A. The symbol used to designate Codex Alexandrinus. See Septuagint; Text and Versions (NT).

Aaron, aír’uhn (Heb. 'āhārôn H195, derivation uncertain, possibly an Egyp. name; Gk. Aarōn G2). The oldest son of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi, and brother of Moses and Miriam (Exod. 6:20; Num. 26:59). He was born during the captivity in Egypt, before Pharaoh’s edict that all male infants should be destroyed, and was three years older than Moses (Exod. 7:7). His name first appears in God’s commission to Moses. When Moses protested that he did not have sufficient ability in public speaking to undertake the mission to Pharaoh, God declared that Aaron should be spokesman for his brother (4:10-16). So Aaron met Moses at “the mountain of God” (4:27) after forty years’ separation, and took him back to the family home in Goshen. Aaron introduced him to the elders of the people and persuaded them to accept him as their leader. Together Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh’s court, where they carried on the negotiations that finally brought an end to the oppression of the Israelites and precipitated the exodus from Egypt.

According to Islamic tradition, the tomb of Aaron lies atop Jebel Harun (Mt. Hor) located a few miles S of Petra. (View to the NW.)
During Moses’ forty years in the wilderness Aaron had married Elisheba, daughter of Ammийнадаб and sister of Nahshon, a prince of the tribe of Judah (Exod. 6:23; 1 Chr. 2:10). They had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar (Exod. 6:23).

After the Israelites left Egypt, Aaron assisted his brother during the wandering in the wilderness. On the way to Sinai, in the battle with Amaleк, Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands (Exod. 17:9-13), in which was the staff of God. Israel consequently won the battle. With the establishment of the tabernacle, Aaron became high priest in charge of the national worship and the head of the hereditary priesthood (see priest).

In character Aaron was weak and occasionally jealous. He and Miriam criticized Moses for having married a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1-2; see CUSH #3). This complaint may have been an intentionally insulting reference to Zipporah. (See Hab. 3:7 for a linking of Midian and Cush; Zipporah is always elsewhere described as a Midianite.) Behind this personal slight lies a more serious threat to Moses’ position. Aaron was high priest and thus the supreme religious leader of Israel; Miriam was a prophetess (Exod. 15:20). The great issue was not whether Moses had married a particular person but whether he could any longer be considered the sole, authoritative mouthpiece of God. As Aaron and Miriam said, “Hasn’t he [the Lord] also spoken through us?” (Num. 12:2). It is in the light of this basic challenge to Moses’ God-given status that we must understand and appreciate the prompt and dramatic response of the Lord (12:4-15).

We may further note that Aaron’s own authority as priest did not go unchallenged. It becomes clear that when Korah and his company (Num. 16) challenged Moses’ leadership, Aaron’s priesthood too was called into question. By the miraculous sign of the flowering and fruit-bearing staff, the Lord identified Aaron as his chosen priest (17:1-9) and accorded him a perpetual priesthood by ordering his staff to be deposited in the sanctuary (17:10).

When Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the tablets of the law from God, Aaron acceded to the people’s demand for a visible god that they could worship. Taking their personal jewelry, he melted it in a furnace and made a golden calf similar to the familiar bull-god of Egypt. The people hailed this image as the god who had brought them out of Egypt. Aaron did not remonstrate with them but built an altar and proclaimed a feast to the Lord on the next day, which the people celebrated with revelry and debauchery (Exod. 32:1-6). When Moses returned from the mountain and rebuked Aaron for aiding this abuse, Aaron gave this naive answer: “They gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!” (32:24). It may be that Aaron meant to restrain the people by a compromise, but he was wholly unsuccessful. See also calf worship.

In the biblical narrative much is made of the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests. The “dignity and honor” (Exod. 28:2) of their office was expressed in garments of great beauty and significance: the breastpiece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, and sash. The ceremony of appointment is described in Exod. 29 and enacted in Lev. 8. It involved presenting a sin offering and a burnt offering on behalf of the priests-to-be (Exod. 29:10-14, 15-18), for though they were priests, they were first of all sinners needing the grace of God in atonement (Heb. 5:2-3). See sacrifice and offerings.

The consecration included three special ceremonies: (1) their ears, hands, and feet were touched with the blood of a ram (Exod. 29:19-20), signifying respectively the hallowing of the mind and of the acts and directions of life—what they would hear, what they would do, where they would go; (2) they were anointed with oil mingled with the sacrificial blood (29:21), symbolizing the grace of God in atonement (blood) and endowment (oil); (3) their hands were filled with some of the fat of the slain beasts along with various sorts of bread, and the whole was lifted up in offering to the Lord (29:22-23). Just as we say that a busy person “has his hands full,” so they consecrated to the Lord the whole business of living—life’s special duties, seen in the fat of the sacrifices, and life’s ordinary cares and needs, seen in the bread. After eight days (Lev. 9:1) Aaron and his sons entered their public ministry, presenting the sin offering, burnt offering, and fellowship offering on behalf of the people. This first act of ministry
received divine ratification in the appearing of the glory of the Lord and the fire of God that fell on the offering (9:23-24).

At the end of the wilderness wandering, Aaron was warned of his impending death. He and Moses went up Mount Hor, where Aaron was stripped of his priestly robes, which passed in succession to his son Eleazar. Aaron died at the age of 123 and was buried on the mountain (Num. 20:22-29; 33:38; Deut. 10:6; 32:50). The people mourned for him thirty days.

The Psalms speak of the priestly line as the “house of Aaron” (Ps. 115:10, 12; 118:3; 135:19), and Aaron is mentioned in Hebrews as a type of Christ, who was “called by God, just as Aaron was” (Heb. 5:4-5), though the eternal priesthood of Christ is stated explicitly to be derived from Melchizedek and not from Aaron (7:11).

Aaronites. air’uh-nı’ts. This term is used by the KJV in two passages where the Hebrew simply has Aaron, but where the reference is clearly to his descendants (1 Chr. 12:27; 27:17; in the former passage the NIV translates, “the family of Aaron”).

Aaron’s staff (rod). When Korah and his confederates challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Num. 16-17, possibly the most important event during the thirty-seven years of wandering described in chs. 15-19), Moses demanded that the staffs of each of the princes of the tribes be given him; and he placed their staffs with Aaron’s “before the Lord in the Tent of the Testimony” (17:7). The next day Aaron’s staff was found to have budded, vindicating the divine authority of Aaron as high priest (17:8). It was then placed before the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies to be preserved as a witness against all who might rebel against his authority (17:8-10). (It is possible that the staff was subsequently placed inside the ark, as Heb. 9:4 suggests.)

The staff referred to is very likely the same shepherd’s staff Moses was carrying at the time of his call (Exod. 4:2). When turned into a serpent, it became a sign to Moses and Aaron, to Israel, and to Pharaoh of the divine mission and authority of Moses (v. 17). It is twice called “the staff of God” (4:20; 17:9). In the battle with Amalek the staff was in Moses’ hand; and Aaron and Hur supported his arms when he was weary (17:9-13). Moses was commanded to take the staff, and he and Aaron were told to “speak to that rock” (Num. 20:8). Instead of following these instructions implicitly, Moses (evidently with Aaron’s support) spoke arrogantly to the people, and Moses lifted up his hand with his staff and smote the rock twice (v. 11), acts of presumption for which he and Aaron were severely punished.

All of the expressions used are natural in view of the significance of the staff. It was called “the staff of God,” for it was the symbol of God’s authority; it was Moses’ staff, because it belonged to him and was carried by him; it was also Aaron’s staff, because Aaron at times spoke and acted for Moses.

Ab. ab. The fifth month (July-August) in the Babylonian calendar used by postexilic Israel. This name is not found in the Bible.

Abaddon. uh-bad’uhn (Gk. Ἀβαδδών G3). This Hebrew name, with its Greek equivalent Apollyon, is used once in the NT with reference to the evil angel who reigns over the infernal regions of the abyss (Rev. 9:11). The Hebrew noun ἀβαδδών H11, meaning “[place of] destruction, ruin,” but variously translated, occurs only in a few poetic passages (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 15:11; 27:20).

Abagtha. uh-bag’thuh (Heb. ἄβαγθα H5, possibly an Iranian name). One of the seven eunuchs sent by the Persian king Xerxes (Ahasuerus) to bring Queen Vashti to a royal feast (Esth. 1:10).

Abana. ab’uh-nuh (Heb. ḏūbânā H76, “stony”). Also Abanah. The name of a river that flows through Damascus, mentioned in the Bible only once, when Naaman asked, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel?” (2 Ki. 5:12; an alternate reading in the Heb. MSS is Amana). The Greeks called it the Chrysorrhoas (“golden stream”); it is the same as the modern Barada River. Beginning 23 mi. (37 km.) NW of Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, this river makes Damascus, though bordering on a desert, a very lovely and fertile area.
ABARIM

It divides into nine or ten branches and spreads out like an open fan into the plain E of Damascus.

Abarim. ab’uh-rim (Heb. ‘ābara’im H6305, “the regions beyond”). The region E of the JORDAN (Transjordan), and specifically a mountain range in NW Moab that includes Mount Nebo. The Israelites encamped here just before crossing the Jordan, and from one of its peaks Moses saw the Promised Land (Num. 27:12; 33:47-48; Deut. 32:49; Jer. 22:20).

Abba. ah’buh, ab’uh (Gk. abba G5). An Aramaic term meaning “father,” transliterated into Greek in the NT and thence into English. It occurs in three NT prayers (Mk. 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) together with the Greek word for “father” (abba ho patér). It is probable that Jesus used this word also in many of the instances where the Greek Gospels record that he addressed or referred to God as Father. Because Jewish children used Abba when speaking to or about their fathers, some have argued that the term should be translated “Daddy.” However, Abba was the standard expression used also by adults, even when referring very respectfully to a rabbi. See also Son of God.

Abda. ab’duh (Heb. ‘ābdā H6272, “servant, worshiper”; possibly short form of Obadiah, “servant of Yahweh”). (1) Father of Adoniram, who was a high official of Solomon in charge of forced labor (1 Ki. 4:6).

(2) Son of Shammua and a postexilic chief Levite in Jerusalem (Neh. 11:17; called Obadiah son of Shemaiah in 1 Chr. 9:16).

Abdeel. ab’dee-uhl (Heb. ‘ābde’il H6274, “servant of God” [cf. Abda]). Father of an official named Shelemiah; the latter, with two other officials, was instructed by King Jehoiakim to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet (Jer. 36:26).

Abdi. ab’di (Heb. ‘abdī H6279, possibly short form of Obadiah, “servant of Yahweh”). (1) A Levite of the family of Merari whose grandson Ethan was made a songmaster by David (1 Chr. 6:44 [Heb. v. 29]).

(2) Father of Kish, a Levite of the family of Merari; Kish took part in the cleansing and consecration of the temple under King Hezekiah (2 Chr. 29:12).

(3) One of the descendants of Elam who agreed to put away their foreign wives (Ezra 10:26).

Abdil. ab’di-uhl (Heb. ‘ābdī’el H6280, “servant of God” [cf. Abdeel]). Son of Guni and father of Ah; the latter was head of a clan in the tribe of Gad that lived in Gilead and Bashan (1 Chr. 5:15).

Abdon (person). ab’duh (Heb. ‘ābdôn H6277, “servant” or “servile”). (1) Son of Hillel and the eleventh mentioned judge of Israel in the book of Judges. Abdon “judged” Israel eight years, probably from Pirathon in the hill country of Ephraim. The reference to his “forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys” probably signifies the wealth and prominence of his family. Abdon was buried in Pirathon (Jdg. 12:13-15). Nothing is said about his rule. Josephus suggests that his reign was a peaceful one, and therefore “he had no occasion to perform glorious actions” (Ant. 5.7.15 §273).

(2) Oldest son of Jeiel (KJV, “Jehiel”) and Maacah of Gibeon, included in the two lists of Saul’s genealogy (1 Chr. 8:30; 9:36). See also Ariel.

(3) Son of Micah, sent by King Josiah with other officials to inquire of Huldah the prophetess, after the book of the law of the Lord was read before him (2 Chr. 34:20; called Acbor son of Micahiah in 2 Ki. 22:12, 14; Jer. 26:22).

(4) Son of Shashak (1 Chr. 8:23, cf. v. 25), a Benjaminite living in Jerusalem, probably in Nehemiah’s time (see vv. 1, 28).

Abdon (place). ab’duh (Heb. ‘ābdôn H6278, possibly “service”). One of the four Levitical towns in the territory of Asher (Josh. 21:30; 1 Chr. 6:74), probably located at modern Khirbet ‘Abdah about 15 mi. (24 km.) S of Tyre; perhaps to be identified with the Ebron of Josh. 19:28 (where some Heb. MSS read “Abdon” instead of “Ebron”).

Abednego. uh-bed’ni-goh (Heb. ‘ābēd négô H6284 [Aram. H10524], possibly “servant of [the god] Nebo”). The Babylonian name that Ashpenaz, chief officer of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, gave to Azariah, one of the three
Israelite youths who were companions of Daniel (Dan. 1:7). The other two were Shadrach and Meshach. Daniel and his three friends belonged to the Hebrew royal family and are described as “young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace” (1:3-4). They were to be educated for three years in the “language and literature of the Babylonians.” They determined, however, not to defile themselves with the “royal food and wine”; instead, they ate vegetables and drank water for ten days (vv. 8-14). At the end of this trial period, it was obvious that “they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food” (v. 15). Later, the three youths were appointed provincial administrators (2:49). They also proved to be of stalwart faith and piety, and withstood all pressures to worship the pagan image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. In consequence of this, all three were cast into a fiery furnace, but they were miraculously delivered (3:1-30; see Daniel, Book of). The NT alludes to them when it mentions the heroes of faith who “quenched the fury of the flames” (Heb. 11:34).

Abel (person). ay’buhl (Heb. hebel H2040, “breath, vanity,” or “son, heir”; Gk. Abel G6, also Habel). Adam and Eve’s second son, who was murdered by his brother Cain (Gen. 4). “Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil” (4:2). The problem that caused disaffection between the brothers arose when Cain brought a vegetable offering to the Lord, and Abel brought a lamb from the flock. “The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor” (4:4-5). What this precisely means the Bible does not make clear. Perhaps the Lord had previously made his will known that he must be approached with blood-sacrifice (cf. 3:21); or possibly with this incident between Cain and Abel the Lord revealed that he required such an offering. Two things tend to suggest an earlier revelation of this requirement: first, the Genesis account has “Abel and his offering,” “Cain and his offering,” in each case putting the person first and suggesting that the one came in a correct spirit whereas the other did not. Second, the epistle to the Hebrews suggests the same view: “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did” (Heb. 11:4; cf. 12:24). How could he have acted in faith if there had not been a prior word from the Lord for him to believe and obey? Cain, by contrast, came in a defiant spirit, as is revealed in his hurt refusal of the Lord’s reminder that the right way was open to him and in his resentful murder of his brother. Thus Abel became the first exemplar of the way of righteousness through faith (Matt. 23:35; Lk. 11:51; 1 Jn. 3:12).

Abel (place). ay’buhl (Heb. ‘ābel H64, “meadow”). A name found in various compounds, apparently used to describe the nature of a site or its surroundings. In 2 Sam. 20:18 Abel is the shortened form of Abel Beth Maacah. In 1 Sam. 6:18 the KJV reads, “the great stone of Abel,” but the Hebrew text probably means, “the great meadow”; the NIV translates “the large rock,” following a few Hebrew MSS and the Septuagint (similarly other English versions).

Abel Acacia Grove. See Shittim.

Abel Beth Maacah. ay’buhl-beth-may’uh-kuh (Heb. ‘ābel bêt ma’akâ H68 [with spelling variations], “meadow of the house of oppression”). Sometimes Excavated area of Abel Beth Maacah (view to the NE).
translated “Abel of Beth–maacah,” and also known as Abel Maim (2 Chr. 16:4). A town in the extreme N of Palestine, modern Abil el-Qamh, about 12 mi. (19 km.) N of Lake Huleh and a few miles W of the city of Dan, in the tribal territory of Naphtali (2 Sam. 20:15; 1 Ki. 15:20). Abel Beth Maacah is mentioned in some early Egyptian sources. Sheba son of Bicri fled to it when his revolt against David failed. The town was saved from assault by Joab when, with its proverbial shrewdness, it followed the advice of “a wise woman” that the people sacrifice Sheba (2 Sam. 20:14-22). About eighty years later it was seized by Ben-Hadad (1 Ki. 15:20) and in 734 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser, who carried off its inhabitants to Assyria (2 Ki. 15:29).

Abel Keramim. ay’buhl-ker’uh-mim (Heb. āḇēl keḵāh’īm H70, “meadow of vineyards”). Also Abel-charam. A place in Ammon, E of the Jordan. Jephtah is said to have “devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim” (Jdg. 11:33; KJV, “the plain towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as Jephthah is said to have “devastated twenty charamim. A place in the extreme N of Palestine, modern Abil el-Qamh, about 12 mi. (19 km.) N of Lake Huleh and a few miles W of the city of Dan, in the tribal territory of Naphtali (2 Sam. 20:15; 1 Ki. 15:20). Abel Beth Maacah is mentioned in some early Egyptian sources. Sheba son of Bicri fled to it when his revolt against David failed. The town was saved from assault by Joab when, with its proverbial shrewdness, it followed the advice of “a wise woman” that the people sacrifice Sheba (2 Sam. 20:14-22). About eighty years later it was seized by Ben-Hadad (1 Ki. 15:20) and in 734 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser, who carried off its inhabitants to Assyria (2 Ki. 15:29).

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Abez. ay’bez. See Ebez.

Abi, Abia(h). ay’bi, uh-bi’uh. See Abijah.

Abi-Albon. ay’bi-al’buhn (Heb. āḇī-ʿalbōn H50, meaning uncertain). Identified as an Arbathite (meaning prob. that he was from Beth Arabah), Abi-Albon was a member of David’s thirty mighty warriors (2 Sam. 23:31). Many think this form of the name is corrupt, for he is called Abiel in the parallel (1 Chr. 11:32).

Abiasaph. uh-bi’uh-saf (Heb. āḇī-ʿāṣāp H25, “[my] father has gathered”; spelled ʿēbāṣāp H47 in 1 Chr.). Also Ebiasaph. Son (or descendant) of Korah and descendant of Levi (Exod. 6:24; 1 Chr. 9:19). The order of succession in Exod. 6:16-24 and 1 Chr. 6:37-38 is Kohath, Izhar, Korah, Assir, Elkanah, Ebiasaph; but in 1 Chr. 6:22-23 it is given as Kohath, Amminadab, Korah, Assir, Elkanah, Ebiasaph. He is apparently called Asaph in 1 Chr. 26:1 (cf. LXX).

Abiathar. uh-bi’uh-thahr (Heb. ʿēbāṭār H59, “father of abundance”). Son of the high priest Ahimelech. The latter, along with eighty-four
other priests, was killed at Nob on Saul’s instructions, after Doeg had told the king that Ahimelech had helped David by inquiring of the Lord for him and by giving him Goliath’s sword (1 Sam. 22). Abiathar somehow escaped the slaughter and joined David, bringing the oracular ephod with him (22:20–23). Subsequently, Abiathar and Zadok seem to have functioned as joint high priests, an arrangement that continued through David’s reign (cf. 2 Sam. 15:24, 27, 29). Abiathar did not, however, receive the same loyalty to Solomon, but associated himself with the cause of Adonijah, the eldest surviving son of David (1 Ki. 1:7, 19, 25). It would appear that, even after the failure of Adonijah’s attempt to succeed David, Abiathar was in some way still linked with him, for when Adonijah was executed on suspicion of plotting a coup, Abiathar was banished from Jerusalem (2:22–27). This act terminated the joint priesthood of Zadok and Abiathar (as still referred to in 1 Ki. 4:4), and also fulfilled the prediction, made 150 years earlier, of the end of the priestly rule of the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2:31–35).

Abi. ay’bei-uhl (Heb. ‘abi’el H24, “my father is God”). (1) A man of Benjamin who is mentioned as the father of Kish and the grandfather of King Saul and Abner (1 Sam. 9:1; 14:51). It is conjectured that Jeiel in 1 Chr. 8:29 and 9:35, the father of Ner, is the same as Abiel. In that case, Abiel (Jeiel) was the grandfather of Kish and the great-grandfather of Saul. Other solutions have been proposed.

(2) One of David’s thirty mighty warriors (1 Chr. 11:32), also called Abi-Albon (2 Sam. 23:31). He was probably a native of Beth Arabah in the N of Judah (Josh. 15:6) and was therefore known as Abiel the Arbathite.

Abiezer. ay’bi-ee’zuhr (Heb. ‘abi’ezr H48, “[my] father is help”; gentilic ‘abi’ ezeri H49, “Abiezrite”). (1) A descendant of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. Abiezer, who settled on the W side of the Jordan (Josh. 17:2), is probably the same as Iezer (a contraction of Abiezer), regarded as the son of Gilead (Num. 26:30). If 1 Chr. 7:18 refers to the same individual, he was apparently Gilead’s nephew, in which case he may have been considered a son for genealogical purposes. The district of Manasseh inhabited by the Abiezrites (Jdg. 6:34) was the native region from which Gideon came (6:11). The site of the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon was Ophrah of the Abiezrites (6:24), the town from which Gideon drew his first support of men to fight the Midianites (6:34). See Ophrah (place).

(2) One of David’s military elite, the Thirty; a native of Anathoth in Benjamin (2 Sam. 23:27; 1 Chr. 11:28). He was one of David’s month-by-month army commanders, having his turn in the ninth month (1 Chr. 27:12).

Abiezrite. ay’bi’eze’rit. See Abiezer.

Abigail, Abigal. ab’uh-gayl, ab’uh-gal (Heb. ‘abigail H28, “[my] father rejoices” or “source of joy”; also ‘abigail [1 Sam. 25:32; 2 Sam. 3:3 Ketib,
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Abigail, the wife of Nabal, a rich man of Maon in Judah. When Nabal refused to give provisions to David and his men in payment for the protection they had given him, Abigail, a wise and beautiful woman, herself brought provisions to David, persuading him not to take vengeance on her husband. About ten days later Nabal died, and subsequently Abigail became David’s wife (1 Sam. 25:2-42). Abigail bore to David his second son, Kileab (2 Sam. 3:3, called Daniel in 1 Chr. 3:1).

(2) Sister of King David and of Zeruiah (2 Sam. 17:25; 1 Chr. 2:16-17). David’s father, however, was Jesse (cf. 1 Chr. 2:13), whereas Abigail is identified as the daughter of Nahash. It has been suggested that “daughter of Nahash” might be a textual corruption, or that Nahash was another name for Jesse, or that Jesse married the widow of Nahash; if the latter, Abigail was David’s half-sister. Whether or not any of these surmises is true, Abigail and David had the same mother. Abigail became the wife of Ithra (Jether) and the mother of Amasa, who for a while was commander of David’s army.

Abihail. ab’uh-hayl (Heb. ’ābîhayîl H38, “my father is strength” or “strong father”; the form ’ābîhayîl H35 [1 Chr. 2:29; 2 Chr. 11:18] may be a variant spelling or a different name). (1) Father of Zuriel; the latter was head of the Levitical house of Merari (Num. 3:35).

(2) Wife of Abishur son of Shammai (1 Chr. 2:29).

(3) Son of Huri; he was a man of the tribe of Gad who lived in Gilead (1 Chr. 5:14).

(4) Daughter of David’s brother Eliab. She probably married her cousin Jerimoth (David’s son) and was the mother of Mahalath, one of the wives of Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11:18). Ambiguity in the Hebrew text leaves open the possibility that Abihail was another wife of Rehoboam (cf. KJV, but the singular in the Heb. of the next two verses suggests that he had only one wife).

(5) Father of Queen Esther and uncle of Mordecai (Esth. 2:15; 9:29).

Abihu. uh-bi’hyoo (Heb. ’ābîhû H33, “he is [my] father”). The second of the four sons of Aaron and Elisheba (Exod. 6:23; Num. 3:2; 26:60; 1 Chr. 6:3; 24:1). Aaron, his sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders went part of the way up Mount Sinai with Moses at the command of the Lord, and they “saw the God of Israel” (Exod. 24:1, 9–10). Abihu, along with his father and three brothers, was later consecrated as priest (Exod. 28:1; Num. 3:2-3; 1 Chr. 24:1). Abihu and his older brother Nadab were slain by God when “they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command” (Lev. 10:1-2). Neither Nadab nor Abihu had any sons (Num. 3:4; 1 Chr. 24:2).

Abijah. Abijam. uh-bi’juh, uh-bi’juhm (Heb. ’ābiyyâ H31, “[my] father is majesty”). Son of Bela and grandson of Benjamin (1 Chr. 8:3; however, some scholars believe that the text should read “the father of Ehud” rather than “Abihu”).


(1) Seventh son of Beker and grandson of Benjamin (1 Chr. 7:8).

(2) Second son of Samuel. Along with his older brother Joel, he was appointed by his father to be a judge in Beersheba (1 Sam. 8:2). However, the brothers took bribes, perverted justice, and incurred the wrath of the people to such an extent that the Israelites came to Samuel and demanded a king (1 Sam. 8:3-6).

(3) According to 1 Chr. 2:24, a woman named Abijah was the wife of Hezron (grandson of Judah by Perez) and the mother of Ashhur, father (or founder) of Tekoa. The MT is difficult, and some of the ancient versions read differently. The RSV rendering, “Caleb went in to Ephrathah, the wife of Hezron his father, and she bore him Ashhur,” involves an emendation of Abijah (’ābiyyâ) to “his father” (’ābîhû) to “his father” (’ābîhû).

(4) A descendant of Aaron who became the head of the eighth priestly division (1 Chr. 24:10). Twenty-four divisions were appointed by lot for the service of the temple in the time of David. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, belonged to the division of Abijah (Lk. 1:5; KJV, “Abia”).