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AARONITES

AARON

(ârûn, Heb. 'ahârôn, meaning uncertain). 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 three years before Moses and before Pharaoh’s edict that all male infants should be destroyed (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 40 years’ separation, took him back to the family home in Goshen, 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 ended the oppression of the Israelites and precipitated the Exodus.

Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, a prince of the tribe of Judah (Exod 6:23; 1 Chron 2:10). They had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar (Exod 6:23). After Israel left Egypt, Aaron assisted Moses during the wilderness wandering. On the way to Sinai, in the battle with Amalek, Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands (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.

In character he was weak and occasionally jealous. He and Miriam criticized Moses for having married a Cushite woman (Num 12:1–2), perhaps an intentionally insulting reference to Zipporah (Hab 3:7–Cush linked with Midian). Behind this personal slight lies a more serious threat to Moses’ position. Aaron, as high priest, was the supreme religious leader of Israel; Miriam was a prophetess (Exod 15:20). The great issue is not whom Moses had married but whether Moses could any longer be considered the sole, authoritative mouthpiece of God. As Aaron and Miriam said, “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” (Num 12:2). Recognizing this basic challenge to Moses’ God-given status explains God’s prompt and dramatic response (12:4ff.).

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 was also called into question. By the miraculous sign of the flowering and fruitbearing 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 Mt. Sinai to receive the tables of the law from God, Aaron acceded to the people’s demand for a visible god that they could worship. He melted their personal jewelry 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 naïvely replied: “They gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!” (32:24). Perhaps Aaron meant to restrain the people by a compromise, but he was wholly unsuccessful.

Two months later, when the revelation of the pattern for worship was completed, Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priesthood (Lev 8–9). At the end of the wilderness wandering, Aaron was warned of his impending death. He and Moses went up Mt. Hor, where Aaron was stripped of his priestly robes, which were passed in succession to his son Eleazar. Aaron died at age 123 and was buried on the mountain (Num 20:22–29; 33:38; Deut 10:6; 32:50). The people mourned for him 30 days.

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

AARONITES

(ârûn-îts). Descendants of Aaron who fought with David against Saul (1 Chron 12:27). They were distinguished from the Levites (27:17).
AB

The fifth month of the Hebrew year, coinciding approximately with mid-July to mid-August (Num 33:38).

ABADDON

(ā-bā’d-ūn, Heb. ‘āvaddōn, ruin, perdition, destruction). Its six OT occurrences (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11; 27:20) have the idea of “ruin.” Found once in the NT (Rev 9:11), it refers to the angel who reigns over the infernal regions.

ABANA

(ā-bānā’, Heb. ‘āvānā). Mentioned in the Bible only in 2 Kings 5:12, this river flows through Damascus, making the city, though bordering on a desert, one of the loveliest and most fertile on earth.

ABARIM

(ābā-rīm, Heb. ‘avārīm, those beyond, or on the other side). Either the region east of the Jordan or the name of a mountain range NW of Moab. The Israelites encamped here just before crossing the Jordan (Num 33:47), and from one of its peaks Moses saw the Promised Land (27:12).

ABBẻ

(ābē, Heb. ‘ābē). Aramaic word for father; transliterated into Greek and thence into English. It is found three times in the NT (Mark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). The corresponding Hebrew word is Āb.

ABDA


ABDI


ABDON


ABDON

One of four Levitical cities in the tribe of Asher (Josh 21:30; 1 Chron 6:74). It may be the same as “Hebron” in Joshua 19:28. Now called Abdeh, near the Mediterranean and about 15 miles (25 km.) south of Tyre.

ABEDNEGO

(ā-bē’dēn-gō, Heb. ‘āvēdh-neghō, servant of Nego). One of the three Hebrews overseeing the affairs of the province of Babylon; he was saved from the fiery furnace (Dan 3:12–30).

ABEL

(ābēl, Heb. hevel). A Hebrew word of this spelling means “breath,” “vapor,” that which is “insubstantial”; but more likely the name should be linked with an Accadian word meaning “son.” He was Adam and Eve’s second son, who was murdered by his brother Cain (Gen 4). Disaffection between the two brothers arose when Cain brought a vegetable offering to the Lord, and Abel brought a lamb. Perhaps God had previously (at 3:21?) revealed that man must approach him with blood-sacrifice. God accepted Abel’s offering because it was an animal sacrifice and or because of the spirit (“by faith,” Heb 11:4) in which it was offered (Gen 4:4–5). Thus Abel became the first exemplar of the way of righteousness through faith (Matt 23:35; 1 John 3:12).

ABEL

(ābēl, Heb. ‘āvēl, a meadow). 1. The name of a city involved in the rebellion of Sheba (2 Sam 20:14, 18); the same as Abel Beth Maacah (20:15). 2. “The great stone of Abel” (1 Sam 6:18 KJV; NIV has “the large rock”).

ABEL BETH MAACAH

(ābēl bēth mā’a-kā, Heb. ‘āvēl bēth ma’ākhāh). Abel (“meadow,” perhaps “brook”) of Beth-Maacah (KJV “Maachah”)—i.e., near Beth Maacah—was in the extreme north of Palestine, in the tribe of Naphtali (2 Sam 20:15; 1 Kings 15:20). 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 80 years later Benhadad seized it (1 Kings 15:20) and in 734 B.C. Tigrath-Pileser carried off its inhabitants to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).

ABEL MEHOLAH
(اقةل مهولا، meadow of dancing or brook of dancing). Town where Elisha was born and lived (1 Kings 19:16). The Midianites routed by Gideon fled there (Judg 7:22).

ABEL Mizraim
(اقةل ميزرايم، Heb. ‘אכל מצרים, meadow or mourning of Egypt). A place east of the Jordan at which the funeral procession of Jacob stopped for seven days before entering Canaan to bury him (Gen 50:11). Previously called the “threshing floor of Atad,” the Canaanites now called it the “mourning of (funeral from) Egypt” because the Egyptian nobility and soldiers took part in the funeral rites.

ABEZ
(See EBEZ)

ABIA
(See ABIJAH)

ABI-ALBON
(See ABIEL)

ABIATHAR
(اقةثار, Heb. ‘אبيب, father of abundance). Son of Ahimelech, who with 84 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 (22:20ff). Abiathar and Zadok were in effect joint high priests when David brought the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron 15:11f). This situation continued through David’s reign (e.g., 2 Sam 15:24, 27, 29). Abiathar did not, however, give the same loyalty to Solomon, but associated himself with the cause of Adonijah, the eldest surviving son of David (1 Kings 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 terminated the joint priesthood of Zadok and Abiathar, as referred to in 1 Kings 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).

ABIB
(اقةب, Heb. ‘אב, an ear of corn). The preexilic name for the first month (March/April) of the year (Exod 13:4; 23:15; 34:18) — called Nisan after the Exile.

ABIDAN
(اقةدان, Heb. ‘אבדון, the father is judge). A prince chosen to represent the tribe of Benjamin at the census in the wilderness of Sinai (Num 1:11; 2:22). At the dedication of the tabernacle he made an offering as one of the heads of Israel (7:60, 65).

ABIEL
(اقةيل, Heb. ‘אビル, the father is God, or God is father). 1. The grandfather of Saul and Abner (1 Sam 9:1; 14:51). 2. One of David’s mighty men (1 Chron 11:32), also called Abi-Albon (2 Sam 23:31).

ABIEZER
(اقةיIZER, Heb. ‘איבזר, father of help, or father is help). 1. Head of the family in Manasseh to which Gideon belonged (Judg 6:11–12; 8:2, 32). 2. One of David’s mighty men (2 Sam 23:27; 1 Chron 11:28; 27:12).

ABIGAIL
(اقةגייל, Heb. ‘אביגייל, father is rejoicing). 1. The wife of Nabal and, after his death, of David (1 Sam 25:3, 14–44; 27:3; 2 Sam 3:3), to whom she bore his second son, Kileab (or, 1 Chron 3:1, Daniel). 2. Hebrew ‘אביגילה. A sister or stepsister of David, daughter of Nahash, wife of Jether, and mother of Amasa (2 Sam 17:25; 1 Chron 2:16–17).

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