

## **Glossary of Important Words and Terms**

**Aegean Sea** - Body of water east of Greece dotted with many islands. Scholars believe the Philistines came from this area.

**Aeolia Capitolina** - Hadrian, the Roman emperor, destroyed Jerusalem after defeating the Jews during the Second Jewish Revolt (AD 132-135). He renamed it Aelia Capitolina and erected a temple to the Roman god Jupiter.

**Aijalon Valley** - Valley connecting the coastal plain and the Judea Mountains where Joshua made the sun stand still.

**Altar of incense** - Located in the holy place or priests' room of the tabernacle or temple, just outside the Holy of Holies. The altar was 1.5 feet square and 3 feet high. The incense symbolized the "sweet smell" of the worshippers' prayers going up to God.

**Altar of sacrifice** - Structure used for presenting sacrifices to God. A large altar of sacrifice stood in the outer court of the temple at Jerusalem. It symbolically stood before God's presence to indicate the need for forgiveness before approaching God.

**Ark of the covenant** - The Hebrew word means "box" or "chest." It contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The cover represented God's throne.

**Armageddon** - Transliteration of the Hebrew har megiddon, which means literally the "hill of Megiddo." Revelation 16:16 uses this place to symbolize the final great battle between good and evil. Many battles were fought at this location because the main trade route went through a mountain pass nearby.

**Ashtoreth** - Canaanite goddess of fertility and love. She is thought to be the daughter of the fertility goddess Asherah.

**Atonement seat** - Slab of gold on top of the ark of the covenant on which the golden cherubim stood. It symbolized God's throne.

**Baal** - Canaanite god of fertility. He is often portrayed as the god of storms, lightning, thunder, and rain. He was worshiped in horrible ways. The name means “lord” or “master.” Israel was seduced into worshipping him.

**Beelzebub** - Corruption of the word “Beelzebul,” meaning “lord of the flies.” It was used by Jesus to refer to the prince of demons, the devil.

**Beelzebul** - Philistine god worshipped at Ekron. It means “Prince Baal.”

**Belial** - Hebrew meaning “useless.” Came to be applied to the devil by the Essenes and the early Christians (2 Corinthians 6).

**Bronze Sea** - Bronze basin at the entrance to the tabernacle used for ceremonial purification before sacrifices were made. It also symbolized God’s forgiveness after sacrifices were made. Solomon commissioned a large basin for the temple at Jerusalem. It was over 14 feet in diameter and seven feet high: it weighed over 25 tons and held 13,000 gallons of water. It sat on the backs of 12 oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east.

**Canaan** - Old Testament name for the Promised Land. It means “land of purple,” referring to the color of the dye produced from shellfish along Canaan’s coast.

**Canaanite** - The word originally meant “merchant” or “trader.” Eventually it came to refer to the people of the region.

**Central mountains** - Region made up of three mountain ranges: Hebron in the south, Judea in the center, and Samaria in the north.

**Cherem** - Hebrew word meaning “totally given to the Lord,” often through destruction. Only God’s judgment could reclaim anything placed under this curse.

**Coastal plain** - flat, fertile area of Israel along the Mediterranean Sea that comprises the Plain of Sharon in the north and Philistine territory in the south.

**Colonnades** - Rows of columns spaced evenly apart that support arches or a roof. First-century Roman streets often had colonnades on both sides.

**Copper Scroll** - One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, etched on copper, claiming to identify a great treasure that had been hidden before the Temple was destroyed.

**Creche** - Nativity scene.

**Dagon** - Philistine god. Recent evidence indicates that he was the grain god responsible for fertility.

**Dead Sea Scrolls** - Commentaries or instruction manuals for the Essene community discovered in 1947 by the Dead Sea in caves near the ruins of Khirbet Qumran. They provide valuable insights into the beliefs of one religious community from the time of Jesus; and contain many references showing common themes, language, and beliefs with the teachings of Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early church. They help verify the most accurate texts of the Old Testament. Though these scrolls are 1,000 years older than other Hebrew manuscripts, there are few differences, and they indicate the miracle of God's protection of His Word throughout history.

**Dome of the Rock** - the Muslim mosque built in the seventh century on the Temple Mount. The presence of this mosque makes it impossible to excavate the Mount.

**First fruits** - The first part of the produce of Israelite farmers that belonged to God.

**First Jewish Revolt** - Revolt against Rome by the Jewish people that resulted in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70.

**Fresco** - Design created by painting water colors onto wet plaster.

**Frieze** - A design or series of low-relief sculptures forming an

ornamental, horizontal band around a room or between the architrave and cornice of a building.

**Gilead Mountains** - Mountains east of the Jordan Valley between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

**Great Rift Valley** - Valley east of Israel where the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea are located. Also known as the Jordan Valley.

**Hallel** - A selection comprising Psalms 113-118 and 135-136 chanted during Jewish feasts.

**Har** - Hebrew for “hill” or “mountain.”

**Hazzan** - Synagogue leader or administrator who cared for the facility and how it was used.

**Hellenism** - Name for the culture and worldview of the Greeks. It was antithetically opposed to the God-centered worldview of the Jews. Hellenism makes the human being the ultimate reality. The human mind is the basis for truth, the human body is the ultimate in wisdom, and human pleasure is the ultimate goal in life. It is the ancestor of modern humanism.

**High place** - Elevated location used in the worship of gods. The God of the Bible also met His people in high places.

**Hinnom** - Valley to the west of Jerusalem that was at one time the city sewage dump and the place where Judean kings sacrificed their children. This valley, with its filth, rottenness, and burning flesh, came to symbolize hell.

**Hippodrome** - Greek, *hippus* (“horse”) and *dromos* (“course”). Referred to a horse racing course or circus. Herod built hippodromes in Caesarea, Jericho, and Jerusalem, where horse races, chariot races, and Olympic style games were held as part of his attempt to Hellenize Israel.

**Humanism** - Modern worldview based on an evolutionary model that considers human beings the ultimate life form and denies the existence

or relevance of God. Right and wrong are determined by human standards, not God's.

**Insula** - A family household arrangement common in Capernaum and Chorazin, where many room-residences for various family members were built around a central courtyard.

**Jezreel Valley** - Large, flat, fertile plain in northern Israel between the Galilee Mountains and the Samaria Mountains. The Via Maris passed through this area. It was also known as the Valley of Armageddon.

**Judah** - Fourth son of Jacob from whom the tribe of Judah and Jesus descended.

Also the name of the southern kingdom after Israel divided in 926 BC.

**Judea** - New Testament name for the Promised Land after the Babylonian Captivity (586 BC). Originally, it referred to the area that belonged to the tribe of Judah.

**Judea Wilderness** - Area from the eastern slopes of the Judea Mountains down to the Great Rift Valley, from Jericho in the north to south of the Dead Sea. Little rain falls here, so there are few plants or animals. Many deep wadis penetrate this wilderness.

**Kidron Valley** - Deep wadi forming the eastern border of Jerusalem between David's City and the Mount of Olives. The spring of Gihon and the garden of Gethsemane are in this valley.

**Kings Highway** - Major trade route east of the Jordan Valley. It was a more difficult road to travel than the Via Maris.

**legion** - A military designation. Composed of spear men, archers, tacticians/ strategists, cavalry, and reserves. Some of the best Roman legions, including the tenth, were stationed in Israel during the first century. Legion also was used to describe a host of demons or an army of angels.

**Manual of Discipline** - One of the writings of the Essenes found among the Dead Sea Scrolls; it describes the rules of the community.

**Messianic banquet** - One way to describe the great banquet that will occur when the Messiah comes.

**Mikveh** - A ceremonial bath where a person immerses to become ritually clean according to Jewish law. A mikveh must be at least four and a half feet deep and hold no less than 195 gallons of water. Most water was piped in from cisterns filled by aqueducts that were connected to rivers or streams, necessary to provide "living water" to ensure purity. Water often was stored next to the mikveh in a special reservoir. Worshippers immersed before entering the Temple Mount. Background to Christian baptism; probable that a mikveh was used for baptisms on the Christian fulfillment of Pentecost.

**Moab Mountains** - Mountain range east of the Dead Sea where the nation of Moab lived.

**Mount Arbel** - Mountain ridge 1,000 feet above the Sea of Galilee. Site of a brutal battle in 38 B.C. between Galilean Jews and Herod the Great for control of Galilee.

**Mount Carmel** - Mountain ridge in Israel that divides the Valley of Jezreel from the coastal plain. Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal here.

**Mount Ebal** - Mountain near the city of Shechem where an altar to God was built. Joshua gave the curses of the covenant on this mountain when he renewed the covenant after entering the Promised Land, as Moses had commanded him.

**Mount Gerizim** - Mountain near the city of Shechem where Joshua pronounced the covenant blessings when he renewed the covenant after entering the Promised Land, as Moses had commanded him.

**Mount Gilboa** - Mountain on the southern edge of the Valley of Jezreel. Saul and Jonathan died here.

**Mount Hermon** - Mountain on the northern border of Israel. More than 9,000 feet above sea level, it is often covered with snow. Water from this

mountain forms the Jordan River.

**Mount Sedom** - This mountain ridge at the southern end of the Dead Sea is composed of salt. It retains the name of the city of Sodom, which was probably nearby.

**Mount Sinai** - Mountain where God met Moses to establish His covenant with the Israelites. Here He gave the Ten Commandments and the instructions for the building of the tabernacle. Many scholars believe Sinai refers to Jebel Musa, a peak in the Sinai Peninsula, the area between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. This peak is 7,500 feet high. Others put Mount Sinai further north; still others in Arabia.

**Mount Tabor** - Mountain at the northeast edge of the Valley of Jezreel. Site of the battle between Deborah and Barak and Jabin, king of Hazor.

**Murex shellfish** - Shellfish found along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea north of Israel, where the Phoenicians lived. Purple dye was produced from these shellfish.

**Nazirite** - Individual who showed his devotion to God by choosing to separate himself from other people through his lifestyle. He made a three-part vow: to never cut his hair or beard, to abstain from any grape product, and to avoid contact with anything dead. Samson was a Nazirite.

**Northern kingdom** - When Israel divided after Solomon's death (926 B.C.), the northern 10 tribes under Jeroboam became the northern kingdom, or Israel. The Assyrians destroyed them in 722 B.C.

**Peristyle garden** - Cultivated garden inside a colonnaded area. Herod the Great built several peristyle gardens, including Jericho and the Herodion.

**Procurator** - Roman military governor. Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea.

**Rabbinic Judaism** - Jewish religious practice after the Temple was destroyed (AD 70) that centered around the Torah and its

interpretation by the rabbis.

**Samaria Mountains** - Northern part of the central mountain range in Israel.

**Scriptorium** - Name given to a room in the Qumran community in which many scholars believe the Essenes wrote some of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

**Second Jewish Revolt** - In this revolt of AD 132-135, the Romans totally removed the nation of Israel. Also known as the Bar Kochba Revolt.

**Septuagint** - Means "70." Greek translation of the Old Testament made during the rule of the Ptolemies over the Jews. Frequently quoted by the authors of the New Testament.

**Shavuot** - Means "weeks"; also known as Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks. It's celebrated 50 days after the Sabbath following Passover.

**Shofar** - Elaborate trumpet made from a ram's horn. Linked to the ram caught in a thicket and sacrificed by Abraham in place of Isaac. Used to intimidate enemies, call people to assembly, and announce prayer time, the start and end of Sabbath, and holy days, like Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succoth, and Passover. Believed that this trumpet will signal the final judgment at the end of time.

**Sicarii** - An extremist sect of the Zealots heavily involved in the First Jewish Revolt. They were named after their short, curved dagger (sica), which they used to assassinate Romans and Jewish collaborators.

**Sinai Peninsula** - Peninsula south of Israel. Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments, may be located here. It is also the area of the Israelite wandering.

**"Sitting in the gate"** - Synonym for being a ruler, judge, or official, because the gate compartments functioned as courthouses.

**Sons of light** - Name the Essenes gave themselves as followers of God. Their enemies (Romans and the apostate priesthood in Jerusalem), in



their opinion, were the sons of darkness. The New Testament uses this language also (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

**Soreq Valley** - Valley linking the coastal plain and the Judea Mountains through the Shephelah. Samson lived here. **southern kingdom** - When Israel divided after Solomon's death (926 BC), the tribe of Judah under Rehoboam became the southern kingdom, or Judah. In 586 BC, God punished the people for their sins by exiling them to Babylon for 70 years. Jesus was born of this tribe.

**Standing stone** - Large stone erected as a testimony to a significant act of God (or gods). Standing stones could serve pagan as well as God-honoring purposes.

**Stele** - Standing stone with an inscription. Our practice of placing tombstones over the graves of loved ones probably derives from this special standing stone.

**Syncretism** - Combining different forms of belief or practice. The Israelites practiced syncretism when they tried to worship both God and Baal.

**Tabernacles (Festival, sanctuary, Succoth)** - The seventh yearly feast (Leviticus 23) when all males were required to come to Jerusalem. The people celebrated Israel's wandering in the desert by living in temporary shelters. Included a water ceremony as part of prayer of rain.

**Table of showbread** - Table that stood in the holy place of the tabernacle and temple, outside the Holy of Holies. Priests placed the bread of the Presence (Exodus 25:30), or showbread, on it. The bread symbolized the Israelites' commitment to give the Lord the results of their work. It also testified that everything they received was a gift from God.

**Tel** - Large mound or hill composed of layers of debris from several different periods of settlement.

**Tetrarch** - A Roman political office; meant one-fourth of a kingdom.

When Herod died, his three sons and others received parts of his kingdom; two sons become tetrarchs, one an ethnarch.

**Topheth** - Place where the Israelites sacrificed their children. Based on a Hebrew word meaning “furnace” or “fireplace,” the word was altered by Hebrew scribes to mean “shameful thing.” It came to apply as well to the cemetery where the victims’ remains were buried and to the location in the Hinnom valley where the sacrifice occurred.

**Torah** - Hebrew word meaning “teaching” or “instruction.” It refers to the first five books of Moses.

**Triclinium** - A reception or banquet hall or dining room. The tables were placed in a U-shape and surrounded by couches, where diners reclined as they ate.

**Valley of Jehoshaphat** - Place where the Lord will summon the world to be judged. The Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem is believed to be this location.

**Wilderness of Paran** - Wilderness south of the Judea and Negev mountains between the Wilderness of Zin and the Sinai Peninsula. The Israelites wandered here for 40 years.

**Yeshua** - Hebrew from “Jesus,” a contraction of the Old Testament “Joshua.” It means “Yahweh saves.”

**Zin Wilderness** - Name of part of the Negev wilderness just west of the Great Rift Valley. Named after the riverbed in the area: Zin.