

Resource: Biblica Bible Dictionary

Biblica Study Notes (Key Terms) © 2023 Biblica Inc. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0 license. Biblica Study Notes has been adapted in the following languages: Tok Pisin, Arabic (عَرَبِيٌّ), French (Français), Hindi (हिंदी), Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), Portuguese (Português), Russian (Русский), Spanish (Español), Swahili (Kiswahili), and Simplified Chinese (简体中文) from Biblica Study Notes © 2023 Biblica Inc. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0 license by Mission Mutual.

Biblica Bible Dictionary

A

Aaron

A son of Amram and Jochebed from the tribe of Levi. Moses was his brother and Miriam was his sister. He was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. He helped Moses lead the people of Israel during the exodus. He became the first high priest. All high priests were to come from Aaron's family line. (Levites, Priest)

Aaron's walking stick

The stick Aaron used when God did signs and wonders through him. Later, God caused it to grow buds, flowers and almonds. This showed that God had chosen Aaron's family line to serve him as priests. Aaron's walking stick was kept in the ark of the covenant.

Abba

A word in the Aramaic language that means father. Jesus called God Abba. Those who follow Jesus are part of God's family. So they can call God their Father or Abba just like Jesus does. This name shows how close God is to all those who trust him.

Abel

The second son of Adam and Eve. He was a shepherd. He made an offering that pleased God. His brother Cain killed him even though he hadn't done anything wrong. The Bible talks about Abel's blood crying out to God from the ground. This meant that God needed to bring justice because Abel was murdered.

Abiathar

The son of Ahimelek who served as high priest when David was king. He was from Eli's family line. He was faithful to David but didn't support Solomon as the king after David. Because of this he was no longer allowed to be the high priest. This fulfilled the prophecy against Eli's family line.

Abigail

A wise woman married to a foolish man named Nabal. She convinced David to trust God instead of killing people because he was angry. After Nabal died, Abigail became one of David's wives. She had one son with David.

Abijah

The son of Rehoboam and Maakah. He was the father of Asa and was from the tribe of Judah. He was the second king of the southern kingdom of Judah. He did evil and worshipped false gods.

Abimelek

A son of Gideon and Gideon's concubine from Shechem. Abimelek murdered almost all of Gideon's other sons. He ruled as king over Shechem and the areas around it. He was violent and killed many people.

Abraham

The son of Terah and uncle of Lot from Mesopotamia. In Genesis chapter 17 God changed his name from Abram to Abraham. In the Hebrew language, one of the meanings for Abram's name is father of many nations. Abraham became the father of the nation of Israel. He was married to Sarah and their son was Isaac. He had a son named Ishmael

with Sarah's slave Hagar. Abraham was from Shem's family line and followed God faithfully. God made a covenant with Abraham and his family line. (Covenant with Abraham)

Absalom

The son of David and Makaah. Tamar was his sister. He also had a daughter named Tamar. Absalom killed his brother Amnon for raping their sister Tamar. Absalom made himself king while King David was still alive. His army fought against David's army. Joab killed him even though David didn't want Absalom to be hurt.

Abyss

A way of talking about a place full of evil spiritual beings. In Luke's gospel, Jesus had authority to send evil spiritual beings there (Luke 8:31). In a vision recorded in Revelation, John saw it as a bottomless pit. It was ruled over by an evil spiritual being called the Destroyer. Evil spiritual beings came out of it only when God allowed them to. (Evil spiritual beings)

Achaia

A Roman territory in the area that is now southern Greece. The capital city was Corinth. Paul travelled throughout Achaia on his second and third journeys.

Achan

An Israelite man from the tribe of Judah. He kept things from Jericho that should have been destroyed. This caused trouble for his family and the entire Israelite community. Achan and his entire family were put to death in the valley of Achor. In the Hebrew language Achor means trouble.

Action of prophecy

Israel's prophets shared God's messages by speaking words and also by the way they lived. God told them to do certain things or to act out a story. These actions were signs to get people's attention.

They were signs about how God would bring judgement or bring salvation.

AD

A way to describe all the years after Jesus was born. In the Latin language, AD means in the year of our Lord.

AD 70

The year that Roman armies destroyed the temple. They also destroyed much of the city of Jerusalem. Jewish rebels had been fighting against Rome's rule for four years. Then Roman armies killed many Jews and burnt the temple down. It was never rebuilt. Jesus had warned people many times that this would happen. Jesus described it as punishment for not accepting him as the Messiah sent by God.

Adam

The first human being God created. Eve was his wife. In the Hebrew language the name Adam means human being. It's also like the Hebrew word for ground. God made Adam from dust and breathed life into him. He had friendship and peace with God while he lived in the Garden of Eden. He worked together with Eve to take care of the garden. He named all the creatures God made. Adam was the father of Cain, Abel and Seth. When Adam and Eve stopped obeying God, they had to leave the Garden of Eden.

Adonijah

The son of David and Haggith. He made himself king before David appointed Solomon as king. When Solomon became king, Solomon spared Adonijah's life. Then Adonijah made a foolish request. He tried to have more authority than Solomon and tried to become king. Solomon had him killed for that.

Adopted

When someone is made part of a family that they weren't born into. This is what happens when

people trust in Jesus. God created human beings to live together with him in peace and love. They were meant to be children in his family. Humans didn't accept God's love but chose to follow their own ways. This meant that they didn't belong to any family. Those who believe Jesus is the Messiah accept God's love. They become part of God's family again. Paul described this like being adopted as God's children.

Ahab

The son of Omri who became the seventh king of the northern kingdom. He was the father of Ahaziah and Jezebel was his wife. He did more evil than any king of Israel before him. He worshipped false gods. He made Samaria a centre for worshipping Baal. He treated the prophet Elijah like an enemy.

Ahijah

A prophet from Shiloh. His words and actions challenged the authority of kings who disobeyed God. God used Ahijah to show that Solomon hadn't been faithful to God's covenant with David. Later God used Ahijah to show that Jeroboam hadn't been faithful to God either.

Ahimelek

The great-grandson of Eli who served as high priest when the holy tent was in Nob. He gave David holy bread and Goliath's sword when David was running away from Saul. Doeg the Edomite killed him for helping David.

Ai

A city in Canaan where Abraham built an altar. The Israelites lost their first battle against Ai. They won the second battle and destroyed the city. In the Hebrew language Ai means the ruin.

Alpha and Omega

In the Greek alphabet Alpha is the first letter and Omega is the last letter. Jesus called himself the Alpha and the Omega. This was a way of saying that

he is the first and the last. He was at the beginning when God created all things. He will be at the end of the world as it is now. It's a way of saying that Jesus has always existed and will always exist. It's also a way of saying that Jesus is God. God the Father called himself the Alpha and the Omega in Revelation 21:6.

Alphabet poem

A poem in which each line or section begins with a different letter of the alphabet. The first line or section begins with the first letter of the alphabet. The second line or section begins with the second letter. This pattern keeps going until the end of the alphabet. Alphabet poems were common in the Hebrew language. (Poem)

Altar

Something people built to honour God. They worshipped by making sacrifices on the altar. People often built altars to recognise a special way that God had spoken or acted. Altars helped them remember what God had said or done. The altars also showed that people were committed to worshipping and obeying God. God gave careful instructions about building the altars in the holy tent and the temple. People also built altars to worship false gods.

Amalekites

A people group south of Canaan. It's thought that they came from the family line of Esau's grandson Amalek. They were enemies of the people of Israel. For hundreds of years they attacked the Israelites.

Amen

A word in the Hebrew language that means truly or may it be. It shows that people agree with what has been said. It shows that they want what has been said to happen. In the Bible people often said amen when praising God, praying or blessing others.

Ammonites

A people group that lived east of the River Jordan. They were from the family line of Lot. The land where they lived was called Ammon. They worshipped the false god called Molek.

Amorites

A people group that lived in Canaan and east of the River Jordan. They were from the family line of Ham's son Canaan. They were enemies of Abraham's family line for hundreds of years. God drove them out of Canaan and gave their land to the Israelites.

Amos

A prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah during the time of King Uzziah. He was a shepherd. His messages were about the northern kingdom during the rule of King Jeroboam the second. His prophecies are recorded in the book of Amos.

Andrew

A fisherman from Bethsaida who lived in Capernaum. He was a disciple of John the Baptist. He became one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Peter was his brother.

Angel

A messenger sent by God. Angels tell people God's words or do work for God on earth. Angels are spiritual beings. They can look like humans but they don't have bodies like human bodies. (Spiritual beings)

Angel of the Lord

An angel always described with the name of the Lord in the Old Testament. This spiritual being sometimes brought a message from God. Other times the Old Testament described the angel as being God himself. This angel was one way God made himself known on earth before Jesus was born.

Anointed

In the Old Testament, to anoint meant to pour oil on someone. Usually the oil was poured on their head. Often this meant that God had given the person certain work to do. Priests and kings were anointed to show that God chose them to be leaders. It showed that his power was with them. In the New Testament, Jesus' followers were anointed with the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit lives inside of each believer. The Spirit shows that Jesus' followers belong to God and are part of his people. The work they are anointed to do is to continue doing Jesus' work on earth. Believers would also anoint one another with oil when they prayed for healing. The oil didn't heal people. It showed that they trusted in God as they prayed. (Olive tree)

Antioch in Pisidia

A city in the Roman territory of Pisidia in Asia Minor. Paul visited it on three of his journeys to share the good news about Jesus. It's thought that Paul's letter to the Galatians was read to the church there. This was a different city than Antioch in Syria.

Antioch in Syria

An important Greek city in the Roman territory of Syria. Travellers from all over the world would pass through Antioch. It was in the country now called Turkey and near the country now called Syria. The church there supported Paul on his journeys to spread the message about Jesus.

Apocalyptic writing

In the Greek language the word apocalypse means to reveal or uncover something. Apocalyptic writing was common among Jewish and Christian prophets. In apocalyptic writing, prophets used signs and pictures to talk about things happening on earth. The signs and pictures uncovered spiritual truths about those things. They helped people understand God's point of view. They showed how God would save his people and judge their enemies. The signs and pictures in

apocalyptic writing are often powerful and frightening. This was to get people's attention.

Apollos

A Jew from Alexandria in Egypt who understood the Scriptures very well. He became friends with Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus. They helped him understand more about Jesus. Apollos taught in churches where Paul had worked.

Apostles

Jesus' 12 disciples and other close followers who became leaders in the first churches. The apostles taught people about Jesus and spread the good news about him. Apostle is a word from the Greek language that means someone who is sent.

Aquila and Priscilla

A husband and wife who made and sold tents. They were Jews who had lived in Rome. Paul became friends with them in the city of Corinth. They worked together to spread the good news about Jesus. Paul mentioned them in three of his letters. Aquila and Priscilla helped Apollos understand more about Jesus.

Aram

A people group that lived in Mesopotamia and Syria. They worshipped false gods. They were from the family line of Shem. The land where they lived was also called Aram. Abraham's relatives lived in Aram. Damascus became an important city of the Arameans. The language of the Arameans was called Aramaic. Later on many Assyrians, Babylonians and Jews spoke the Aramaic language. Parts of the Bible were written in Aramaic.

Ark

The big boat that God gave Noah instructions to build. God kept the people and the animals in the ark safe during the flood.

Ark of the covenant

An important box that was a sign of the Mount Sinai covenant. Sacred objects were kept in it. This included the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments. It also included a jar of manna and Aaron's walking stick. At first the ark was kept in the holy tent. Later it was kept in the Most Holy Room of the temple (Most Holy Room). It was like God's throne on earth. It was the place where God's people could meet with him.

Artaxerxes

The ruler of the Persian kingdom from 465 to 425 BC. He was known as Artaxerxes I. God used him as a tool to help the Jews rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

Artemis

A false goddess worshipped for helping people hunt and have children. In the times and places of the New Testament she was called by many different names. When the Greeks built the city of Ephesus, they called her Artemis. There was a huge and famous temple in her honour in Ephesus. Ephesus was the centre for the worship of Artemis.

Asa

The son of Abijah and the father of Jehoshaphat. He was from the tribe of Judah. He was the third king of the southern kingdom of Judah. For many years he followed God faithfully. He led the people to worship only God. Later he stopped trusting God and started treating God's people badly.

Asaph

A Levite from the family line of Gershon. David appointed Asaph, his helpers and the sons from Asaph's family line. David appointed them to be in charge of worship services. They led the people of Israel in praising God with songs of thanks. They prophesied, played instruments and wrote songs. Some of these songs are recorded in the book of Psalms.

Ashmoreth

A goddess worshipped by many people groups in and around Canaan. She was also called Asherah, Astarte and Ishtar. She was worshipped as the mother of other male and female gods.

Asia Minor

An area under Roman rule. It was the western part of the country now called Turkey. It wasn't the continent now called Asia with countries like China, India and Russia. Paul travelled throughout Asia Minor.

Assyria

A kingdom in Mesopotamia that lasted for thousands of years. It became a powerful government that ruled over many other nations and people groups. The capital city was Nineveh. Assyria took control of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. They forced the Israelites to leave their land and live far away in exile. Some of Assyria's kings were Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon and Sennacherib. Babylonian armies won an important battle over Assyria in 612 BC. Assyria was no longer powerful after that.

Athaliah

A granddaughter of Omri and the mother of Ahaziah. It's thought that she was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. It's thought that she married King Jehoram. Athaliah murdered the males in David's family line who could have become king. She did this after Jehu killed her son Ahaziah. Only Joash was saved. Athaliah ruled as queen over the southern kingdom for six years. She led the people to worship Baal. She did many evil things. She was killed by palace guards.

Athens

A very important Greek city in the Roman territory of Achaia. Paul visited it on his second journey. He shared the message of Jesus with the thinkers and leaders at the Areopagus. The Areopagus was a hill outside of Athens. There a council of Athenian

leaders would meet and talk about important matters.

Atone

To bring peace back to something when the peace has been destroyed. In relationships, peace is destroyed when people sin against one another. This also destroys the peace between the sinner and God. The person who sins must repent and stop doing what they have done wrong. And the sin must be paid for. This allows for there to be peace again between people. It also allows for there to be peace between people and God. (Day of Atonement)