of the Lord ([Numbers 31:8](#), [Joshua 13:21](#)). The Israelites who lived near the area ruled by Rekem had been led away to worship the false god called Baal-peor.
2. The son of Hebron, who was a descendant of Caleb. Rekem was the father of Shammai ([1 Chronicles 2:43-44](#)).

Rekem (Place)

One of 26 cities assigned to Benjamin's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 18:27](#)).

Religion

The service and worship of God; an institutionalized system of religious beliefs and practices. The Israelites' service and worship of God had become institutionalized by the time Jesus lived. Jesus himself criticized several of its practices for having a show of piety but lacking true heart-felt adoration of God. The institutionalization of the Christian faith occurred in many churches long after the time of the apostles. Hence, it is not discussed in the NT.

See also Judaism.

Remaliah

The father of King Pekah of Israel who ruled from 737 to 732 BC. Pekah took power by secretly killing the previous king ([2 Kings 15:25-37](#)). Later, he attacked Jerusalem with his army ([Isaiah 7:1-9](#)).

Remeth

Border town in Issachar's territory ([Jos 19:21](#)), and probably the same as Ramoth ([1 Chr 6:73](#)), also called Jarmuth. *See* Jarmuth #2.

Remission of Sins

A King James Version phrase that carries the same meaning as "forgiveness of sins." The New Testament uses a variety of terms to describe a single truth. Different expressions are used to describe the idea of forgiveness of sins:

- "passing over" in [Romans 3:25](#)
- "covered" in [Romans 4:7](#)
- "not imputed" in [Romans 4:8](#)
- "remembered no more" in [Hebrews 10:17](#)

One of the most significant ways of expressing forgiveness is the word "remission" ([Matthew 26:28](#); [Mark 1:4](#); [Luke 1:77](#); [3:3](#); [24:47](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [10:43](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#); [10:18](#)).

Remission has an interesting tradition in the Greek language. In a legal sense, remission meant dismissal from a job, release from an obligation, or

cancellation of a debt or punishment. Over time, it came to mean amnesty or exemption from taxation.

In New Testament use, the activity of remission means "to let go," "to leave behind," or "to send away." Because of this, the word is often translated into "forgiveness" as well as "remission" ([Acts 5:31](#); [13:38](#); [26:18](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Colossians 1:14](#)). While forgiveness can be exercised by both God and humans, the word "remission" almost always means forgiveness given by God ([Matthew 26:28](#); [Acts 10:43](#)).

See also Forgiveness.

Remmon

KJV form of En-rimmon, a town in Simeon's territory, in [Joshua 19:7](#). *See* En-rimmon.

Remmon-Methoar

KJV translation for "Rimmon it ends toward Neah," in [Joshua 19:13](#). *See* Rimmon (Place) #2.

Remnant

Group of people who survive a catastrophe brought about by God, ordinarily in judgment for sin. This group becomes the nucleus for the continuation of mankind or the people of God; the future existence of the larger group depends on this purified, holy remnant that has undergone and survived the judgment of God. The remnant concept is found in all periods of redemptive history where catastrophe—be it natural disaster, disease, warfare, or other instruments—threatens the continuity of God's purposes. From the Creation account to the end of the OT, the concept is progressively sharpened.

The Problem

The theological problem that the remnant concept addresses is the tension between the grace and promises of God over against his holiness and just judgment of sin. This tension between God's grace and his judgment presents a distinction between the true and false people of God and between the present and future people of God. The holy, pure, and true people of God will survive his judgment on sin as a faithful remnant and will become the

nucleus of a renewed, chosen people. The purposes of God are not frustrated but are effected among that true and renewed people.

The concept is one that cuts in two directions. On the one hand, depending on the imminent expectation of the biblical author, it may emphasize judgment, that God is on the verge of destroying his people because of their sin; the remnant itself may even be threatened because the contemplated judgment is so severe. On the other hand, the fact that a remnant survives emphasizes both the grace of God (his favor shown to those he has kept safe) and the dawning of a new age and a new community, which inherits the promises of God as it springs from that remnant.

In the Old Testament

Prior to the Patriarchal Period

The first passage exhibiting the remnant concept is the account of the fall of man. Though there is no immediate loss of life or numerical reduction, the judgment of God threatens the continued existence of mankind ([Gn 3:15-19](#)). Judgment is averted by God's grace, and Adam and Eve become the nucleus of humanity; the hopes of the future are focused in their offspring ([3:16, 20](#); [4:1](#)). God's purposes for mankind will be realized through the seed of the woman.

The Flood narrative is more specific. Because of the wickedness of mankind, God determined to blot out all life. However, a righteous man who was blameless before God, together with his family, received God's favor ([Gn 6:8-9](#); [Heb 11:7](#)). Only Noah and those with him in the ark survived the judgment of God ([Gn 7:23](#)). The continued existence of mankind focuses in the fruitfulness and increase of his sons ([9:1](#)), introducing a new age and a new covenant (vv [8-17](#)). God's purposes for mankind will be realized in the seed of Noah.

From the Patriarchal Period to the Monarchy

Not all passages contributing to the development of the remnant motif involve the threat of universal judgment. The sins of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were so grievous that God determined to destroy them. For the sake of his servant Abraham ([Gn 18:16-19](#); [19:29](#)) and because of Lot's righteousness ([2 Pt 2:8](#)), God spared Lot and his two daughters. Abraham's negotiations with God to spare the entire city if 50, and finally even 10, righteous persons could be found there ([Gn 18:22-33](#)) emphasize again that the righteous

escape judgment. God will not sweep away the righteous with the wicked; even when they hesitated, he was merciful and led them out of the city ([19:16, 29](#)).

The story of Joseph is the literary bridge from the children of Jacob, a family in Canaan ([Gn 46:26–27](#)), to the thousands of children of Israel at the time of the exodus. The dominant theological motif in the story is the preservation of the patriarch's family in the face of mortal threat from famine. God sent Joseph into Egypt to save lives and to preserve for his family a remnant ([45:6–7](#)). Joseph's brothers intended harm, but God turned it to good—to the saving of many lives ([50:19–20](#)). Once again the purposes of God are not thwarted but will be realized in these survivors from the threat of extinction.

Obedience to the commands of God and trust in his promises are at issue when the spies return from reconnoitering Canaan ([Nm 13–14](#)). Representatives from all the tribes had explored the land. In spite of their agreement about its excellence, all but two of the spies reported that the land could not be taken. Because of their grumbling, God announced his intention to destroy them all and to recreate a greater nation from his faithful servant Moses. After Moses interceded on behalf of the people, the Lord relented. Instead of destruction for all, only Joshua and Caleb would enter the promised inheritance because of their faithful report. The people would remain in the wilderness 40 years until all died except these two. The transgressors would die, but the faithful remnant would receive the promise.

The law, too, stipulates that faithfulness is required to retain possession of the land. Disobedience would bring disease, defeat in war, drought, crop failure, attack by wild animals, death by sword and famine, cannibalism, destruction of cities, and exile into enemy lands ([Lv 26:1–39](#)). But for those who were left, those who confessed their sins and repented—the remnant—God would keep his covenant with them, restore them to their land, and realize his purpose through them.

From the Monarchy to the Exile

Even in the apostate northern kingdom the Lord kept his faithful remnant. At the end of a three-year drought in punishment for sins in the northern kingdom ([1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1](#)) and after the victory over the priests of Baal at Mt Carmel, Elijah went to Mt Sinai, fleeing for his life from Jezebel (ch [19](#)). There he lamented that Israel had given itself

totally to false worship and that he alone was left of the faithful. God replied by instructing him to anoint Jehu as king and Elisha as his prophetic successor. Jehu and Elisha would destroy the apostate, while God preserved for himself the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The faithful remnant would be spared destruction.

The preexilic prophets emphasized the smallness of the remnant that would survive the destruction under Assyria and Babylon. Amos warned of great judgment that would threaten even the remnant itself. God would destroy the sinful kingdom, though not totally. Isaiah, too, speaks of the smallness of the remnant. Israel is left like a shelter in a vineyard, a hut in a melon field only narrowly avoiding the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah ([Is 1:8–9](#)). It is left like a pole on a hilltop ([30:17](#)), like the stump of a felled tree ([6:13](#)). When the reaper gathers his harvest, Israel is the gleanings that are left, the few olives that remain in the top of the tree ([17:4–6](#)). But from the stump of that felled tree will spring new life ([6:11–13](#)). Those who survive in Jerusalem will be holy, and the Lord will bring a new shoot from the stump of Jesse, a righteous servant (the Branch) who will bring the remnant of the people of God from many nations ([4:2–3; 11:1–16](#)). After God has purged away the iniquity of the people, Jerusalem would be known as the city of righteousness ([1:21–26](#)).

During the Exile

From his vantage point among the exiles by the Kebar River ([Ez 1:1](#)), Ezekiel was concerned about the future remnant and the promises of restoration. In a vision (ch [9](#)), he saw a scribe pass through the city of Jerusalem placing a mark on the foreheads of all who grieved for the sins committed in the city. Behind the scribe came a group of warriors slaying all who did not have the mark on their foreheads. Fearing the destruction of all the people, Ezekiel called out, “O Lord, will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel?” Immediately thereafter, he saw the glory cloud—the visible presence of God in the midst of his people—rise and depart from the temple (ch [10](#)). Ezekiel prophesied judgment on the leaders of Israel, and Pelatiah (whose name means “escape”) died, prompting Ezekiel to ask again, “O Lord, will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel?” ([11:13](#)). The Lord will gather his people and restore them to their land as a pure people free of idolatry. Though their sins were great, there would yet be mercy and restoration for a purified nation. The glory cloud that Ezekiel saw departing from the temple will

return to a new temple (ch [43](#)). The people will no longer stray from God ([14:11](#)) but will enjoy a new and everlasting covenant ([16:60-62](#)). Ezekiel recalled the remnant motif as it applied to the wilderness community after the exodus: many will leave the land of bondage, and the rebellious will die along the way, not entering Israel ([20:35-38](#)). God will gather his flock, and they will have "one shepherd, my servant David" ([34:20-24](#)). God will remove their hearts of stone, give them hearts of flesh, and put his Spirit in them ([36:24-27](#)). Though Israel appears dead and incapable of living again, yet God will speak to these dry bones and bring them to life ([37:1-14](#)).

Remphan

The King James Version form of Rephan, a pagan deity, mentioned in ([Acts 7:43](#)).

See Rephan.

Repentance

A change of mind or attitude about God. When someone repents, they recognize they have been wrong and choose to trust in Jesus instead. This change in thinking leads to changes in how they live ([Acts 20:21](#)).

How Do Faith and Repentance Work Together?

Trusting in Jesus (faith) and changing your mind about God (repentance) go together. The Bible teaches that both are important when someone becomes a follower of Jesus. Sometimes, teachers focus more on explaining repentance because it helps people understand how to follow Jesus. For example, Jesus said there is joy in heaven among the angels over one sinner who repents ([Luke 15:7](#)). The apostles described Gentile conversion to Christianity as God granting them "repentance unto life" ([Acts 11:18](#)). True repentance and trust in Jesus always go together. You cannot have one without the other. Believers may feel or be aware of one aspect more than another, but both are essential in conversion.

How Do We Practice Repentance?

Repentance is not just something you do once. It is a new way of thinking that helps you live the way God wants you to live. Each day, followers of Jesus

look at their wrong actions and mistakes. This helps them continue to trust God and change their ways.

David's story of his adultery with Bathsheba provides one of the main examples of an expression of repentance ([Psalms 51](#)). Whole churches or groups of people are sometimes called to repent together ([Revelation 2:5](#)). [Second Corinthians 7](#) describes corporate repentance in three main movements:

- expressing sorrow for sin
- resolving to forsake old sinful ways
- promising changed behavior

While repentance is often accompanied by deep feelings, it is based on convictions about the sinner's own need before a holy God.

How Was Repentance Important to Early Christian Preaching?

Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ preached repentance (([Matthew 3:2](#); [Mark 1:4](#); [1:15](#)). Before Jesus went up to heaven, he told his closest followers to spread his message to everyone ([Luke 24:44-49](#)). This is called the Great Commission. The apostles continued the same kind of preaching. We can see this in [Acts 2](#) when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. When he told people to turn to God and trust in Jesus, about 3,000 people became followers of Jesus that day.

See Confession; Conversion; Forgiveness; Regeneration; Salvation.

Rephael

Shemaiah's son and a temple gatekeeper in David's time ([1 Chr 26:7-8](#)).

Rephah

Resheph's father from Ephraim's tribe ([1 Chr 7:25](#)).

Rephaiah

1. Jeshaiiah's son and a descendant of Solomon ([1 Chr 3:21](#)).

2. Ishi's son and a captain from Simeon's tribe who led 500 Israelites to destroy the Amalekites at Mt Seir ([1 Chr 4:42-43](#)).
3. Tola's son and a warrior from Issachar's tribe in the days of David ([1 Chr 7:1-2](#)).
4. Son of Binea and father of Eleasah, a descendant of Saul ([1 Chr 9:43](#)); also called Raphah in [1 Chronicles 8:37](#) (kiv "Rapha").
5. Hur's son, who worked on the Jerusalem wall during the days of Nehemiah ([Neh 3:9](#)).

Rephaim

1. In several Old Testament passages, *Rephaim* refers to the spirits of dead people who live in the place of the dead, called *Sheol* ([Proverbs 2:18](#); [9:18](#); [21:16](#)). The rephaim of the underworld suffered ([Job 26:5](#)). They were separated from God ([Psalm 88:10-12](#)). They were also separated from all living people ([Isaiah 26:14](#)). They are weak and shadow-like, not strong like living people ([Isaiah 14:9](#)).

2. The word *Rephaim* also describes a group of very tall and strong people who lived in the land of Canaan during Abraham's time. Along with other ancient groups like the Zuzim, Emim, and Horites, they were defeated by Kedorlaomer and his allies ([Genesis 14:5](#)). They were one of nine nations living in Palestine at the time when the Lord promised to give the land to the descendants of Abraham ([15:20](#)). Other nations had different names for them. The Moabites called them the Emim, and the Ammonites called them the Zamzummim. These groups were as large and tall as the Anakim, another group of giants ([Deuteronomy 2:11, 20](#)). Og, king of Bashan, was the last known Rephaim king. The Israelites defeated him under Moses's leadership and took his land ([Deuteronomy 3:11](#); [Joshua 12:4](#); [13:12](#)). Some of the giants who fought with the Philistines may have come from the Rephaim ([2 Samuel 21](#); [1 Chronicles 20](#)).
See also Giants.

Rephaites

Alternate translation for Rephaim. *See* Rephaim #2.

Rephan

A pagan deity mentioned by Stephen in [Acts 7:43](#) (King James Version "Remphan"; New American Standard Bible "Rompha"). Stephen quoted from the text of [Amos 5:26](#) to show how the Israelites worshiped false gods during their time in the wilderness.

Stephen was quoting from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The Septuagint translators understood the Hebrew word *kaiwan* to refer to the Assyrian god of Saturn, or possibly to the Egyptian Saturn god Repa.

Some scholars argue that [Amos 5:26](#) does not name specific ancient gods at all, but is simply making a general reference to the false worship practiced by the Israelites in the wilderness.

Rephidim

A place where the Israelites camped during their journey through the wilderness after leaving Egypt. [Exodus 17:1](#) tells us that Rephidim was where the Israelites stopped after traveling through the wilderness of Sin. [Numbers 33:12–15](#) gives more details, saying that after the wilderness of Sin, they first camped at Dophkah, then at Alush, then at Rephidim, before they continued to the Sinai wilderness.

Several events occurred at Rephidim during the wilderness travels of Israel. Upon arriving at Rephidim, the Israelites learned that there was no water to drink. Following God's instructions, Moses struck a rock in Horeb with his staff, and water flowed out for everyone to drink. However, Moses renamed Rephidim as "Massah" (which means "testing") and "Meribah" (which means "quarreling") because the Israelites had doubted that God was with them and would provide for them ([Exodus 17:1–7](#)).

Rephidim was also the place where the Israelites fought a battle against the Amalekites. Joshua led the Israelite fighters, and God promised to give Israel victory as long as Moses kept his hands raised in the air. Aaron and Hur helped Moses hold up his hands throughout the day, and the Israelites won the battle against the Amalekites.

The location of Rephidim is uncertain. Some scholars suggest it was at Wadi Refayid in southwest Sinai. Others think it might have been near modern Jebel Musa at Wadi Feiran or at Wadi es-Sheikh.

See also Wilderness Wanderings.

Reptile

See Animals (Adder; Asp; Gecko; Lizard; Snake).

Resen

City built by Nimrod between Nineveh and Calah ([Gn 10:12](#)). It was part of the complex known as

"the great city" and could have been a suburb of Nineveh. Some interpreters suggest it was a waterwork between Nineveh and Calah.

Resheph

Rephah's son, a descendant of Ephraim and an ancestor of Joshua, son of Nun ([1 Chr 7:25](#)).

Rest

Rest means freedom from work or activity. The Christian belief in rest comes from the rest of God himself. After completing the work of Creation in six days, God "so on that day He rested from all His work" ([Genesis 2:2](#)). This event provides the foundation for the Hebrew Sabbath, a weekly day of rest. The word "sabbath" itself means rest in Hebrew. The idea of resting on the seventh day is seen as part of the Creation order. The fourth commandment says to keep the Sabbath for God. Work for only six days. God made everything in six days and rested on the seventh ([Exodus 20:8–11](#)).

The biblical idea of rest is not just about the past (Creation) and the present (weekly rest). It is also about the future. This future rest is symbolized by the Israelites' journey under Moses from slavery in Egypt to the "rest" of the Promised Land. They achieved this rest under Joshua, who led them into the land and settled them there (see [Joshua 23–24](#)).

The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness meant that the adults who left Egypt with Moses did not enter the Promised Land. They brought this judgment upon themselves due to their ingratitude and rebellion ([Numbers 14:26–35](#)). Centuries later, God warned their descendants. He said not to be hard-hearted, or they might miss his rest. "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" ([Psalm 95:7–11](#)). The author of Hebrews quotes this passage ([Hebrews 3:7–8](#); [4:7](#)) to show that God's rest is not just a part of history. The promise of entering his rest is still open. The word "today" shows that the day of grace is still here: "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day. So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God" ([Hebrews 4:8–9](#)).

Everyone is invited to enter into God's rest. The weekly Sabbath is a reminder and a reflection of that rest. The rest the Israelites found in the Promised Land after their wandering is a symbol of

God's eternal rest. His people will share in it. The rest that Christ offers to those who come to him ([Matthew 11:28](#)) is a glimpse and a promise of the divine rest that awaits them. The rest after death for believers who have "fallen asleep in Christ" is a deepened experience of this rest: "Blessed are the dead—those who die in the Lord...they will rest from their labors" ([Revelation 14:13](#)). But the complete fulfillment of this rest will occur when Christ returns. At that time, all who belong to him will fully reflect his likeness ([1 John 3:2](#)). Salvation will be complete. They will get imperishable, glorified bodies ([2 Corinthians 5](#)). A renewed creation where righteousness dwells will be established ([2 Peter 3:13](#)).

This moment will be the climax of history and the time when God's people fully enter into his eternal rest. Christ's redemption, purchased on the cross, will be completed. It will bring rest and freedom from all sin. It also means freedom from all sorrow, pain, and death ([Revelation 7:9-17](#); [21:1-7](#)). Also, humanity will extend to all of God's creation. It will be perfected as originally intended (see [Romans 8:19-25](#)).

Rest does not mean inactivity. God rested from the work of Creation. But, he is active. He sustains all he made. He carries out both righteous judgment and gracious salvation. Jesus Christ, through his life, death, resurrection, and glorification, is God in action ([2 Corinthians 5:19](#)). As Jesus said, "My Father is at His work, and I too am working" ([John 5:17](#)). Christians will rest from the struggle against evil and the sufferings of this present life. However, the rest they enter into will not be boring or uneventful. God himself is dynamic, not static, and so is his rest.

As a result, all that a Christian rests from will allow them to be joyfully and continuously active in serving God, the Creator and Redeemer. In perfect harmony with all of God's works, Christians will joyfully praise and serve the triune God. Their joy will be complete, without any lack or need for improvement (see [Revelation 4:8-11](#); [5:8-14](#); [7:9-12](#)). This will be the eternal Sabbath rest that has a beginning but no end: "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest" ([Hebrews 4:11](#)).

See also Heaven; Lord's Day, The; Sabbath.

Resurrection

Act of being raised from the dead, used in the Bible in three different contexts: (1) It refers to miraculous raising of the dead back to earthly life, such as when Elijah raised a boy ([1 Kgs 17:8-24](#)), Elisha raised the Shunammite's son ([2 Kgs 4:18-37](#)), Jesus raised both Jairus's daughter ([Mk 5:35-43](#)) and Lazarus ([Jn 11:17-44](#)), Peter raised Dorcas ([Acts 9:36-42](#)), and Paul raised Eutychus ([20:9-12](#)). There is no hint that these resuscitations would prevent future death. (2) It refers most frequently to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (3) It also refers to the eschatological resurrection of mankind at the end of time for punishment or reward ([Jn 5:29](#); cf. [Rv 20:5-6](#)).

Preview

- Resurrection in the Old Testament and Judaism
- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The Resurrection Accounts
- The Significance of Christ's Resurrection
- Resurrection in General
- Resurrection and Gnosticism

Resurrection in the Old Testament and Judaism

The concept of resurrection to eternal life developed slowly in Israel. Life and death were limited to physical existence in this world. Death meant leaving this world and entering a shadowy existence known as Sheol, the place of the rephaim, or shades ([Is 14:9](#)), a place of hopelessness ([2 Sm 12:23](#); [Jb 7:9-10](#)). The tragedy of Sheol was that a person was cut off from fellowship with God. At that stage of Israel's thought, there seemed little hope for resurrection ([Pss 6:4-5](#); [88:10-12](#)).

But in the midst of hopelessness concerning a personal future, Israel developed a sense of faithfulness to God. In spite of the fact that the future was not clear, Job cried helplessly, "If a man dies, will he live again?" ([Jb 14:14](#)). As Job sought for the seemingly impossible, the difficult passage in [Job 19:25-26](#) suggests the reality of resurrection by a living redeemer (go'el).

While some would argue that [Hosea 6:1-3](#) suggests a resurrection, it is more likely that Israel considered it to be a promise of God's continuing care, even when it experienced defeat at the hands of its enemies. Whether Paul saw in the third-day statement of Hosea a reference to Jesus is difficult

to assess. This passage, along with texts like the dry bones of Ezekiel (ch [37](#)), focus primarily on giving Israel hope in spite of defeat. But they may have become part of a developing sense in Israel that after death there should be something more.

In [Daniel 12:2](#), however, there is a sure reference to the resurrection of the dead. Indeed, the text announced a twofold resurrection of Jews: some to eternal life and some to eternal contempt. But there was no general resurrection of all people suggested by this text.

In the intertestamental period, views began to solidify. The theologically conservative Sadducees would have nothing to do with the new ideas of resurrection and the afterlife. They continued to argue that there was no mention of resurrection in the writings of Moses, that life pertained to this earthly realm, and that the future hope was experienced through one's children ([Ecclus 46:12](#)). Sheol, the place of the dead, was devoid of relationship with God and was a place of hapless existence. The Sadducean opinion of the resurrection is generally well known to Christians because of the encounter between Jesus and the Sadducees when they sought to ensnare him concerning the wife of seven brothers. Jesus rejected their views of the resurrection, of God, and of the Scriptures ([Mk 12:18-27](#)).

The Pharisees, along with the Essenes and those at Qumran, believed in resurrection. A twofold pattern of resurrection was suggested by the famous eschatological passages of 2 Esdras 7 and the Apocalypse of Baruch 50-51. Both texts may be as late as the first century AD. In the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, the righteous Jews could generally expect resurrection, but not the wicked (1 Enoch 1:46, 51, 62). But elsewhere in Enoch there is a hint that some wicked may be raised for judgment (vv 22, 67, 90). The resurrection of the righteous in these texts would generally be linked to a spiritual type of body, yet in [2 Maccabees 7:14ff.](#), the view seems less developed and more physical. The ascetics at Qumran expected a resurrection in the great Day of the Lord.

While in Judaism there was a growing sense of an eschatological day of resurrection and reckoning, there was no hint anywhere of a resurrection of the Messiah. Such an idea had to await the historical reality of Jesus.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The resurrection of Christ is the central point of Christianity. So important was the resurrection for Paul that he hinged both preaching and faith upon its validity. He considered that a Christianity without the resurrection would be empty and meaningless ([1 Cor 15:12-19](#)). Indeed, the resurrection for him was the unveiling of God's power in Jesus ([Rom 1:4](#)).

The resurrection of Christ is the presupposition behind other texts of the NT as well. Rebirth to a living hope is based upon the resurrection ([1 Pt 1:3](#)). It is the foundation for witness and fellowship with God, because the living Lord has been seen and touched ([1 Jn 1:1-4](#)). It is the bedrock thesis for ministry and apostleship ([Acts 1:21-25](#)). The Gospels likewise would hardly have been good news if they did not conclude with Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection is the prototype for all the believers, who will experience resurrection when Christ returns.

The Resurrection Accounts

While the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very essence of Christianity, it has been the subject of considerable debate. Scholars have frequently noted the variations that are present in the accounts. How many and who were the women at the tomb? Was there one (Mt; Mk) or were there two (Lk; Jn) angels at the tomb? Did the women come to anoint the body (Mk; Lk) or to see the tomb (Mt)? Did the women say nothing to anyone because of fear (Mk), or did they report to the disciples (Mt)? What was the order of the appearances, and did they take place in Jerusalem (Lk; [Jn 20](#)) or in Galilee (Mt; [Jn 21](#)) or in both places? Can the appearances be harmonized? What kind of body did Jesus possess? These and many other questions have been the watershed for a great deal of contemporary scholarly debate.

Many of these questions were not first discovered by recent scholars. Tatian in the second century sought to remove the questions by composing his *Diatessaron* (harmony) in hopes that Christians would accept his work as a variant-free substitute for the Gospels. Although Christians liked the harmony, they continued to faithfully transmit the Gospels, because they believed that in them, by divine inspiration, God had provided a powerful witness concerning his Son. Many today still try the way of harmonization in an effort to deal with the minutia of historical questions, but they usually miss the uniqueness of each testimony. Others

emphasize the differences and speculate on the Gospel constructs, but the fact of the resurrection usually becomes lost in the details of these human constructs. Both are attempts at protecting the essence of faith and reason in different ways.

The Empty Tomb

Many explanations have been given concerning the empty tomb. Some said the body was stolen by the disciples (already suggested by [Mt 28:13](#)), but then one needs to explain the church on the basis of fraud. Others have said that the Jews could have stolen the body, or the disciples could have mistaken the tomb, but then the body would soon have been produced by the enemies. Others have said that Jesus could have lapsed into a swoon, reviving later in the cold tomb, but then the result would hardly have inspired the power of the Christian church. These explanations are all rationalistic attempts based upon a preconception that an actual resurrection of Jesus could not have happened.

In spite of the material differences, and while the Gospel writers have used a great deal of common material in their tomb stories, they themselves refrain from employing the tomb as a basis for resurrection faith. With the exception of [John 20:8](#), the empty tomb engendered surprise and fear. Indeed, it seemed to be an idle tale ([Lk 24:11](#)). It is not the tomb stories but the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection that gave rise to faith.

The Appearances

Unlike the tomb stories, there is little commonality of material in the appearances. Yet the appearances are the basis for faith that the unbelievable happened. An enemy like Paul was converted into a zealous apostle ([Acts 9:1-22](#); [1 Cor 15:8](#)). A fearful fisherman like Peter abandoned his nets ([Jn 21](#)). A doubter like Thomas uttered early Christianity's greatest confession, calling Jesus "my Lord and my God" ([20:24-28](#)). And two weary travelers to Emmaus found new zeal to return quickly to Jerusalem and share the news about their encounter with the risen Jesus ([Lk 24:13-35](#)).

Scholars have debated the nature of these appearances. Starting from Paul's list of appearances ([1 Cor 15:5-8](#)), some have argued that all appearances are of the same nature, and since the Damascus-road appearance to Paul recorded in Acts seems to have been of a spiritual nature ([Acts 9:1-9](#); cf. [22:6-11](#); [26:12-19](#)), then all the appearances must have been similar. Statements

that the risen Jesus was touchable ([Lk 24:41-43](#)) are rejected as later accretions to an earlier vision-type tradition. This type of argument is based on presuppositions of the impossibility of a bodily resurrection.

Another theory was based on the division between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. According to this view, the resurrection was not to be regarded as a fact of history but as an experience of the faith of the disciples. The issue, however, is that the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection proclaimed the event as a historical, palpable reality.

The Significance of Christ's Resurrection

Several people were raised from the dead, as recorded in the Bible. A widow's son was raised by Elijah, another widow's son was raised by Jesus, and Lazarus was raised by Jesus. However, their revitalization (or resuscitation) is not the same as Christ's resurrection. They arose only to die again; he arose to live forevermore. They arose still doomed by corruptibility; he arose incorruptible. They arose with no change to their constitution; he arose in a significantly different form.

When the Lord arose, three significant things happened to him. He was glorified, he was transfigured, and he became spirit. All three happened simultaneously. When he was resurrected, he was glorified (see [Lk 24:26](#)). At the same time, his body was transfigured into a glorious one ([Phil 3:21](#)). Equally so—and quite mysteriously—he became life-giving spirit ([1 Cor 15:45](#)).

Prior to the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, he declared, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth many grains" ([Jn 12:23-24](#); literal). This declaration provides the best picture of resurrection. Paul also used this illustration. He likened the resurrection glory to a grain being sown in death and then coming forth in life. Actually, Paul used this illustration when answering two questions the Corinthians posed about resurrection: (1) How are the dead raised? and (2) With what sort of body do they come? ([1 Cor 15:35](#)).

To the first question Paul responded, "Foolish man, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies" ([1 Cor 15:36](#)). This follows perfectly the Lord's saying in [John 12:24](#), and the two explain each other. The

grain must die before it can be quickened. Paul devotes more explanation to the second question; and the Spirit inspired his sublime utterance to unfold this mystery. Using the same natural example of the grain of wheat, Paul revealed that the body that comes forth in resurrection is altogether different in form from that which had been sown. Through an organic process, the single bare grain is transformed into a stalk of wheat. In essence, the grain and the stalk are one and the same—the latter simply being the living growth and expressed expansion of the former. In short, the stalk is the glory of the grain, or the glorified grain. This illustration shows that Jesus' resurrected body was altogether different from the one that was buried. In death, he had been sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness; in resurrection, he came forth in incorruption, glory, and power. The natural body that Jesus possessed as a man became a spiritual body, and at the same time Christ became "life-giving spirit."

With this new spiritual existence, Christ, as spirit and through the Holy Spirit, could indwell millions of believers simultaneously. Before the resurrection, Jesus was limited by his mortal body; after his resurrection, Jesus could be experienced illimitably by all his believers. Before his resurrection, Christ could dwell only among his believers; after his resurrection, he could dwell in his believers. Because Christ became spirit through resurrection, he can be experienced by those he indwells. The Spirit of Christ now makes Christ very real and experiential to us.

The Lord Jesus entered into a new kind of existence when he was raised from the dead because he was glorified and simultaneously became spirit—or, to coin a term, he was "pneumafied" (from the Greek word for "spirit," *pneuma*). It appears that when he arose the indwelling Spirit penetrated and saturated his body so as to constitute his entire being with spirit. Recent studies in the area of pneumatology (the study of the Spirit) point out that the risen Christ and the Spirit were united via Christ's resurrection.

William Milligan, the author of the best English classic on the subject of the resurrection, said that the risen Christ is spirit. In that classic, called *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, he wrote the following:

The condition of our Lord after His Resurrection was viewed by the sacred writers as essentially a state of *pneuma* (spirit). Not indeed that our Lord had then no body, for it is the constant lesson of Scripture that a body was possessed by him; but

that the deepest, the fundamental characteristic of His state, interpenetrating even the body, and moulding it into a complete adaptation to and harmony with His spirit, was *pneuma*. In other words, it is proposed to inquire whether the word *pneuma* in the New Testament is not used as a short description of what our Lord was after His Resurrection, in contrast with what He was during the days of His humiliation upon earth.

Milligan went on from there to show that several Scriptures affirm that the resurrected Christ is spirit. He cited [1 Corinthians 6:17](#) to show that the believer who is joined with the risen Lord must be joined to him as spirit, because he who is joined to the Lord is said to be "one spirit" with him. He used [2 Corinthians 3:17-18](#) to demonstrate that the Lord who is the Spirit is none other than the risen Christ. He also employed [1 Timothy 3:16](#), [Romans 1:3-4](#), and [Hebrews 9:14](#) to prove that the risen Lord is spirit.

When we read the last chapters of the Gospels, we realize that a great change had transpired in our Lord after the resurrection. By entering into glory, he had entered into a new sphere of existence. At one moment he was visible; in another he became invisible ([Lk 24:31](#)). He was defying the limitations of space and perhaps even time. In the early morning of the day of resurrection, he appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden ([Jn 20:11-17](#)), then to some of the other women ([Mt 28:9](#)). After this, he ascended to his Father ([Jn 20:17](#)). Then he returned to appear to Peter, who had gone home ([Jn 20:10](#); [Lk 24:34](#)). On the same day, in the late afternoon, he took a seven-mile (11.3-kilometer) walk with two disciples on their way to Emmaus ([Lk 24:13-33](#)), following which he appeared to the disciples as they were assembled in a closed room somewhere in Jerusalem ([Lk 24:33-48](#); [Jn 20:19-23](#)). It is nearly impossible to follow a sequential, chronological order of all these happenings. What Jesus did was humanly impossible. How could he make all of these appearances on the same day? All we can say is that resurrection greatly changed his sphere of existence. As spirit, and yet with a body—a glorified one—he was no longer limited by time and space.

Through resurrection, Jesus had acquired a different form (see [Mk 16:12](#)). As to his person, he was still the same; the Jesus who walked in Galilee and was crucified at Calvary is the same Jesus who arose. His person had not changed, nor will it ever; it is immutable. But his form did change; he is now

life-giving spirit. As such, Christ is able to indwell all of his believers.

Resurrection and regeneration are closely linked in the Scriptures—in the same way that crucifixion and redemption form an inseparable unity. As redemption was not possible without Christ's crucifixion, so regeneration is not possible without Christ's resurrection. The Scripture plainly says that we have been born again through the resurrection of Christ ([1 Pt 1:23](#)).

After Christ was raised from the dead, he called the disciples his brothers ([Mt 28:10](#); [Jn 20:19](#)), and he declared that his God was now their God, and his Father their Father. Through resurrection, the disciples had become the brothers of Jesus, possessing the same divine life and the same Father. As the firstborn from among the dead ([Col 1:18](#); [Rv 1:18](#)), Jesus Christ became the firstborn among many brothers ([Rom 8:29](#)).

Resurrection in General

Paul looked for the Day of the Lord when the dead in Christ would be raised and those who were still alive would join the dead in final victory ([1 Thes 4:15-18](#)). There was no doubt in his mind that this resurrection was a glorious expectation, that it involved some type of a personalized body, and that this body would not be physical but spiritual ([1 Cor 15:35-44](#)). Paul did not speak of two resurrections, as do the Johannine texts (e.g., [Jn 5:29](#)), but merely of the resurrection to life. Perhaps the Revelation of John provides the best clue in understanding NT thought on this issue because it refers to the blessing of being part of the first resurrection ([Rv 20:5-6](#)). Although in Revelation the term "resurrection" is not used in connection with judgment, the appearance at the judgment seat and the verdict of the second death in the lake of fire indicate that a resurrection to judgment will hardly be of the same essence as resurrection to life.

Resurrection and Gnosticism

Gnostic eschatology is indebted to the Greek view of immortality and involves the shedding of the bodily husk in the spiritual ascent of the devotee to the Pleroma, or Gnostic heaven. Because of the way Gnostics used words, the Gospel of Philip is a helpful window for understanding the Gnostic twisting of ideas. There it is argued that "those who say that the Lord died first and [then] arose are in error; because he first arose and [then] died. If anyone does not attain the resurrection first, will

he not die?" (Philip 56:15-19). The concept of resurrection is de-eschatologized and defined not in terms of a truly future expectation of resurrection but in terms of a realized spiritual awakening in this world. The Gospel of Philip is also useful in perceiving why in [2 Timothy 2:17-19](#) the criticism was so severe against Hymenaeus and Philetus for holding that the resurrection was past. Clearly, realized eschatology was rejected in the Pauline community and by the church when it appeared in Gnosticism. And it should continue to be rejected by the church in the present day.

See also Dead, Place of the; Eschatology; Second Coming of Christ; Spirit.

Reu

Peleg's son, the father of Serug. He was a descendant of Shem ([Genesis 11:18-21](#); [1 Chronicles 1:25](#)). He is listed as one of Jesus's ancestors in [Luke 3:35](#).

See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

Reuben (Person)

Eldest son of Jacob and Leah ([Gn 29:32](#); [46:8](#)) and forefather of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Reuben was involved in the mandrake incident ([30:14](#)) and had sexual relations with Bilhah, his father's concubine ([35:22](#)). But he emerges into full adulthood as one of the more honorable of Jacob's sons. Reuben objected to the plot to kill Joseph and planned to rescue him from the pit ([37:22-35](#)). He moralized about the brothers' imprisonment in Egypt ([42:22](#)) and guaranteed the safety of Benjamin at immense risk to his own family. Yet at Jacob's pronouncement of blessing, Reuben is declared unstable and his birthright forfeited ([49:3-4](#)). He fathered four sons ([1 Chr 5:3](#)).

See also Reuben (Place); Reuben, Tribe of.

Reuben (Place)

The territory of Reuben was an area of land east of the Jordan River. This land was given to the tribe of Reuben with the condition that they would help the other Israelite tribes capture the land of Canaan west of the Jordan River ([Numbers 32](#)). Moses agreed to the request from the Reubenites who

wanted this land because it was good for raising cattle.

The Arnon River marked the southern border of the territory of Reuben. The stream of Heshbon and the kingdom of Ammon marked the northern and eastern borders. The Jordan River and the Dead Sea marked the western border.

The people of Reuben lived in this territory until around 732 BC, when they were taken into captivity (forced to leave their homeland) by Tiglath-pileser III, who was the king of Assyria.

See also Reuben (Person); Reuben, Tribe of.

Reuben, Tribe of

The Beginning of the Tribe of Reuben

The tribe that descended from Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob ([Genesis 29:32](#)). As the firstborn, Reuben's tribe was often listed first among the tribes of Israel ([Numbers 13:4](#)). The tribe of Reuben was also named first among the two-and-a-half tribes that settled east of the Jordan River ([Joshua 1:12](#)). However, despite its position of honor, Reuben's tribe gradually lost its prominence. This was partly due to Reuben's sin ([Genesis 35:22](#)), which led his father, Jacob, to prophesy that Reuben would lose his leadership among the tribes ([49:4](#)). Although [Deuteronomy 33:6](#) contains a prayer for Reuben's survival, the tribe did decline.

Historical Role and Struggles

During Israel's time in the desert, Reuben had a role just like the other tribes, sending a leader and a spy to explore the land of Canaan ([Numbers 1:5](#); [Numbers 13:4](#)). However, only the spies from Ephraim (Joshua) and Judah (Caleb) were faithful. The other tribes failed to trust God, and Reuben was not any better or worse than the others ([Numbers 14:6](#)).

Reuben's history includes the revolt of two Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, against Moses' authority ([Numbers 16:1](#)). This may have been an attempt to restore Reuben to its leading position among the tribes. This rebellion failed, with a severe judgment from God ([Numbers 16:33](#)).

Wealth and Land Settlements

Reuben's tribe was known for its wealth in cattle ([Numbers 32:1](#)). The tribe initially sought to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan in lands taken from the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. Although Moses rebuked them for this request, the Reubenites and their allies, Gad and half of Manasseh, agreed to help fight for their fellow Israelites across the Jordan. Moses granted their request ([Numbers 32:20–22](#)). They fought well and were allowed to return home after the campaign ([Joshua 22:1–6](#)). Though separated by the Jordan River, they built a memorial altar to show they still saw themselves as part of Israel ([Joshua 22:10](#)).

Decline and Later History

Reuben's tribe did not appear again until the time of the prophetess Deborah. When Israel rallied to fight against Sisera, Reuben did not respond to the call. The tribe seemed to value material wealth more than joining in battle. For example, they chose the fertile lands of Transjordan ([Numbers 32:5](#)). Life as shepherds was likely more appealing than a life of warfare ([Judges 5:16](#)). Reuben's behavior reflected the prophecy that they would be "unstable as water" ([Genesis 49:4](#)).

Later, Reuben's lands were likely overtaken by the Moabites. The area became a battleground between Israel and other nations, like Aram ([1 Kings 22:3](#)). The tribe was among the first to be devastated by the Assyrians ([2 Kings 15:29](#)). Although Ezekiel's vision mentions a small portion of land for Reuben ([Ezekiel 48:6](#)), the tribe seems to have largely faded after the exile. Reuben is listed among the redeemed in the book of Revelation ([Revelation 7:5](#)), but no individuals from the tribe are mentioned in the New Testament.

Reubenite

Any descendant of Reuben, son of the patriarch Jacob ([Numbers 26:7](#); [Joshua 1:12](#)).

See Reuben, Tribe of.

Reuel

1. The son of Esau by his wife Basemath, and the father of four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah ([Genesis 36:4, 10–17](#)).
2. A priest of Midian who gave his daughter to Moses for a wife. He is perhaps the same person as #1 above, and identical to Jethro ([Exodus 2:18](#); compare [Exodus 3:1](#)). He is also called Raguel in [Numbers 10:29](#) in the King James Version. *See* Jethro.
3. An alternate spelling of Deuel, Eliasaph's father, in [Numbers 2:14](#). *See* Deuel.
4. An ancestor of Meshullam in Benjamin's tribe ([1 Chronicles 9:8](#)).

Reumah

Nahor's concubine ([Gn 22:24](#)). Her four sons became the ancestors of the Aramean tribes living north of Damascus.

Revelation

Revelation is when something hidden becomes known or is shown to others.

What Does "Revelation" Mean?

The word comes from the Latin word *revelatio*. It has two main meanings:

1. The act of revealing to make something known.
2. The thing that is revealed.

In theology, revelation refers to how God makes himself known to people. This can happen in two ways:

- God showing himself directly
- God's message being shared through speaking or writing

In the New Testament, the Greek word for revelation (*apokalupsis*) means "to uncover" or "to make known." Another Greek word, *phanerosis*,

means almost the same thing but emphasizes that something is shown clearly and is easy to understand.

Different Views About How We Learn About God

Rationalistic philosophy, as taught by thinkers like René Descartes and Immanuel Kant, believes that human reason is the only true source of knowledge about God. This view accepts only natural religion—beliefs that come from human reason—and denies any real supernatural revelation from God. Rationalists may sometimes consider the idea of a supernatural religion, but they do not believe that God can intervene directly in the world.

Christian theology teaches that the source of true knowledge is the word of God, specifically the Scriptures. However, modern critical theology, sometimes called "scientific theology," has questioned whether Scripture can truly be trusted as a solid base for understanding God. Many scholars now argue that natural science gives more reliable knowledge and that supernatural events are unlikely. As a result, Scripture is no longer seen as the final authority.

According to this view, the Bible does not record what actually happened or what God truly said or did. Instead, it reflects the beliefs of the early church about what they thought happened. Therefore, the Bible is seen not as a divine message from God but as a unique product of early religious ideas and experiences.

Christian theology teaches that divine revelation—God's message to humanity—is the only true source for understanding God. People know about God because God chooses to reveal himself. God acts first and is the author of revelation, while people receive it. Through this revelation, God shows things that would otherwise stay hidden ([Deuteronomy 29:29](#); [Galatians 1:12](#); [Ephesians 3:3](#)).

General Revelation

God reveals himself to humanity in two main ways. First, there is what is known as "general revelation." Through general revelation, God makes himself known in nature, in history, and in people, who are made in his image. This idea—that people have an inner sense of God's existence through the natural world—is found throughout the Bible, both in the Old Testament (like in [Psalms](#)

[10:11](#); [14:1](#), [19:1](#)) and in the New Testament (such as [Acts 14:17](#); [17:22–29](#); [Romans 1:19–21](#)).

People can recognize that God exists, that he is the Creator with great power, and that he rules with justice. For this reason, even when people deny God's existence, as atheists do, they are fighting against an inner awareness of him. When Paul spoke to the Athenians, he reminded them that it is in God—the one true God—that all people live, move, and exist ([Acts 17:28](#)). However, knowing God through nature is not the end of revelation. Complete revelation happens when people encounter God personally.

Special Revelation

Knowing God through nature alone does not reveal his loving purpose to save all people. God's heart is gracious and desires salvation for everyone. This is why God chose to reveal himself in a special way, so people could know his plans. Without this special revelation, people would not understand God's plan for salvation through Christ. In the Bible, God guided prophets and apostles, filling their hearts and minds so they could speak his message ([Jeremiah 1:4–19](#); [1 Corinthians 2:13](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:16–21](#)).

The highest point of God's revelation was when his Son, Jesus Christ, came in human form ([John 1:14–18](#); [Galatians 4:4–5](#); [Hebrews 1:1–2](#)). Jesus revealed God the Father directly and fully, showing God's loving will for all people ([John 14](#)).

God did not just guide the hearts and minds of his prophets and apostles to speak his word; he also inspired them to write down the messages, promises, and teachings he wanted preserved forever. These sacred writings, gathered together in the Bible, form a unified whole that reveals God's thoughts and plans for humanity. Through Scripture, the prophets and apostles shared not only historical events but also specific truths God wanted people to know. The main purpose of the Bible is to reveal Christ, and all of Scripture points to him ([John 5:39](#); [10:35](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [18:28](#); [1 Corinthians 15:3](#)).

See also Bible, Inspiration of the.

Revenge, Revenger

See Avenger of Blood.

Reward

The payment or compensation for good or evil actions. It often refers to the benefits or consequences resulting from one's actions. This concept involves ethical responsibility and accountability. Terms related to this idea include:

- Wages
- Hire
- Recompense
- Requit

These terms cover all rewards, including everyday interactions and God's response to human behavior. They cover both this life and the next.

To the Greek and Hebrew people, the idea of reward was linked to the idea of completing an action. Like a worker getting paid for their work, an action is believed to bring about certain results, whether a reward or a punishment. This concept is reflected in commercial language, as when Paul says, "The wages of sin is death" ([Romans 6:23](#)). This means that actions are expected to have equal consequences.

Biblical views on reward are both ethical and religious. God's covenant with Israel was a sign of his favor and promised blessings for obedience to his commands. Disobedience, however, would lead to disaster and death. [Deuteronomy 28](#) details the blessings for obedience and the curses for not doing what was right and good in the sight of the Lord (see also [Leviticus 26](#)). During the wandering in the wilderness, disobedience led to suffering and death. The history of the time of the judges and kings shows that faithfulness brought blessings, and sin brought punishment. Victory and national prosperity were linked to following God's commands ([Joshua 1:7–9](#); compare [Judges 2](#)).

Sometimes, this pattern of reward and punishment did not seem to follow. The Jewish belief was that God is merciful and forgiving. Forgiveness involves removing the punishment for sin. As it says, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins or repaid us according to our iniquities" ([Psalm 103:10](#)).

In Ecclesiastes, the writer observed that life does not always align with the principle of retribution. He noted a somewhat cynical view when the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. Job's friends thought his suffering was due to hidden sin, but Job maintained his integrity. In the end, Job was rewarded for his faithfulness.

By the time of Jesus, Judaism had evolved significantly. Roman law had replaced the old legal system. However, Judaism still valued good works and encouraged people to build up merit for God's blessing ([Tobit 4:7-10](#); [Sirach 51:30](#)). The Pharisees believed that careful law observance would earn God's favor. They thought that good deeds would be rewarded, and sins would be punished if not in this life, then in the future.

Jesus also taught about reward, especially in the Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5-7](#)). He said that God would bless those who show certain moral qualities ([Matthew 5:1-12](#)). People who act to be praised by others will receive only that praise, but those who seek to please God will be rewarded by him ([Matthew 6:1, 4, 6, 18](#)). Jesus challenged the idea of reward with the parable of the laborers ([Matthew 20:1-16](#)). In it, everyone got the same wage, no matter how long they worked. He taught that we should work for motives beyond just receiving rewards. In the parable of the good shepherd, Jesus contrasts the hireling, who works only for wages, with the shepherd, who will die for the sheep ([John 10:11-14](#)). A servant who only does his duty deserves no special reward ([Luke 17:9-10](#)).

Paul introduced a new perspective on reward, especially in relation to salvation. Salvation is no longer seen as the result of doing more good than evil. It is a gift of divine favor that cannot be earned ([Romans 4:4-5](#)). Salvation is not earned but given by a loving God. However, rewards are still given for good deeds after salvation has been given. [First Corinthians 3:8-14](#) teaches that the quality of a person's works will be assessed and rewarded, but salvation itself is not based on works. However, works matter for one's eternal destiny ([Colossians 3:24](#); [Revelation 14:13](#)).

See also Crown; Judgment.

Rezeph

A city destroyed by the Assyrians. King Sennacherib of Assyria sent an insulting letter to King Hezekiah of Judah that mentioned this city. The list of the conquered cities of Gozan and Haran and the sons of Eden in Telassar includes Rezeph. The Assyrian king reminded King Hezekiah that the local gods of these cities were not able to protect them from Assyrian conquest. The same would be true for Hezekiah. His God would not preserve Jerusalem ([2 Kings 19:12](#); [Isaiah 37:12](#)).

Rezeph was a notable Assyrian city. It was famous for its business and place of government. The Assyrian Empire took control of Rezeph more than a century before Sennacherib confronted King Hezekiah. It could be the same place as the modern Syrian city of Resafa.

Rezia

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

Rezin

1. Syrian monarch who ruled in Damascus during the earlier part of Isaiah's prophetic ministry and during the last years that the northern 10 tribes existed as a nation. Rezin was used by God to humble both Israel and Judah because they had forsaken him and rejected his covenant ([2 Chr 28:5-6](#)).

Rezin was born in the town of Bit-hadara near Damascus in the land of Syria (also called Aram). Upon his accession to the throne, the Syrian people (also called Arameans) reasserted their independence from Israel's domination. During this period, Assyria was strengthening itself and expanding its empire throughout the Near East. Along with King Menahem of Israel, Rezin was forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian monarch Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BC. The heavy burden of vassalage to the Assyrians generated anti-Assyrian sentiment among the Syrian and neighboring people. During this time, Rezin seems to have helped Pekah in his successful coup to seize the throne of Israel. Immediately upon his accession to the throne, Pekah formed an anti-Assyrian coalition with Rezin. They soon realized that successful resistance against Assyria required a larger alliance. They invited King Ahaz of Judah to join their coalition, but Ahaz adamantly refused. With the intention of placing an Aramean of Davidic lineage upon the throne of Judah in order to effect a broader Syrian-Israelite alliance, Rezin and Pekah joined in an attack on Judah. In spite of winning most battles, Rezin and Pekah were unsuccessful in their attempt to take Jerusalem and replace Ahaz ([2 Chr 28:5-15](#); [Is 7:1-9](#)). During these dark days for Judah, Isaiah brought an encouraging word to the people. He prophesied the imminent destruction of Israel (Ephraim) and Damascus by Assyria ([Is 7:1-9](#); [8:1-8](#)). So certain

was the destruction of these kingdoms that he referred to their two kings as “stubs of smoldering firebrands” about to be extinguished ([7:4](#)). Disregarding Isaiah’s prophecy, Ahaz sent a large sum of money to Tiglath-pileser III, hoping to induce him to come to Judah’s aid.

Rezin and Pekah moved their forces to the north to prepare for the impending Assyrian invasion. Tiglath-pileser attacked in 733 BC and captured much of the area of Galilee. He then turned his attention to Damascus, to which Rezin had fled. Assyrian records refer to Rezin as a “caged bird” in besieged Damascus. When Damascus fell in 732 BC, Rezin was executed and many citizens of Damascus were exiled. Samaria, the capital city of Israel, fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Damascus and the nation of Syria became an Assyrian province. Rezin thus was the last Syrian king to reign in Damascus.

2. Father of some of the temple servants who served in postexilic times ([Ezr 2:48](#); [Neh 7:50](#)).

Rezon

Son of Eliada, who set himself up as ruler of Damascus and Syria following David’s killing of Hadadezer, king of Zobah. Rezon was a God-appointed adversary who despised Israel and was a constant problem to Solomon during his reign ([1 Kgs 11:23–25](#)).

Rhegium

Rhegium was an important harbor in southern Italy. The apostle Paul stopped there on his way to Rome ([Acts 28:13](#)).

Paul’s ship came from Malta and first stopped at Syracuse, the main city of Sicily. When the wind did not come from the south, the ship may have sailed carefully into the Strait of Messina. There, the sailors found a good harbor at Rhegium.

Later, a south wind began to blow. That wind helped carry the ship from Rhegium to Puteoli. Puteoli was a major port on the Bay of Naples. Many grain ships from Alexandria arrived there.

The Strait of Messina was well known to Roman sailors. Ships had to pass through it to reach the west coast of Italy. But this strait was narrow and dangerous. It had many shallow places and other obstacles. Because of this, ships often had to wait at Rhegium until a strong south wind blew.

The name *Rhegium* (now called Reggio or Reggio di Calabria) may come from a Greek word that means “to tear.” People said Sicily looked like it had been torn away from the mainland. Rhegium was the closest port on the Italian side.

Rhesa

A descendant of Zerubbabel and an ancestor of Jesus Christ ([Luke 3:27](#)).

See Ancestry of Jesus Christ.

Rhoda

A servant girl in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, in Jerusalem. Rhoda reported to those in the house that Peter was standing outside the door. Since they were unaware of his release from prison, the others at first did not believe her report ([Acts 12:13–15](#)).

Rhodes

Port of call on Paul’s return trip to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey ([Acts 21:1](#)). The mention of Rhodes in [Genesis 10:4](#), [Ezekiel 27:15](#), and [1 Chronicles 1:7](#) is not based on the Hebrew text of the OT but on its Greek translation. The island of Rhodes, an area of more than 500 square miles (1,295 square kilometers), is situated near the southeast coast of modern Turkey.

In Paul’s time the island had long been an important establishment of Dorian Greek culture, with several cities. Rhodes, the capital, lay on the busiest ancient sea route between the ports of Italy and the province of Asia to the west, and those of Syria and Egypt to the east. It was distinguished for its natural harbor and public works. Rhodes was a prominent center for business and supplied most of the precedents for Roman law of the sea. The second century BC marked the height of its political power, which included control of most of Caria and Lycia on the mainland of Asia Minor. Roman power first deprived Rhodes of its commercial domination, and during the Roman civil wars of the first century BC, it was reduced politically to little more than a provincial town in the Roman Empire.

To celebrate a military victory in 280 BC, the city of Rhodes erected an immense bronze statue of the Greek sun god, 121 feet (36.9 meters) tall—about

the height of the Statue of Liberty. It was 12 years in the making, and soon after its completion, an earthquake broke it off at the knees (224 BC). But the fragmented ruins remained as a curiosity until Arab occupation of the island in the seventh century. This Colossus of Rhodes was included in some ancient lists of wonders of the world.

Rhodocus

A Jewish traitor who gave military information to the Syrians regarding the fortification of Beth-zur by Judas Maccabeus. When discovered, he was found guilty and imprisoned ([2 Macc 13:21](#)).

Ribai

A Benjaminite from the town of Gibeah. Ribai was the father of Ittai, who was one of the mighty men of King David ([2 Samuel 23:29](#); [1 Chronicles 11:31](#)).

Riblah

1. Town along the Orontes River located some 35 miles (56.3 kilometers) northeast of Baalbek, identifiable with modern Riblah in Syria. Riblah was well situated topographically for military operations, especially when the great powers of Egypt and Mesopotamia were crossing the northern part of the Fertile Crescent. The Egyptians are mentioned in Scripture as the first people that troubled this town. After the death of King Josiah in his battle with the Egyptian pharaoh Neco, Jehoahaz was made king. Neco did not approve of the election. So the pharaoh imprisoned Jehoahaz at Riblah and made Eliakim (Jehoiakim), Jehoahaz's brother, king of Judah ([2 Kgs 23:33](#)).

After the defeat of Neco at Carchemish in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took control of the area, making Riblah his headquarters for his South-Syria and Palestine dominions. When Zedekiah, king of Judah, opposed Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians captured him and imprisoned him at Riblah ([2 Kgs 25:6](#); [Jer 39:5-6](#); [52:9-10](#)). Consequently, many of Zedekiah's sons were killed at Riblah, and Zedekiah was bound and taken to Babylon ([2 Kgs 25:20-21](#); [Jer 52:26-27](#)).

Riblah is also called Diblah (asv) and Diblath (kjb) in [Ezekiel 6:14](#).

2. Town defining part of the eastern boundary of Israel, located east of Ain ([Nm 34:11](#)). Its exact location is unknown, though it is probably not identifiable with #1 above.

Riches

Riches are a large amount of wealth. This can include money, land, buildings, animals, or slaves ([Isaiah 5:8-10](#); [1 Samuel 25:2-3](#); [8:11-18](#)). People with great riches often had great power and influence. The Hebrew word for wealth includes the idea of strength and power.

The Bible has mixed views on wealth. Sometimes, it describes material wealth as a sign of God's blessing (for example, [Genesis 24:35](#)), but at other times, it associates being rich with wickedness (for example, [Psalm 37:7, 16](#)).

God made all things for people to enjoy ([1 Timothy 6:17](#)). People who are rich should thank God, not be proud or trust in their wealth. Everything in the world belongs to God, the Creator ([Psalm 24:1](#)). But the Bible also warns that some wealth comes from injustice and is not a blessing from God ([Habakkuk 2:9-11](#); [Amos 8:4-6](#); [Jeremiah 22:13](#)).

When wealth is gained in a right way, it can be seen as a gift from God. King David showed this when he prayed, "Both riches and honor come from You" ([1 Chronicles 29:12](#)). Even when wealth is earned through hard work, the Bible teaches that God gives us both our talents and resources. Jesus taught this truth in the parables of the 10 talents ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)) and the 10 minas ([Luke 19:11-26](#)).

The Bible does not say that having wealth is wrong. The Ten Commandments would not forbid stealing and envy if owning things was wrong. Jesus never said it was a sin to be rich.

However, Jesus warned that riches can make it hard to enter the kingdom of God: "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" ([Mark 10:23](#)). Jesus taught that wealth:

- Can destroy peace ([Matthew 6:24-34](#))
- Blind people to the needs of others ([Luke 16:19-31](#))
- Block the way to eternal life ([Mark 10:17-27](#))
- Bring God's judgment ([Luke 12:16-21](#))

Jesus told His followers not to store up personal wealth ([Matthew 6:19](#)), and he praised those who gave up their possessions ([Matthew 19:29](#)).

Jesus's warnings are not against wealth itself but against the wrong attitudes and uses of it. A desire for wealth, rather than the possession of riches, can choke spiritual growth ([Matthew 13:22](#)). Greed led to the downfall of the unforgiving servant ([Matthew 18:23-35](#)), and the rich man's selfishness, not his wealth, led to his doom ([Luke 16:19-26](#)). Paul summed it up by saying, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" ([1 Timothy 6:10](#), emphasis added).

The biggest danger is when wealth controls a person's life. The Bible warns against making material things an idol (for example, [Deuteronomy 8:17-18](#); [Luke 14:15-24](#)). Satan tempted Jesus to choose wealth and power instead of obeying God ([Matthew 4:8-9](#)). But Jesus warned against serving money as a master ([Matthew 6:24](#)). Jesus told a rich young man to sell everything ([Mark 10:17-22](#)). The wealthy man had allowed his possessions to rule over him. Jesus wanted him to realize that his riches were controlling him, so he could let go and follow God. But the man chose to keep his riches and walked away. This shows how strong the desire for wealth can be.

Jesus's teachings on wealth include not only warnings but also guidance on the right attitudes. Those who see themselves as stewards of their possessions, not owners, will find many ways to use their wealth for God's service ([Luke 12:42-44](#)). Instead of making them greedy, their riches should allow them to express love in many practical ways ([2 Corinthians 8:2](#)). Their riches should lead them to trust in God rather than being anxious ([Luke 12:29-31](#); [1 Timothy 6:17](#)).

The Bible teaches that the morality of wealth depends on one's attitude. People who make money their main goal in life have the wrong values. Even if they seem rich, they are poor in God's eyes ([Matthew 16:26](#); [Revelation 3:17](#)). In his view, the truly rich are the people who serve Christ

as King ([Matthew 13:44-46](#)). True wealth is about serving God and living a life of faith and good deeds ([1 Timothy 6:18](#); [James 2:5](#))—a wealth that nothing can get rid of: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" ([Matthew 6:21](#)).

See also Money; Poor, The; Wages; Wealth.

Riddle

A riddle is a word puzzle that asks people to find a hidden meaning. People in the ancient world enjoyed riddles both for fun and as a way to test wisdom. Unlike fables (stories that teach obvious lessons), riddles were meant to be challenging to solve.

Riddles in the Old Testament

Fables in the Bible often used stories about plants or animals to teach clear lessons. For example, Jotham told a story about plants choosing a king ([Judges 9:7-15](#)). The meaning of his story was easy to understand. Sometimes, it can be hard to tell if something is a riddle or a fable. For instance, Ezekiel wrote what some people call a riddle about plants ([Ezekiel 17](#)), but others think it is more like a fable because its meaning is clearer than most riddles.

Samson's riddle at his wedding feast is the most famous riddle in the Bible ([Judges 14](#)). People often shared riddles at celebrations like this (verses [12-13](#)). Samson's riddle had two lines (called a couplet): "From the one who eats came something to eat; out of the strong came something sweet" (verse [14](#)). The answer came from an earlier event when Samson had killed a lion and later found honey in its body. The thirty young men at the feast threatened Samson's future wife to get her to find out the answer from him. They answered his riddle by asking: "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" (verse [18](#)).

King Solomon's wisdom was demonstrated by his ability to answer the queen of Sheba's "difficult questions" ([1 Kings 10:1-4](#)). A Jewish text called Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus) praises Solomon, saying: "Your soul covered the earth, and you filled it with parables and riddles" ([Sirach 47:15](#)).

A Jewish historian named Josephus wrote about a contest between Solomon and King Hiram where they exchanged riddles. Solomon won most of the time, but Hiram finally won one round by getting

help from others (*Antiquities* 8.5.5). The wise people of Israel often claimed they could solve riddles (for example, [Psalms 49:4](#); [Proverbs 1:6](#)). The book of Daniel mentions riddles several times. It describes a future ruler as "skilled in intrigue" (literally, "one who understands riddles") who would rise to power ([Daniel 8:23–24](#)). Daniel could also "interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve difficult problems" ([Daniel 5:12](#)).

Riddles in the New Testament

The New Testament has fewer riddles. The various "hard sayings" of Jesus (for example, [John 6:60](#)) are difficult to accept and just as hard to understand. Perhaps the only true riddle is the number of the beast, 666 ([Revelation 13:18](#)). Many scholars think this number might refer to the Roman Emperor Nero, as this kind of number code was common in ancient writing.

Rie

The King James Version spelling of spelt in [Exodus 9:32](#). A common form of wheat in Bible times.

See Food and Food Preparation; Plants (Spelt).

Right Hand

In the Bible, the phrase "right hand" has two main meanings. First, it means the right side of a person's body. Second, it is often used as a symbol with special meaning.

The word "right" in the Bible often means "correct" or "good." When something is "right," it means it is just and follows God's ways ([Genesis 18:25](#)). In many places in the Bible, God's right hand is used as a symbol of his power. For example:

- It represents how God helps his people win battles ([Psalms 17:7](#); [98:1](#))
- It shows how God punishes those who do evil things ([Hebrews 2:16](#))
- It shows how God punishes those who do evil things ([Psalms 139:10](#)).

While humans cannot save themselves by their own power, God promises to make people strong when he decides to help them ([Job 40:14](#); [Isaiah 41:13](#)).

To be at the right hand of God is to be in a place of great blessings ([Psalms 16:11](#)). At the right hand of God, the Lord Jesus Christ now reigns in glory and intercedes for those he has redeemed ([Romans 8:34](#)).

To offer the right hand of fellowship is to extend acceptance and grace ([Galatians 2:9](#)). In Bible times, people would shake right hands to show they were making a serious promise or agreement. This practice of using the right hand to make promises was also used in biblical times and continues today ([2 Kings 10:15](#)).

The left hand is sometimes linked to blessings ([Proverbs 3:16](#)). However, it may also be linked to when someone betrays trust or does something wrong ([Ecclesiastes 10:2](#)).

See also Hand.

Righteousness

Having a right relationship, mainly with God and also with others.

Meeting just expectations in any relationship, such as between spouses, parents and children, citizens, workers and employers, merchants and customers, rulers and citizens, and God and people. This is called righteousness. When someone fulfills these expectations, their actions and words are considered righteous. The opposite of righteous is "evil," "wicked," or "wrong" (compare [Psalm 1:6](#); [Zephaniah 3:5](#)).

Righteousness in the Old Testament

In Israel, righteousness influenced all aspects of life, both religious and secular (non-religious). Israel was called to be a special nation to show God's rule, nature, and expectations to the world. They needed God's revelation to understand his will and maintain a relationship with him. A person's relationship with God was directly connected to their relationship with others.

God's Righteousness and Human Righteousness

God is righteous ([2 Chronicles 12:6](#); [Psalms 7:9](#); [103:17](#); [Zephaniah 3:5](#); [Zechariah 8:8](#)). His righteousness shows in his actions for his people and his relationship with them. All of God's acts are righteous (compare [Deuteronomy 32:4](#); [Judges 5:11](#); [Psalm 103:6](#)). God's people rejoiced in his

righteous acts ([Psalm 89:16](#)). Because God is righteous, he expects righteousness from others, reflecting his nature. Righteousness means following God's rule and will.

Noah is called "righteous" because he walked with God and showed integrity compared to others ([Genesis 6:9](#)). After humanity's fall—when people disobeyed God and brought sin into the world, leading to the flood and the scattering at Babel—God renewed His relationship with people through Abraham and his descendants. Abraham was righteous because he lived by God's revealed will ([Genesis 15:6](#); compare [17:1](#); [18:19](#); [26:5](#)).

The Law and Righteousness

God revealed to Israel how they were to relate to him and each other. The law helped the people live according to God's will and be righteous. A person devoted to God's service was called righteous (compare [Malachi 3:18](#)). Therefore, righteousness means living rightly before God and others, shown through what we do and say.

The prophets spoke about a future time of righteousness. This would be when God's special chosen king (the Messiah) would rule. It would also be when God's kingdom would come to earth. The prophet Isaiah wrote about this ([Isaiah 11:1-9](#)). He said this rule would spread to all nations (verses [10-16](#)). Isaiah also said it would last forever ([Isaiah 9:7](#)). Isaiah described the glorious entrance of God's kingdom, where his enemies are subdued, his people are gathered, and they live in peace.

Acts of restoration, from Israel's return from exile to the final coming of the kingdom, show God's righteous acts. He forgives, restores, remains faithful, loves, elects, and sends his Spirit to renew his people. He gives them the benefits of the renewed covenant relationship (a special agreement between God and his people). Both Jews and gentiles receive God's righteous acts ([Isaiah 45:8, 23](#); [46:13](#), [48:18](#); [51:5, 8, 16](#); [56:1](#); [59:17](#); [60:17](#); [61:10-11](#)).

Righteousness in the New Testament

God was concerned about his people's salvation and his everlasting kingdom. So, God revealed his righteousness by sending his Son. The coming of Christ marks the renewal of God's relationship with people, the covenant, and his kingdom on earth. The older covenant, mediated by Moses, was renewed by the Son of God, who came "to fulfill all righteousness" ([Matthew 3:15](#)). Jesus's message

aligns with the Old Testament in identifying God's kingdom with his righteousness ([Matthew 6:33](#); [13:43](#)). Jesus taught that God expects everyone to live in harmony with his will ([Matthew 7:21](#)). Jesus is God's final revelation of what he requires for people to enter the kingdom and live righteously.

Justification and Righteousness

Individuals cannot attain this righteousness by their own efforts; it is a gift from God ([Romans 3:21-5:21](#)). There is no righteousness apart from Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus reveals that "The righteous will live by faith" ([Romans 1:17](#); compare [Hebrews 2:4](#)). Therefore, the Father requires acceptance of his Son as his means of justification ([Romans 3:25-26](#); [5:9](#)). Justification is when God declares people righteous when they trust in his Son ([Romans 8:33-34](#); [2 Corinthians 3:18](#); [11:15](#)). God pardons sins, reconciles with sinners, and grants them peace ([Romans 5:1, 9-11](#); [Ephesians 2:14-17](#)). Those declared righteous enjoy a new relationship as "sons of God" by adoption. The Father relates righteously to his children and expects them to relate righteously to him.

Future Fulfillment of Righteousness

When Jesus returns, we will see true righteousness in full. At that time, all those who God has made right with himself will also be glorified ([Romans 8:30](#)). God's plan for saving people is moving toward a final goal. This goal is when God's kingdom will fully appear. At that time, God will renew all creation in "righteousness"—that is, all creation will be right with God ([2 Peter 3:13](#)).

See also God, Being and Attributes of; Justification, Justified; Law, Biblical Concept of.

Rimmon (Person)

1. A Benjaminite from the town of Beeroth. His two sons, Baanah and Recab, killed Ishbosheth ([2 Samuel 4:2, 5, 9](#)). Ishbosheth was the son of King Saul and became king of Israel after his father died.

2. A god worshiped by the Syrians of Damascus. Naaman was captain of the Syrian army. He and his king often visited the temple of Rimmon ([2 Kings 5:18](#)).
See Syria, Syrians.

Rimmon (Place)

1. Alternate name for En-rimmon, a town in southern Judah, in [Joshua 15:32](#) and [1 Chronicles 4:32](#). *See En-rimmon.*
2. Town in the territory allotted to Zebulun's tribe for an inheritance ([Jos 19:13](#)); alternately called Dimnah in [Joshua 21:35](#).
3. Large cave about 12 miles (19.3 kilometers) north of Jerusalem and 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) south of biblical Ephraim (modern Taiyiba), also called the Rock of Rimmon. Six hundred refugees from the city of Gibeah found shelter in the cave for four months ([Jgs 20:45-47](#); [21:13](#)).

Rimmon-perez

A temporary camping place of the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. It was between Rithmah and Libnah ([Numbers 33:19-20](#)).

See Wilderness Wanderings.

Rimmon, Rock of

Large cave north of Jerusalem ([Jgs 20:45-47](#); [21:13](#)). *See Rimmon (Place) #3.*

Rimmono

A town in the territory of Zebulun ([1 Chr 6:77](#)).

Rinnah

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

Riphath

Gomer's son and the brother of Ashkenaz and Togarmah, non-Semitic descendants of Noah through Japheth's line ([Gn 10:3](#)). [First Chronicles 1:6](#), a parallel passage, reads Diphath instead of Riphath, undoubtedly a latter copyist's misspelling that was never corrected.

Rissah

A place where the Israelites stopped during their journey through the wilderness. It was located between Libnah and Kehelathah ([Numbers 33:21-22](#)).

See Wilderness Wanderings.

Rithmah

A place where the Israelites stopped during their journey through the wilderness. It was located between Hazeroth and Rimmon-perez ([Numbers 33:18-19](#)).

See Wilderness Wanderings.

River of Egypt

1. Alternate name for the border of Egypt (possibly the Nile River) in [Genesis 15:18](#).

2. Alternate name for the brook of Egypt. *See Brook of Egypt.*

River of the Wilderness

KJV reading for an unidentifiable brook in the Arabah in [Amos 6:14](#); called brook of the Arabah in the rsv (nlt "valley of the Arabah"). *See Brook of the Arabah.*

Rizia

Capable leader and mighty warrior, Ulla's son from Asher's tribe ([1 Chr 7:39](#)).

Rizpah

Rizpah was the daughter of Aiah. She was a concubine (secondary wife) of King Saul. She gave birth to two sons named Armoni and Mephibosheth.

After Saul died, there was a conflict between two leaders: Ishbosheth and Abner. Ishbosheth accused Abner of having sexual relations with Rizpah. . In that time, this could be seen as trying to take the king's place. Abner became angry and promised to help David become king instead ([2 Samuel 3:7-10](#)).

Later, during David's reign, there was a famine. God said it happened because Saul had killed many Gibeonites. To make peace, David gave seven of Saul's descendants to the Gibeonites. Rizpah's two sons were among them. The Gibeonites killed them.

Rizpah stayed with the bodies of her sons. She protected them from birds and wild animals until King David had them buried properly ([2 Samuel 21:8-11](#)).

Robber, Robbery

See Criminal Law and Punishment.

Roboam

The King James Version spelling of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, in [Matthew 1:7](#).

See Rehoboam.

Rock Badger

See Animals (Badger).

Rodanim

Fourth son of Javan and a descendant of Noah through Japheth's line ([1 Chr 1:7](#)). An alternate spelling in [Genesis 10:4](#) reads Dodanim, possibly a copyist's error. Both words probably refer to the Greek peoples of Rhodes and its neighboring islands in the Aegean Sea.

Roe, Roebuck

See Animals (Deer; Gazelle).

Rogelim

A town in the highlands east of the Jordan River. Rogelim was the home of Barzillai the Gileadite. Barzillai served King David at Mahanaim when David was seeking safety from his son Absalom who had rebelled against him ([2 Samuel 17:27; 19:31](#)).

Rohgah

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

Roll

Leather or papyrus scroll. See Writing.

Romamti-Ezer

Heman's son and a musician appointed by King David to serve in the sanctuary ([1 Chr 25:4, 31](#)).

Rome, City of

City in Italy founded, according to tradition, in 753 BC on seven hills about 15 miles (24.1 kilometers) from the mouth of the Tiber River. It was of no biblical interest until NT times. There are nine explicit references to the city in the NT ([Acts 2:10; 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 28:14, 16; Rom 1:7, 15; 2 Tm 1:17](#)), but Paul's sojourn there and his letter to the Roman Christians, written probably from Corinth around AD 57 and 58, make the imperial city of considerable interest to Bible readers.

History

In the second millennium BC, Indo-European migrants moved into Europe and settled in the Italian peninsula. One group settled around the mouth of the Tiber River. A vigorous and more cultured group, the Etruscans from Asia Minor, occupied central Italy. At the time of Rome's emergence in the eighth century BC, the population of the Italian peninsula was mixed. The Latin-

speaking enclave, which settled toward the mouth of the Tiber, were agriculturalists. The scattered groups formed leagues and communities to defend themselves against raiders. They built stockades on the hills to protect families and flocks while fighting off the raiders. From such beginnings Rome emerged as a dominant center with its focal point in the area of the seven hills (the Palatine, the Capitoline, the Aventine, the Caelian, the Esquiline, the Viminal, and the Quirinal). Traditionally these hills were considered to be seven in number; in fact, there are more than seven, although some are simply flat-topped spurs. The Tiber River winds in a large S-curve between the hills. At one point it divided to form an island where it was shallow enough to ford. The town that grew up there was linked by roads, north to the Etruscans, south to the Greek trading cities, west to the coast, and inland to the tribal areas on the highlands. Knowledge of early Rome is based largely on archaeological evidence from the remains of the simple forts and numerous burial sites in the area.

Rome developed politically in a remarkable fashion over the next 1,000 years. The loose association of the original chieftains, who comprised the earliest “senate,” gave place to domination by Etruscan kings who seem to have trained the people in discipline and obedience. They constructed numerous works, draining the forum area and making it a social, commercial, industrial, and political center. They built a temple for Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva on the Capitoline Hill as a common shrine for all the people. When the kings became autocratic, the Latin population rebelled and expelled the kings.

The republic was established in 510 BC. This establishment marked the beginning of Rome’s remarkable expansion to the dimensions of a world empire. The population, which was now spread out over the hills and valleys, despite their tribal differences, united and solved political problems without bloodshed. Strictly speaking, the term “republican” should not be understood in any modern sense as indicating a kind of democracy. Rather, the ancient families (patricians) dominated the senate and constituted an oligarchy. This arrangement was useful for Rome at that time. The small city-state soon broke out of its confined area, overcame the Etruscans, and dominated the Greek cities to the south. The Romans then looked farther afield. In 273 BC they made a treaty with the Ptolemies of Egypt. Before long, they expanded into North Africa, overcame the Carthaginians, pressed on into Spain, and developed ambitions to occupy

the Middle East as well. Rome’s many conquests brought enormous wealth.

With geographical expansion came social changes in Italy. During the second century BC, rich landowners bought out the small independent farmers, who subsequently drifted into Rome, landless and unemployed. Huge, overcrowded tenement houses appeared, which constituted creeping slums. Alongside this squalor there was evidence of vast wealth from Rome’s conquests in distant lands. In the capital, many fine buildings appeared. Pompey, who subdued and organized the East, did much to adorn the great capital.

The next stage in Rome’s political development came when the senate, the governing body of the republic, proved unable to control its more radical and violent members. As their political ambitions increased, aspiring leaders sought to gain popular support by granting privileges to the people without the concurrence of the senate. Civil strife broke out and plagued the last century of the republic. Military victories beyond Rome gave power to the generals. In the civil wars that followed, constitutional questions were decided by the power of the sword. Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, Julius Caesar, Antony, and Octavian were the real political forces in the land.

By 27 BC, Octavian emerged supreme and was given the title Augustus. Theoretically, a dual government existed between the senate and Augustus (the emperor), but a weak senate allowed the emperor to become the virtual ruler. As a result, Roman peace (*pax Romana*) reigned at home and abroad until well into the second century AD. The emperors of the first century AD cover the period of the life of Jesus and of the emerging church, and several are mentioned in the NT: Augustus ([Lk 2:1](#)), Tiberius ([Lk 3:1](#)), Claudius ([Acts 11:28](#); [18:2](#)), and Nero, who is referred to without being explicitly named ([Acts 25:10–12](#); [27:24](#); [2 Tm 4:16–17](#)).

The city of Rome was the capital of the empire and the home of the emperor, senators, administrators, military personnel, and priests. Augustus, the first of the emperors whose leadership and diplomatic endeavors gave peace to Rome after two civil wars and a century of strife, gave attention to the restoration and adornment of the city. He boasted that he found Rome built of brick and left it built of marble. His efforts at restoring Rome’s ancient religions led to the building of many temples. On the Palatine hill, Augustus united several houses already there into a palace for his own residence. A new and sumptuous temple of Apollo, surrounded

by colonnades in which the emperor housed a large library, was erected near the palace. The palace itself overlooked an imposing group of new marble buildings in the valley below: a basilica business hall, a senate house, a temple of “the divine Julius,” a marble speaker’s platform, two impressive new forums, the forum of Caesar, and the forum of Augustus. Later emperors added to this splendor. Beyond the central forum area, the palaces of Tiberius and Caligula, various baths, arches, and theaters, the Circus Maximus, and the Circus Nero were built. The whole was enclosed by a wall built outside the old rampart of Servius. Several aqueducts brought water into the city, and significant roads from north, south, east, and west converged on the central city area.

Rome’s Military Presence in Palestine

With the military intervention of Pompey in the internal affairs of Judea in 63 BC, Rome established its presence in Palestine. The census ordered by Augustus Caesar, affecting the eastern provinces as well as the rest of the Roman world ([Lk 2:1-2](#)), was a vivid reminder. Roman military presence is amply reflected on the pages of the Gospels and Acts (e.g., [Mk 15:16](#); [Lk 3:14](#); [7:1-8](#); [Acts 5:37](#)).

In the NT period, service in the legions was open to all Roman citizens. A professional volunteer army had replaced a conscripted militia. The permanent standing army was made up of legions recruited from the ranks of citizens. The legions were commanded by experienced officers of the rank of consul. Auxiliary forces were raised outside Italy, the inducement for enlistment being Roman citizenship for a soldier and his descendants after 25 years of service.

In the provinces supreme military command lay with the provincial governor or prefect. In Judea at the time of Jesus’ public ministry, Pontius Pilate was designated “prefect of Judea” in a Latin inscription found in Caesarea in 1961. At the official center for administration of Judea, Caesarea Maritima, one or more legions at the disposal of the governor would be garrisoned. On special occasions, particularly at the great Jewish festivals, when riots and disorders could be anticipated, the provincial governor would take up residence in Jerusalem some 60 miles (96.5 kilometers) to the south, accompanied by a substantial contingent of troops (cf. [Lk 13:1](#)).

Augustus established a standing army large enough to defend and pacify the empire. In 15 BC there were 28 legions, each composed of some 5,000 foot

soldiers plus a mounted bodyguard of 128 men. After three legions were destroyed in uprisings by fierce Germanic tribes in AD 9, the number remained at 25 for some time. That suggests a standing army of about 125,000 legionaries in the first century.

Augustus was also responsible for establishing a permanent auxiliary army, almost the same size as the legionary army. The auxiliary forces, recruited from provincials who had not yet received Roman citizenship, included both cavalry and infantry. The cavalry was organized in squadrons, the infantry in cohorts of 1,000 under command of a military tribune ([Acts 21:31-33](#)). When the apostle Paul was in Jerusalem, the tribune was Claudius Lysias, a man of Greek birth whose purchased Roman citizenship made possible his elevation to commander of an auxiliary cohort ([22:28](#); [23:26](#)). To send Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea, Claudius could delegate a military escort of 200 soldiers commanded by two centurions, plus 70 mounted guards ([23:23](#)), without dangerously weakening the strength of the fortress garrison.

A cohort was made up of either ten or five “centuries,” units consisting of 100 men under the command of a centurion whose duties resembled those of a modern army captain. Cornelius ([Acts 10:1](#)) was a Roman centurion assigned to one of the auxiliary cohorts in Judea. There is inscriptional evidence for the presence of his unit, “the Second Italian Cohort of Roman Citizens,” in Syria about AD 69. Paul was sent to Rome in the custody of another centurion, Julius, who belonged to the Augustan or imperial cohort ([27:1](#)). The term Augustan was a title of honor sometimes bestowed on auxiliary troops. Julius was evidently a legionary centurion assigned to the corps of officer-couriers who maintained a communication service between the emperor and his provincial armies. He had a detachment of soldiers under his command on the voyage to Rome (v [3](#)) and on arrival handed his prisoners over to the commander of the courier corps ([28:16](#)). Probably all of the Roman centurions mentioned in the Gospels or Acts ([Mt 8:5](#); [Mk 15:39](#); [Lk 7:2](#)) were officers assigned to an auxiliary cohort.

Christians in Rome

It was to this magnificent city that Paul came under escort in March AD 59. He found that the Christian church had already been established there. Indeed, he had already communicated with the Christians in his letter to the Romans early in 57. There was a

considerable Jewish colony in Rome in the first century AD, descended from the large number of Jewish slaves brought to the city by Pompey after the capture of Jerusalem in 63 BC. The emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome in AD 49, possibly when Jesus was proclaimed as Messiah in the synagogue. Who the preachers were is not known, but they were probably Christian travelers and traders. Paul's Letter to the Romans was his exposition to the Gentile churches that had come into existence independently of him. His first known contact with the people of Rome was when he met Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth ([Acts 18:2](#)). This couple was expelled from Rome in the time of Claudius. Later, Paul hoped to visit Rome ([Acts 19:21](#)) on his way to Spain ([Rom 15:24](#)). In his salutation he mentioned a considerable circle of Christians in Rome (ch [16](#)). The references to households in several places (vv [5](#), [10](#), [11](#), [14](#), [15](#)) suggest that these were house churches of the Roman Christian church. During his captivity, Paul was a prisoner of Roman authorities, but he was able to meet the local leaders of the Jews, explain his experiences to them, and expound the gospel to them in person ([Acts 28:16-31](#)).

In the book of Revelation, Rome is given a sinister significance. By the end of the first century AD, Rome had already drunk the "blood of the martyrs of Jesus" ([Rv 17:6](#)), a reference to early martyrs.

See also Caesars, The; Romans, Letter to the.

Root of Jesse

See Jesse, Root of.

Rose

See Plants (Oleander; Tulip).

Rosetta Stone

The Rosetta Stone became famous because it helped scholars understand ancient Egyptian writing. The name "Rosetta" comes from Rashid, a town in Egypt where the stone was found. This town is near where one branch of the Nile River flows into the sea.

The stone is made of black basalt rock. It measures about 3 feet 9 inches (1.1 meters) long, 2 feet 4.5 inches (0.7 meters) wide, and 11 inches (27.9

centimeters) thick. When it was found, it was damaged. The top corners were missing. Experts think the original stone was at least 12 inches (30.5 centimeters) longer than it is now.

The stone was discovered in 1799 when Napoleon's army invaded Egypt. There are two stories about how it was found. One story says soldiers found it lying on the ground. The other story says it was part of a wall that was being torn down to build a fort (later called Fort Julian). A French officer named Bouchard, who was an engineer, found the stone. He saw that it had writing in three different scripts and thought it might be very important for studying ancient history.

The bottom part of the stone had Greek writing. Bouchard and his colleagues thought this might be a translation of the mysterious writing at the top. They showed the stone to Napoleon, who ordered copies to be sent to Europe for scholars to study. Two Frenchmen, Jean-Joseph Marcel and Remi Raige, soon realized that the middle script, between the picture writing (hieroglyphs) and Greek text, was a simpler form of Egyptian writing. Scholars call this "demotic" writing. It was a common, everyday form of writing that used shortcuts, unlike the more complex "hieratic" writing used by priests.

The damaged stone now has 14 lines of hieroglyphic text, 32 lines of demotic text, and 54 lines in Greek. The last 26 lines of Greek are damaged at the ends. Luckily, scholars were able to fill in much of the missing hieroglyphic text using similar inscriptions from other places.

A man named Rev. Stephen Weston was the first to translate the Greek text into English. A French scholar called "citizen Du Theil" translated it into French. Two other scholars, Sylvester de Sacy and a Swedish diplomat named Akerblad, studied the demotic script. Akerblad was the first to identify all the proper names in the demotic text that matched the Greek text. He also identified words like "temples," "Greeks," and the word for "he."

An important clue came from Thomas Young, who is also known for his work on light. He discovered that ancient Egyptian writing used signs that represented sounds. The first breakthrough was identifying the name "Cleopatra" written in hieroglyphs. This helped scholars identify the name "Ptolemy," except for the last few signs in the circle around the name (called a cartouche). They guessed that these last hieroglyphs matched the

royal titles in the Greek text. By combining letters, scholars were able to translate the title "ever-living, beloved of Ptah."

Thomas Young's discovery that hieroglyphs represented sounds, along with the work of Jean-François Champollion, helped solve the mystery of ancient Egyptian writing. By 1822, Young had made a list of hieroglyphic characters. Champollion expanded and corrected this list. Champollion even figured out the grammar of the language. Their work laid the foundation for later experts on ancient Egypt.

We now know that the stone has a decree written on it. This decree was made by Egyptian priests who met in Memphis. It celebrated the anniversary of when Ptolemy V, also called Epiphanes, became king of all Egypt. The date is probably the spring of 196 BC. Scholars think the original text was in Greek, and the demotic and hieroglyphic versions were translations.

The decree starts by praising the king, listing his titles and saying how much he loved his people and country. Then, it lists the good things the king did for temples, priests, and the public. These include forgiving criminals and lowering taxes. To thank the king for his kindness, the priestly council decided to "increase the ceremonial observances of honor which are paid to Ptolemy, the ever-living, in the temples."

The priests decided to do these things:

1. Make statues of Ptolemy as the savior of Egypt.
2. Put figures of Ptolemy in shrines next to the gods.
3. Place 10 double crowns of gold on his shrine.
4. Make the king's birthday and coronation day public holidays.
5. Make the first five days of the month Thoth festive days when all people wear garlands.
6. Add to the priests' title "Priests of the beneficent god Ptolemy Epiphanus, who appears on earth."
7. Allow citizens to borrow temple figures of Ptolemy for their houses and parades.

8. Make copies of the decree on slabs of basalt to be set up in temples "side by side with the statue of Ptolemy, the ever-living god."

The stone was taken to England because of a treaty signed in 1801. It is now on display in the British Museum in London.

Rosh

Seventh of Benjamin's ten sons ([Gn 46:21](#)).

Ruby

See Stones, Precious.

Rue

Rue is an aromatic plant from Eurasia with evergreen leaves that produce a strong-smelling oil once used in medicine.

There is little question about the correctness of the translation of "rue" in [Luke 11:42](#), but there is some doubt about the exact species. Most scholars think that it was the common rue (*Rue graveolens*), a perennial shrubby plant with straight stems 0.6 to 0.9 meter (2 to 3 feet) tall and deeply cut leaves. A very strong odor comes from the leaves. This species is native to the Mediterranean region and grows wild in the Holy Land, especially on Mount Tabor.

Ancient people highly valued rue as a medicine. They believed it could prevent dizziness, inability to speak, epilepsy (seizures), eye inflammations, mental illness, and the "evil eye" (a belief that someone could cause harm by looking at another person). Rue was also used for adding flavor to food.

Rufus

1. One of the sons of Simon of Cyrene ([Mark 15:21](#)).

2. A Christian greeted by Paul in the letter to the Romans. Paul added a special endearing comment about his mother ([Rom 16:13](#)). This Roman Rufus may be the same one referenced as the son of Simone of Cyrene in [Mark 15:21](#).

Ruhamah

One of two symbolic names showing God's altered perspective toward Israel from one of hostility to one of mercy. God's attitude of displeasure was symbolized by the name Lo-ruhamah (meaning "Not pitied"), which Hosea named his daughter. God had withdrawn his compassion from Israel because of their great sin ([Hos 1:6, 8](#)). His new attitude of mercy was portrayed by the name Ruhamah (meaning "She has obtained pity"), revealing God's revived spirit of compassion that was to be poured out on Israel ([2:1, 23](#)).

Ruler

The term has many meanings. It translates 13 Hebrew and 3 Greek words.

In a political sense, a ruler was one who controlled a state ([2 Chronicles 7:18](#); [Psalm 105:20](#); [Proverbs 23:1](#); [28:15](#); [Ecclesiastes 10:4](#); [Isaiah 14:5](#); [16:1](#); [49:7](#); [Jeremiah 33:26](#); [51:46](#); [Micah 5:2](#)), or a state that controlled a people ([Judges 15:11](#)). The usual term for ruler was "king." But, many in Israel preferred the Hebrew term translated as "leader," meaning "one placed in front." This was due to the king's unpleasant associations. For example, Samuel rejected the former term but used the latter ([1 Samuel 9:16](#); [10:1](#); [13:14](#); [25:30](#); [2 Samuel 5:2](#); [6:21](#); [7:8](#)). Other Hebrew words are translated "ruler" in the King James Version. However, most modern translations prefer alternatives to this more generic term.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for "ruler" refers to administrative or religious leaders (see [Matthew 9:18, 23](#); [Luke 8:41](#); [18:18](#); [23:35](#); [24:20](#); [John 3:1](#); [7:26, 48](#); [12:31](#); [Acts 3:17](#); [4:5, 26](#); [7:27, 35](#); [13:27](#); [14:5](#); [16:19](#); [23:5](#); [Romans 13:3](#)). [Ephesians 6:12](#) mentions the rulers of the darkness of this world.

See also King.

Ruler of the Synagogue

The main leader of a Jewish place of worship in New Testament times. Each synagogue usually had only one such leader.

The ruler's functions were to take care of the physical arrangements for the services of worship and maintain the building. The ruler also determined who would be called to read from the Law and the Prophets or to conduct the prayers. The office was sometimes held for a specified period, sometimes for life.

The New Testament refers to this official on four different occasions. Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue at Capernaum. When his daughter was ill, he went to Jesus for help, and Jesus raised her from the dead ([Matthew 9:18-26](#); [Mark 5:21-43](#); [Luke 8:41-56](#)).

[Luke 13:14](#) records the story of another ruler of a synagogue who treated Jesus with great hostility. The ruler objected to Jesus when he healed someone on the Sabbath after teaching at the synagogue.

On his missionary journeys, Paul often began his ministry in each place he visited by going to the synagogue. At Pisidian Antioch ([Acts 13:15](#)), the rulers of the synagogue welcomed and encouraged him to preach the gospel and to return again the following week. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, was converted ([18:8](#)). Crispus's successor Sosthenes was beaten by the mob after the Jews had made a charge against Paul before Gallio, the governor of Achaia.

See also Synagogue.

Rumah

Home of Pedaiah, the father of Zebidah, Jehoiakim's mother ([2 Kgs 23:36](#)). Some identify it with Arumah, near Shechem (cf. [Jgs 9:41](#)) or with Khirbet el-Rumah in Galilee.

Rush

KJV form of reed in [Job 8:11](#) and [Isaiah 9:14](#). *See* Plants.

Ruth (Person)

A Moabitess and the widow of Mahlon, the son of Naomi and Elimelech, who were Ephrathites from Bethlehem. Naomi and Elimelech moved to Moab due to a famine in Judah. After Elimelech and Naomi's two sons died, Naomi returned to Bethlehem with her daughter-in-law Ruth during the barley harvest ([Ruth 1:4–22](#)). While gleaning in the barley fields of Boaz, Ruth found favor in his eyes ([Ruth 2:2–22](#)). She later married Boaz. He, as the nearest family member, purchased Naomi's estate to keep it in the family. ([Ruth 4:5–13](#)). Ruth is mentioned in Matthew's family list of Christ as the mother of Obed and the great-grandmother of David ([Matthew 1:5](#)).

See also Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Ruth, Book of.

Ruth, Book of

Preview

- Who Wrote the Book of Ruth? When Was It Written?
- Why Was the Book of Ruth Written?
- What Is the Book of Ruth About?
- What Is the Message of the Book of Ruth?

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

The author of the book is unknown. The question of who wrote it relates to when it was written. A few things in the text can help us answer this question.

[Ruth 4:18–22](#) tells us that Ruth was King David's great-grandmother. This supports the idea that the book was likely written after David began his reign.

Since the book of Ruth does not approve of foreign marriages, it likely was not written when Solomon started his foreign marriage policy.

Also, David's friendship with Moab might have inspired someone in his kingdom to write the book, providing reasons for David's actions (see [1 Samuel 22:3–5](#)). Therefore, the author might have been close to David, possibly Samuel, Nathan, or Abiathar.

The narrative begins with the phrase: "In the days when the judges ruled." The period of the judges likely lasted about 300 years. It started with

Othniel and ended with Samson, although Samuel also served as a judge.

If the family record in [Ruth 4:18–22](#) is complete, these events happened during the life of David's great-grandfather and mark the birth of his grandfather. Assuming each generation spans 35 years, these events likely occurred around the start of the 11th century BC, or about 100 years before David's birth.

Why Was the Book of Ruth Written?

The book's purpose depends on when it was written. If the book was written soon after David's death, it is likely to prove that his family (the Davidic line) was the chosen royal family. The book may also justify including the devout Moabite woman in the nation of Israel.

What Is the Book of Ruth About?

Introduction ([1:1–5](#))

Due to famine, Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, cross the Jordan River to Moab, where there is enough food. The two sons marry Moabite women but then die, and their father also dies. Naomi becomes a widow with two foreign daughters-in-law.

Return to Bethlehem ([1:6–22](#))

Naomi hears that the famine in Bethlehem has ended and prepares to return. Her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, join her for part of the journey. Naomi, concerned about the challenges they might face as foreigners in Judah, urges them to stay in their homeland. Both young widows initially refuse, but Naomi explains the situation. She is not pregnant, so there is no immediate chance of a younger brother fulfilling the levirate duty (marrying a brother's widow). She was also unlikely to marry again or have more children. Even if these conditions changed, waiting would be unrealistic. Orpah is convinced and says goodbye to her mother-in-law with a kiss.

But Ruth "but Ruth clung to her" ([Ruth 1:14](#)). Ruth's strong commitment to stay with Naomi is described using the same Hebrew word that describes how a husband and wife become joined together in marriage ([Genesis 2:24](#)). It is like being glued or stuck to something, making it difficult to separate. Ruth showed her serious intentions by making five commitments ([Ruth 1:16–17](#)). Ruth gave up her old life to gain one she valued more.

She chose to follow the God of Israel and his laws. Ruth's appeal to the God of Israel matched Naomi's pleas, and they returned together.

Naomi's return to Bethlehem was difficult. When she left Bethlehem, she had a husband and two sons. When she returned, they were all dead. She asked her friends to call her "Mara," which means bitter. However, she returned at a good time, the start of the harvest season.

Gathering Grain in the Fields of Boaz (2:1-23)

The first verse of the chapter sets the scene by introducing Boaz, a rich relative of Elimelech.

In the second verse, Ruth offered to gather leftover grain by following workers who were harvesting the grain with their tools (these workers were called "reapers"). Poor people were allowed to gather grain that was left behind by the workers (these people were called "gleaners"). Gleaners could also collect grain from the edges of the fields. This was one of God's laws to help poor people get enough food to eat ([Leviticus 19:9-10](#)).

Ruth came to Boaz's field. When Boaz visited, he noticed Ruth, asked about her, and learned who she was. His overseer said she had worked hard in the fields since early morning. Boaz, impressed by her loyalty to Naomi, kindly offered her extra help. She was allowed to gather grain right behind the main group of reapers. Additionally, the young men drew water for her, which was unusual.

Ruth, showing great humility and respect, asked Boaz why she, a foreigner, received such favor. Boaz gave two reasons: her kindness to her mother-in-law and her spiritual insight, which led her to seek Israel's God, "under whose wings you have taken refuge" ([Ruth 2:12](#)). This phrase describes God's protection, like a bird protecting its young.

She also received a place at the reapers' table. Following Boaz's orders, she went back to the fields to gather unharvested grain. At the end of the day, she went home to Naomi and shared the day's events. Naomi told Ruth that Boaz had the right of redemption (see discussion below). Ruth continued working in his fields until the harvest season ended.

Relying upon the Kinsman-Redeemer (3:1-18)

Naomi advised Ruth to approach Boaz as a *go'el*, or kinsman-redeemer. Naomi's plan may seem unusual, but there are reasons for it:

1. Naomi likely thought Boaz was the closest relative, unaware of a closer one ([Ruth 3:12](#)). According to Israelite law ([Deuteronomy 25:5-19](#)), Boaz would need to marry Ruth to have children, since her husband had died.
2. Naomi is shown as a God-fearing woman in this book. Although the plan may seem strange, it does not go against God's law or shock a virtuous man like Boaz. Otherwise, Naomi would have failed to achieve what she wanted.

Boaz responded to Ruth's actions with kindness and concern. He told her he was not the closest relative but promised to take care of the matter the next day. To protect her reputation, Boaz sent her home before daylight. Naomi predicted that Boaz would resolve the issue that same day.

Redeeming the Inheritance (4:1-22)

Boaz went to the city gate, where public affairs were discussed. He wanted to talk about business with a closer relative. Ten city elders served as witnesses. The first issue was property. Boaz asked the closer relative if he wanted to buy property for Naomi. According to tradition, buying the land also meant marrying Ruth, the Moabite widow ([Ruth 4:5](#)). The closer relative did not want to marry Ruth because it would mean sharing his property with any son they had. He gave up his rights by taking off his shoe, a symbol of giving up land rights. So, Boaz became the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz and Ruth's marriage resulted in a son, who was considered Naomi's child and heir under Israel's laws.

What Is the Message of the Book of Ruth?

First, the book of Ruth shows Ruth's family line leading to David. This line completes in [Matthew 1](#) and fulfills in Jesus.

A second lesson is the beauty of God's grace. This story shows how God's kindness includes everyone, even those who were not born as Israelites. A foreigner, even someone from Moab, can share in Israel's blessing.

Theologically, the idea of a kinsman-redeemer as a type of Messiah (chosen one) is clear. He must be a blood relative, able to buy, willing to purchase the inheritance, and willing to marry the widow of the deceased relative.

Finally, Ruth's love for Naomi shows a model of devotion. The women of Bethlehem told Naomi, "your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons" ([Ruth 4:15](#)). In their culture, having seven sons was considered a great blessing. The women were saying that Ruth's love and care for Naomi was worth even more than this.