

## EASTON'S BIBLE DICTIONARY

**A — Alpha**, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, as Omega is the last. These letters occur in the text of Rev. 1:8,11; 21:6; 22:13, and are represented by “Alpha” and “Omega” respectively (omitted in R.V., 1:11). They mean “the first and last.” (Comp. Heb. 12:2; Isa. 41:4; 44:6; Rev. 1:11,17; 2:8.) In the symbols of the early Christian Church these two letters are frequently combined with the cross or with Christ’s monogram to denote his divinity.

**AARON** — the eldest son of Amram and Jochebed, a daughter of Levi (Ex. 6:20). Some explain the name as meaning mountaineer, others mountain of strength, illuminator. He was born in Egypt three years before his brother Moses, and a number of years after his sister Miriam (2:1,4; 7:7). He married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab of the house of Judah (6:23; 1 Chr. 2:10), by whom he had four sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. When the time for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt drew nigh, he was sent by God (Ex. 4:14,27–30) to meet his long-absent brother, that he might co-operate with him in all that they were required to do in bringing about the Exodus. He was to be the “mouth” or “prophet” of Moses, i.e., was to speak for him, because he was a man of a ready utterance (7:1,2,9,10,19). He was faithful to his trust, and stood by Moses in all his interviews with Pharaoh.

When the ransomed tribes fought their first battle with Amalek in Rephidim, Moses stood on a hill overlooking the scene of the conflict with the rod of God in his outstretched hand. On this occasion he was attended by Aaron and Hur, his sister’s husband, who held up his wearied hands till Joshua and the chosen warriors of Israel gained the victory (17:8–13).

Afterwards, when encamped before Sinai, and when Moses at the command of God ascended the mount to receive the tables of the law, Aaron and his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, along with seventy of the elders of Israel, were permitted to accompany him part of the way, and to behold afar off the manifestation of the glory of Israel’s God (Ex. 19:24; 24:9–11). While Moses remained on the mountain with God, Aaron returned unto the people; and yielding through fear, or ignorance, or instability of character, to their clamour, made unto them a golden calf, and set it up as an object of worship (Ex. 32:4; Ps. 106:19). On the return of Moses to the camp, Aaron was sternly rebuked by him for the part he had acted in this matter; but he interceded for him before God, who forgave his sin (Deut. 9:20).

On the mount, Moses received instructions regarding the system of worship which was to be set up among the people; and in accordance therewith Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priest’s office (Lev. 8; 9). Aaron, as high priest, held henceforth the prominent place appertaining to that office.

When Israel had reached Hazereth, in “the wilderness of Paran,” Aaron joined with his sister Miriam in murmuring against Moses, “because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married,” probably after the death of Zipporah. But the Lord vindicated his servant Moses, and punished Miriam with leprosy (Num. 12). Aaron acknowledged his own and his sister’s guilt, and at the intercession of Moses they were forgiven.

Twenty years after this, when the children of Israel were encamped in the wilderness of Paran, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram conspired against Aaron and his sons; but a fearful

judgment from God fell upon them, and they were destroyed, and the next day thousands of the people also perished by a fierce pestilence, the ravages of which were only stayed by the interposition of Aaron (Num. 16). That there might be further evidence of the divine appointment of Aaron to the priestly office, the chiefs of the tribes were each required to bring to Moses a rod bearing on it the name of his tribe. And these, along with the rod of Aaron for the tribe of Levi, were laid up overnight in the tabernacle, and in the morning it was found that while the other rods remained unchanged, that of Aaron “for the house of Levi” budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds (Num. 17:1–10). This rod was afterwards preserved in the tabernacle (Heb. 9:4) as a memorial of the divine attestation of his appointment to the priesthood.

Aaron was implicated in the sin of his brother at Meribah (Num. 20:8–13), and on that account was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. When the tribes arrived at Mount Hor, “in the edge of the land of Edom,” at the command of God Moses led Aaron and his son Eleazar to the top of that mountain, in the sight of all the people. There he stripped Aaron of his priestly vestments, and put them upon Eleazar; and there Aaron died on the top of the mount, being 123 years old (Num. 20:23–29. Comp. Deut. 10:6; 32:50), and was “gathered unto his people.” The people, “even all the house of Israel,” mourned for him thirty days. Of Aaron’s sons two survived him, Eleazar, whose family held the high-priesthood till the time of Eli; and Ithamar, in whose family, beginning with Eli, the high-priesthood was held till the time of Solomon. Aaron’s other two sons had been struck dead (Lev. 10:1,2) for the daring impiety of offering “strange fire” on the altar of incense.

The Arabs still show with veneration the traditionary site of Aaron’s grave on one of the two summits of Mount Hor, which is marked by a Mohammedan chapel. His name is mentioned in the Koran, and there are found in the writings of the rabbins many fabulous stories regarding him.

He was the first anointed priest. His descendants, “the house of Aaron,” constituted the priesthood in general. In the time of David they were very numerous (1 Chr. 12:27). The other branches of the tribe of Levi held subordinate positions in connection with the sacred office. Aaron was a type of Christ in his official character as the high priest. His priesthood was a “shadow of heavenly things,” and was intended to lead the people of Israel to look forward to the time when “another priest” would arise “after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 6:20). (See MOSES.)

**AARONITES** — the descendants of Aaron, and therefore priests. Jehoiada, the father of Benaiah, led 3,700 Aaronites as “fighting men” to the support of David at Hebron (1 Chr. 12:27). Eleazar (Num. 3:32), and at a later period Zadok (1 Chr. 27:17), was their chief.

**ABADDON** — destruction, the Hebrew name (equivalent to the Greek Apollyon, i.e., destroyer) of “the angel of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 9:11). It is rendered “destruction” in Job 28:22; 31:12; 26:6; Prov. 15:11; 27:20. In the last three of these passages the Revised Version retains the word “Abaddon.” We may regard this word as a personification of the idea of destruction, or as sheol, the realm of the dead.

**ABAGTHA** — one of the seven eunuchs in Ahasuerus’s court (Esther 1:10; 2:21).

**ABANA** — stony (Heb. marg. “Amanah,” perennial), the chief river of Damascus (2 Kings 5:12). Its modern name is Barada, the Chrysorrhoas, or “golden stream,” of the Greeks. It rises in a cleft of the Anti-Lebanon range, about 23 miles north-west of Damascus, and after flowing southward for a little way parts into three smaller streams, the central one flowing through Damascus, and the other two on each side of the city, diffusing beauty and fertility where otherwise there would be barrenness.

**ABARIM** — regions beyond; i.e., on the east of Jordan, a mountain, or rather a mountain-chain, over against Jericho, to the east and south-east of the Dead Sea, in the land of Moab. From “the top of Pisgah”, i.e., Mount Nebo (q.v.), one of its summits, Moses surveyed the Promised Land (Deut. 3:27; 32:49), and there he died (34:1,5). The Israelites had one of their encampments in the mountains of Abarim (Num. 33:47,48) after crossing the Arnon.

**ABBA** — This Syriac or Chaldee word is found three times in the New Testament (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), and in each case is followed by its Greek equivalent, which is translated “father.” It is a term expressing warm affection and filial confidence. It has no perfect equivalent in our language. It has passed into European languages as an ecclesiastical term, “abbot.”

**ABDA** — servant. (1.) The father of Adoniram, whom Solomon set over the tribute (1 Kings 4:6); i.e., the forced labour (R. V., “levy”).  
(2.) A Levite of the family of Jeduthun (Neh. 11:17), also called Obadiah (1 Chr. 9:16).

**ABDEEL** — servant of God, (Jer. 36:26), the father of Shelemiah.

**ABDI** — my servant. (1.) 1 Chr. 6:44. (2.) 2 Chr. 29:12. (3.) Ezra 10:26.

**ABDIEL** — servant of God, (1 Chr. 5:15), a Gadite chief.

**ABDON** — servile. (1.) The son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, the tenth judge of Israel (Judg. 12:13–15). He is probably the Bedan of 1 Sam. 12:11.

(2.) The first-born of Gibeon of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Chr. 8:30; 9:36).

(3.) The son of Micah, one of those whom Josiah sent to the prophetess Huldah to ascertain from her the meaning of the recently discovered book of the law (2 Chr. 34:20). He is called Achbor in 2 Kings 22:12.

(4.) One of the “sons” of Shashak (1 Chr. 8:23).

This is the name also of a Levitical town of the Gershonites, in the tribe of Asher (Josh. 21:30; 1 Chr. 6:74). The ruins of Abdeh, some 8 miles north-east of Accho, probably mark its site.

**ABEDNEGO** — servant of Nego=Nebo, the Chaldee name given to Azariah, one of Daniel’s three companions (Dan. 2:49). With Shadrach and Meshach, he was delivered

from the burning fiery furnace (3:12–30).

**ABEL** — (Heb. Hebhel), a breath, or vanity, the second son of Adam and Eve. He was put to death by his brother Cain (Gen. 4:1–16). Guided by the instruction of their father, the two brothers were trained in the duty of worshipping God. “And in process of time” (marg. “at the end of days”, i.e., on the Sabbath) each of them offered up to God of the first-fruits of his labours. Cain, as a husbandman, offered the fruits of the field; Abel, as a shepherd, of the firstlings of his flock. “The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect” (Gen. 4:3–5). On this account Cain was angry with his brother, and formed the design of putting him to death; a design which he at length found an opportunity of carrying into effect (Gen. 4:8,9. Comp. 1 John 3:12). There are several references to Abel in the New Testament. Our Saviour speaks of him as “righteous” (Matt. 23:35). “The blood of sprinkling” is said to speak “better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:24); i.e., the blood of Jesus is the reality of which the blood of the offering made by Abel was only the type. The comparison here is between the sacrifice offered by Christ and that offered by Abel, and not between the blood of Christ calling for mercy and the blood of the murdered Abel calling for vengeance, as has sometimes been supposed. It is also said (Heb. 11:4) that “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” This sacrifice was made “by faith;” this faith rested in God, not only as the Creator and the God of providence, but especially in God as the great Redeemer, whose sacrifice was typified by the sacrifices which, no doubt by the divine institution, were offered from the days of Adam downward. On account of that “faith” which looked forward to the great atoning sacrifice, Abel’s offering was accepted of God. Cain’s offering had no such reference, and therefore was rejected. Abel was the first martyr, as he was the first of our race to die.

Abel (Heb. abhel>), lamentation (1 Sam. 6:18), the name given to the great stone in Joshua’s field whereon the ark was “set down.” The Revised Version, however, following the Targum and the LXX., reads in the Hebrew text *ebhen*> (= a stone), and accordingly translates “unto the great stone, whereon they set down the ark.” This reading is to be preferred.

Abel (Heb. abhel>), a grassy place, a meadow. This word enters into the composition of the following words:

**ABEL-BETH-MAACHAH** — meadow of the house of Maachah, a city in the north of Palestine, in the neighbourhood of Dan and Ijon, in the tribe of Naphtali. It was a place of considerable strength and importance. It is called a “mother in Israel”, i.e., a metropolis (2 Sam. 20:19). It was besieged by Joab (2 Sam. 20:14), by Benhadad (1 Kings 15:20), and by Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29) about B.C. 734. It is elsewhere called Abel-maim, meadow of the waters, (2 Chr. 16:4). Its site is occupied by the modern Abil or Abil-el-kamh, on a rising ground to the east of the brook Derdarah, which flows through the plain of Huleh into the Jordan, about 6 miles to the west-north-west of Dan.

**ABEL-CHERAMIM** — (Judg. 11:33, R.V.; A. V., “plain of the vineyards”), a village of the Ammonites, whither Jephthah pursued their forces.

**ABEL-MEHOLAH** — meadow of dancing, or the dancing-meadow, the birth-place and residence of the prophet Elisha, not far from Beth-shean (1 Kings 4:12), in the tribe of Issachar, near where the Wady el-Maleh emerges into the valley of the Jordan, “the rich meadow-land which extends about 4 miles south of Beth-shean; moist and luxuriant.” Here Elisha was found at his plough by Elijah on his return up the Jordan valley from Horeb (1 Kings 19:16). It is now called ‘Ain Helweh.

**ABEL-MIZRAIM** — meadow of Egypt, or mourning of Egypt, a place “beyond,” i.e., on the west of Jordan, at the “threshing-floor of Atad.” Here the Egyptians mourned seventy days for Jacob (Gen. 50:4–11). Its site is unknown.

**ABEL-SHITTIM** — meadow of the acacias, frequently called simply “Shittim” (Num. 25:1; Josh. 2:1; Micah 6:5), a place on the east of Jordan, in the plain of Moab, nearly opposite Jericho. It was the forty-second encampment of the Israelites, their last resting-place before they crossed the Jordan (Num. 33:49; 22:1; 26:3; 31:12; comp. 25:1; 31:16).

**ABEZ** — tin, or white, a town in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. 19:20), at the north of the plain of Esdraelon. It is probably identified with the ruins of el-Beida.

**ABIA** — my father is the Lord, the Greek form of Abijah, or Abijam (Matt. 1:7), instead of Abiah (1 Chr. 7:8). In Luke 1:5, the name refers to the head of the eighth of the twenty-four courses into which David divided the priests (1 Chr. 24:10).

**ABI-ALBON** — father of strength; i.e., “valiant”, one of David’s body-guard of thirty mighty men (2 Sam. 23:31); called also Abiel (1 Chr. 11:32).

**ABIASAPH** — father of gathering; the gatherer, the youngest of the three sons of Korah the Levite, head of a family of Korhites (Ex. 6:24); called Ebisaph (1 Chr. 6:37).

**ABIATHAR** — father of abundance, or my father excels, the son of Ahimelech the high priest. He was the tenth high priest, and the fourth in descent from Eli. When his father was slain with the priests of Nob, he escaped, and bearing with him the ephod, he joined David, who was then in the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22:20–23; 23:6). He remained with David, and became priest of the party of which he was the leader (1 Sam. 30:7). When David ascended the throne of Judah, Abiathar was appointed high priest (1 Chr. 15:11; 1 Kings 2:26) and the “king’s companion” (1 Chr. 27:34). Meanwhile Zadok, of the house of Eleazar, had been made high priest. These appointments continued in force till the end of David’s reign (1 Kings 4:4). Abiathar was deposed (the sole historical instance of the deposition of a high priest) and banished to his home at Anathoth by Solomon, because he took part in the attempt to raise Adonijah to the throne. The priesthood thus passed from the house of Ithamar (1 Sam. 2:30–36; 1 Kings 1:19; 2:26, 27). Zadok now became sole high priest. In Mark 2:26, reference is made to an

occurrence in “the days of Abiathar the high priest.” But from 1 Sam. 22, we learn explicitly that this event took place when Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar, was high priest. The apparent discrepancy is satisfactorily explained by interpreting the words in Mark as referring to the life-time of Abiathar, and not to the term of his holding the office of high priest. It is not implied in Mark that he was actual high priest at the time referred to. Others, however, think that the loaves belonged to Abiathar, who was at that time (Lev. 24:9) a priest, and that he either himself gave them to David, or persuaded his father to give them.

**ABIB** — an ear of corn, the month of newly-ripened grain (Ex. 13:4; 23:15); the first of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, and the seventh of the civil year. It began about the time of the vernal equinox, on 21st March. It was called Nisan, after the Captivity (Neh. 2:1). On the fifteenth day of the month, harvest was begun by gathering a sheaf of barley, which was offered unto the Lord on the sixteenth (Lev. 23:4–11).

**ABIDA** — or Abi’dah, father of knowledge; knowing, one of the five sons of Midian, who was the son of Abraham by Keturah (1 Chr. 1:33), and apparently the chief of an Arab tribe.

**ABIDAN** — father of judgment; judge, head of the tribe of Benjamin at the Exodus (Num. 1:11; 2:22).

**ABIEEZER** — father of help; i.e., “helpful.” (1.) The second of the three sons of Hammoleketh, the sister of Gilead. He was the grandson of Manasseh (1 Chr. 7:18). From his family Gideon sprang (Josh. 17:2; comp. Judg. 6:34; 8:2). He was also called Jeezer (Num. 26:30).

(2.) One of David’s thirty warriors (2 Sam. 23:27; comp. 1 Chr. 27:12).

(3.) The prince of the tribe of Dan at the Exodus (Num. 1:12).

**ABIEL** — father (i.e., “possessor”) of God = “pious.” (1.) The son of Zeror and father of Ner, who was the grandfather of Saul (1 Sam. 14:51; 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39). In 1 Sam. 9:1, he is called the “father,” probably meaning the grandfather, of Kish. (2.) An Arbathite, one of David’s warriors (1 Chr. 11:32); called also Abi-albon (2 Sam. 23:31).

**ABIEZRITE** — father of help, a descendant of Abiezer (Judg. 6:11,24; 8:32).

**ABIGAIL** — father (i.e., “leader”) of the dance, or “of joy.” (1.) The sister of David, and wife of Jether an Ishmaelite (1 Chr. 2:16,17). She was the mother of Amasa (2 Sam. 17:25).

(2.) The wife of the churlish Nabal, who dwelt in the district of Carmel (1 Sam. 25:3). She showed great prudence and delicate management at a critical period of her husband’s life. She was “a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance.” After Nabal’s death she became the wife of David (1 Sam. 25:14–42), and was his companion

in all his future fortunes (1 Sam. 27:3; 30:5; 2 Sam. 2:2). By her David had a son called Chileab (2 Sam. 3:3), elsewhere called Daniel (1 Chr. 3:1).

**ABIHAIL** — father of might. (1.) Num. 3:35. (2.) 1 Chr. 2:29. (3.) 1 Chr. 5:14.

(4.) The second wife of King Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11:18), a descendant of Eliab, David's eldest brother.

(5.) The father of Esther and uncle of Mordecai (Esther 2:15).

**ABIHU** — father of Him; i.e., “worshipper of God”, the second of the sons of Aaron (Ex. 6:23; Num. 3:2; 26:60; 1 Chr. 6:3). Along with his three brothers he was consecrated to the priest's office (Ex. 28:1). With his father and elder brother he accompanied the seventy elders part of the way up the mount with Moses (Ex. 24:1,9). On one occasion he and Nadab his brother offered incense in their censers filled with “strange” (i.e., common) fire, i.e., not with fire taken from the great brazen altar (Lev. 6:9, etc.), and for this offence they were struck dead, and were taken out and buried without the camp (Lev. 10:1–11; comp. Num. 3:4; 26:61; 1 Chr. 24:2). It is probable that when they committed this offence they were intoxicated, for immediately after is given the law prohibiting the use of wine or strong drink to the priests.

**ABIHUD** — father (i.e., “possessor”) of renown. (1.) One of the sons of Bela, the son of Benjamin (1 Chr. 8:3); called also Ahihud (ver. 7).

(2.) A descendant of Zerubbabel and father of Eliakim (Matt. 1:13, “Abiud”); called also Juda (Luke 3:26), and Obadiah (1 Chr. 3:21).

**ABIJAH** — father (i.e., “possessor or worshipper”) of Jehovah. (1.) 1 Chr. 7:8. (2.) 1 Chr. 2:24.

(3.) The second son of Samuel (1 Sam. 8:2; 1 Chr. 6:28). His conduct, along with that of his brother, as a judge in Beer-sheba, to which office his father had appointed him, led to popular discontent, and ultimately provoked the people to demand a royal form of government.

(4.) A descendant of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, a chief of one of the twenty-four orders into which the priesthood was divided by David (1 Chr. 24:10). The order of Abijah was one of those which did not return from the Captivity (Ezra 2:36–39; Neh. 7:39–42; 12:1).

(5.) The son of Rehoboam, whom he succeeded on the throne of Judah (1 Chr. 3:10). He is also called Abijam (1 Kings 14:31; 15:1–8). He began his three years' reign (2 Chr. 12:16; 13:1,2) with a strenuous but unsuccessful effort to bring back the ten tribes to their allegiance. His address to “Jeroboam and all Israel,” before encountering them in battle, is worthy of being specially noticed (2 Chr. 13:5–12). It was a very bloody battle, no fewer than 500,000 of the army of Israel having perished on the field. He is described as having walked “in all the sins of his father” (1 Kings 15:3; 2 Chr. 11:20–22). It is said in 1 Kings 15:2 that “his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom;” but in 2 Chr. 13:2 we read, “his mother's name was Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.” The explanation is that Maachah is just a variation of the name Michaiiah, and that Abishalom is probably the same as Absalom, the son of David. It is probable that “Uriel

of Gibeah” married Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Sam. 14:27), and by her had Maachah. The word “daughter” in 1 Kings 15:2 will thus, as it frequently elsewhere does, mean grand-daughter.

(6.) A son of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel. On account of his severe illness when a youth, his father sent his wife to consult the prophet Ahijah regarding his recovery. The prophet, though blind with old age, knew the wife of Jeroboam as soon as she approached, and under a divine impulse he announced to her that inasmuch as in Abijah alone of all the house of Jeroboam there was found “some good thing toward the Lord,” he only would come to his grave in peace. As his mother crossed the threshold of the door on her return, the youth died, and “all Israel mourned for him” (1 Kings 14:1–18).

(7.) The daughter of Zechariah (2 Chr. 29:1; comp. Isa. 8:2), and afterwards the wife of Ahaz. She is also called Abi (2 Kings 18:2).

(8.) One of the sons of Becher, the son of Benjamin (1 Chr. 7:8). “Abiah,” A.V.

**ABIJAM** — father of the sea; i.e., “seaman” the name always used in Kings of the king of Judah, the son of Rehoboam, elsewhere called Abijah (1 Kings 15:1,7,8). (See ABIJAH , 5.)

**ABILENE** — a plain, a district lying on the east slope of the Anti-Lebanon range; so called from its chief town, Abila (Luke 3:1), which stood in the Suk Wady Barada, between Heliopolis (Baalbec) and Damascus, 38 miles from the former and 18 from the latter. Lysanias was governor or tetrarch of this province.

**ABIMAEL** — father of Mael, one of the sons or descendants of Joktan, in Northern Arabia (Gen. 10:28; 1 Chr. 1:22).

**ABIMELECH** — my father a king, or father of a king, a common name of the Philistine kings, as “Pharaoh” was of the Egyptian kings. (1.) The Philistine king of Gerar in the time of Abraham (Gen. 20:1–18). By an interposition of Providence, Sarah was delivered from his harem, and was restored to her husband Abraham. As a mark of respect he gave to Abraham valuable gifts, and offered him a settlement in any part of his country; while at the same time he delicately and yet severely rebuked him for having practised a deception upon him in pretending that Sarah was only his sister. Among the gifts presented by the king were a thousand pieces of silver as a “covering of the eyes” for Sarah; i.e., either as an atoning gift and a testimony of her innocence in the sight of all, or rather for the purpose of procuring a veil for Sarah to conceal her beauty, and thus as a reproof to her for not having worn a veil which, as a married woman, she ought to have done. A few years after this Abimelech visited Abraham, who had removed southward beyond his territory, and there entered into a league of peace and friendship with him. This league was the first of which we have any record. It was confirmed by a mutual oath at Beer-sheba (Gen. 21:22–34).

(2.) A king of Gerar in the time of Isaac, probably the son of the preceding (Gen. 26:1–22). Isaac sought refuge in his territory during a famine, and there he acted a part with reference to his wife Rebekah similar to that of his father Abraham with reference to

Sarah. Abimelech rebuked him for the deception, which he accidentally discovered. Isaac settled for a while here,