

34:8). Shaphan plays a prominent role in bringing to the attention of King Josiah the law scroll found in the temple. The name may mean “YHWH has shown himself to be noble” or “YHWH has set apart.” A seal of unknown provenance, dated to the 7th century BCE bears the name Azaliah, son of Meshullam.

Bibliography: ■ Avigad, N., “On the Identification of Persons Mentioned in Hebrew Epigraphic Sources,” *Eretz-Israel* 19 (1987) 237, no. 5. ■ Noth, M., *Die israelitischen Personennamen* (BWANT 46; Hildesheim 1980 [= Stuttgart ¹1928]). [Esp. 193–94]

Pauline A. Viviano

Azaniah

Azaniah (MT ^ʾ*Āzanyā*) is the father of Jeshua, one of the Levites who, with the officials and priests, sign the “sealed document” appended to Ezra’s penitential prayer (Neh 10:10 [ET 10:9]; cf. 12:8).

G. Brooke Lester

Azarel

The name Azarel (MT ^ʾ*Āzarʾēl*) designates six persons in the Bible (Ezra 10:41, Neh 11:13, 12:36, 1 Chr 12:7, 25:18, 27:22), although the LXX transliterations vary widely: Εζερηλ, Εσορηλ, Οζηηλ, Αζαρια, Αζαρηηλ and several other variants. Azarel probably means “God has helped,” although this has been disputed. It has sometimes been confused with Uzziel (“God is my strength”), hence the LXX renderings in two passages Οζηηλ, and Adriel or Adarel (“flock of God,” or the like), which may be Aramaic equivalents of Azarel, according to Gray. Outside of the HB, Azarel occurs in two seals, one of uncertain provenance and the other from Tell Beit Mirsim.

Bibliography: ■ Davies, G., *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions* (Cambridge 1991). [Esp. 142, 211] ■ Fowler, J. D., *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew* (JSOT Supplement Series 49; Sheffield 1988). [Esp. 106, 355] ■ Gray, G. B., *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (London 1896). [Esp. 266]

1. Supporter of David

Azarel was one of the Korahites who came to ally themselves with David while he was a mercenary in Ziklag, where David was headquartered when he faced the hostility of Saul (1 Chr 12:7 [ET 12:6]; cf. 12:1; cf. 1 Sam 27–30). LXX^{BS} = Οζη(ε)ηλ, suggesting the possibility that Azriel and not Azarel is original (but note εληηλ in LXX^{AN}).

Bibliography: ■ Knoppers, G., *1 Chronicles 10–29* (Anchor Bible 12A; New York 2004). [Esp. 558]

2. The Levite

Azarel is mentioned as the head of the 11th division of Levitical musicians David appointed for the service of the temple (1 Chr 25:18).

3. The Danite

Azarel is also the name of a commander of the Danites in the Chronicler’s listing of David’s military officers (1 Chr 27:22).

4. The Priest

Azarel the son of Ahzai is the father of Amashsai and a priestly functionary who came to live in Jerusalem after the exile (Neh 11:13).

5. The Musician

One of the musicians who ascended the wall of Jerusalem when it was dedicated by Ezra the Scribe (Neh 12:36). He is perhaps to be identified with Azarel (4) the son of Ahzai, the priest (Neh 11:13).

6. Descendant of Binnui

Azarel is also a descendant of Binnui/Bannui (Ezra 10:44). He was one of the people who, at the behest of Ezra the Scribe, sent away their foreign wives and children in order to keep the community ethnically pure.

R. Mark Shipp

Azariah

Azariah is a popular personal name, which means “YHWH has helped.”

1. Son of Zadok

Azariah, son of Zadok, heads the list of high officials of Solomon in 1 Kgs 4:2–6. He is characterized as “the priest.” Within its literary setting, the allocation of the first spot in the list to him communicates a contrast between the Solomonic and the Davidic periods (as well as, between Solomon and David), for military officers are consistently presented at the head of the lists associated with the reign of the latter (cf. 2 Sam 8:16–18; 20:23–26; and note even within the Solomonic list, the sequence “Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in command of the army; Zadok and Abiathar were priests” in 1 Kgs 4:4). This Azariah might have been identified with Azariah “6. Son of Ahimaaz” (see below) by Persian period literati. Whether the Solomonic list as a whole or sections thereof are only literary/ideological creations or go back to official registers is still debated.

2. Son of Nathan

Azariah, son of Nathan (1 Kgs 4:5), is another official in the list of main officials of Solomon. He is described as being over the prefects (*niššābim*) of the 12 districts (cf. 1 Kgs 4:7).

3. King of Judah

A report about the reign of King Azariah(u) of Judah appears in 2 Kgs 15:1–7, though the king is referred to also in 2 Kgs 14:21; 15:8, 13, 17, 23,

27, 30, 32, 34 (in vv. 13, 30, 32, 34 he is named Uzziyah[u]). A much larger account of his reign is present in 2 Chr 26:1–23 (cf. also 27:2) where he is consistently named Uzziahu. He is called Uzziyah(u) in Isa 1:1; 6:1; Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5. The report about Isaiah's vision in Isa 6:1 dates the latter to the year in Uzziyah died. The text in Zech 14:5 refers to a memory of a mighty earthquake during his reign (cf. Amos 1:1). Significantly, this earthquake is mentioned neither in 2 Kings nor in 2 Chronicles. Historically, Uzziyah's reign was contemporaneous with that of Jeroboam II of Israel, the last stable and prosperous period of the northern kingdom, and the beginning of Assyrian campaigns to the southern Levant that would eventually lead to Assyrian domination of the entire area. Uzziyah was probably an ally of Jeroboam II and both adopted a positive attitude towards Assyria. Neither 2 Kings nor 2 Chronicles, however, relate these matters. 2 Kings reports that he was crowned by "the people of Judah," following the assassination of his father Amaziah and that he rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah (2 Kgs 14:21), but in the main focuses on its pious character and the skin disease that affected him alone among all kings of Judah or Israel. 2 Chronicles devotes much space to the characterization of Uzziyah as a builder – both of/in urban centers and countryside – and as conqueror who strengthened the army, while he was pious; but also as the king who attempted to usurp the proper roles of the priests and thus was punished. Although monarchic period priests as a whole are constructed as subservient of the king not only in 2 Kings but to an even larger extent in 2 Chronicles, the report in 2 Chr 26:16–23 shapes in the latter a sense of boundaries that must not be trespassed. The roles of two figures that played prophetic roles during his reign (Zechariah and Azariah cf. "14. High Priest under Uzziyah" [see below]) are particularly highlighted in 2 Chronicles.

Bibliography: ■ Beentjes, P. C., "They saw that his forehead was leprous" (2 Chr 26:20)," in *Purity and Holiness* (eds. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis/J. Schwartz; Leiden/Boston 2000) 61–72. ■ Bianchi, F./G. Rossoni, "L'armée d'Ozias (2 Ch 26,11–15) entre fiction et réalité," *Transeuphratène* 13 (1997) 21–37. ■ Na'aman, N., "Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel," *VT* 43 (1993) 227–34.

4. Son of Ethan

Azariah appears as the son of Ethan in the genealogy of Zerach (1 Chr 2:8), one of the two sons of Judah and Tamar.

5. Son of Jehu

Azariah appears, as the son of Jehu and the father of Helez, within the larger frame of the genealogy of Judah in general and that of Sheshan in particular (1 Chr 2:38–39). The long list of descendants of

Sheshan, in which this Azariah is mentioned, is of singular theological significance in 1 Chronicles, because the message it conveys concerning "mixed" marriage. The long list of Sheshan's descendants here communicates to the intended readers that Sheshan's decision to give his daughter to his Egyptian slave Jarha was not only appropriate in YHWH's sight, but also encountered divine blessing. Although the circumstances of the case are particular (Sheshan "had no sons, only daughters"), there is a clear contrast between the position adopted by Sheshan, and by implication YHWH and the author of 1 Chronicles, and that advocated in Ezra-Nehemiah. (These issues are most relevant to the question of separate authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah and 1 Chronicles).

6. Son of Ahimaaz

Azariah is mentioned as son of Ahimaaz and father of Johanan in the priestly list construed by 1 Chr 5:27–41. If as Knoppers and many others propose, the brief report associated with (another) Azariah in 1 Chr 5:36 (ET 6:9) referred originally to this Azariah, then at that stage of the text he would have been identified with the priest in the temple that Solomon built (cf. Azariah "1. Son of Zadok"). 1 Chronicles, however, characterizes this Azariah as the grandson of Zadok.

Bibliography: ■ Knoppers, G. N., *1 Chronicles 1–9* (Anchor Bible 12; New York 2004).

7. Son of Johanan

Azariah appears as father of Amariah, son of Johanan and grandson of Azariah 6 ("Son of Ahimaaz," see above) in the priestly list construed by 1 Chr 5:27–41. In the present form of this text, he is characterized as the priest in the temple that Solomon built, even if he is explicitly presented as the great-great-grandson of Zadok (5:36 [ET 6:10]). Verses 27–41 expand the list of priests during the Solomonic period to include four generations. Expansions and contractions of genealogical time in 1 Chronicles reflect and communicate the relative theological importance assigned to different periods.

8. Father of Seraiah

Azariah is mentioned as son of Hilkiah, father of Seraiah (1 Chr 5:39 [ET 6:13]; cf. 2 Kgs 25:18–21; Ezra 7:1) and grandfather of Jehozadak in the priestly list construed by 1 Chr 5:27–41, in which Jehozadak is characterized as the priest who "went into exile when the LORD exiled Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar." Azariah 8 is the third Azariah in this priestly list.

9. Son of Zephaniah

Azariah is a Kohathite who appears as the father of Joel and the son of Zephaniah (1 Chr 6:21 [ET 6:36]) in the Levite genealogy construed by 1 Chr 6:1–38.

10. Grandson of Meshullam

Azariah is the name given to a priest, described as the son of Hilkiah (cf. “8. Father of Seraiah”) and possibly as “the chief officer of the house of God” within the list of inhabitants of (Persian period) Jerusalem (1 Chr 9:11), construed by vv. 3–34. A “parallel” version of the list appears in Neh 11, though it is associated there with a later date. In this “parallel” list, Seraiah takes the place of Azariah 10 (see Neh 11:11; cf. above “8.,” who is presented as father of Seraiah). It has been suggested that this exchange of names might have been generated by a simple reading error involving an understanding of an *z* as if it were a *s* (cf. “20. Returnee from Exile”).

11. Son of Oded

Azariah, son of Oded (2 Chr 15:1), is an important prophetic character in 2 Chronicles. According to the narrative, the “spirit of God” came to him after Asa defeated the multitudinous forces of Zerah the Cushite. Azariah then uttered an important prophetic speech (15:2b–7) that led Asa to launch a major cultic reforming campaign, which included a covenant to seek YHWH that took place at the temple and the deposition of Asa’s mother from her position as *gebirah*, because of her cultic activities. Azariah’s prophetic speech states some common ideas in v. 2, but also de-familiarizes the traditional Chronicler’s prophetic speech by being proclaimed after, instead of before the battle. It also defamiliarizes the narrative expectations created by the preceding text since it depicts a dire situation just following an astonishing military success. Moreover, the speech carries a strong echo of prophetic texts set in periods later than those of Azariah and Asa (e.g., 2 Chr 15:3 contains an echo of Hos 3:4, 2 Chr 15:5 of both Zech 8:10 and Amos 3:9, 2 Chr 15:7 of Zeph 3:16 and Jer 31:16; there is also a clear textual relation between 2 Chr 15:4 and Hos 5:15). All these features draw the attention of the intended readers of Chronicles to the speech. Some of these features also emphasize that the Azariah’s prophetic message should not be read only (or even mainly) in terms of its immediate (narrative/“historical”) circumstances, that is, the immediate aftermath of Asa’s great victory over Zerah.

Bibliography: ■ Ben-Barak, Z., “The Status and Right of the *gebirā*,” in *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings* (ed. A. Brenner; The Feminist Companion to the Bible 5; Sheffield 1994) 170–85.

12. Two Sons of Jehoshaphat

Two of the sons of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 21:2) were named Azariah (in Heb., one *‘Azarjā* and the other *‘Azarjāhū*). When Jehoshaphat’s firstborn son, their brother Jehoram was established in the throne, he killed these two Azariahs along with all his other brothers.

13. Two Commanders under Jehoiada

Two Azariahs are mentioned among the five military leaders (“commanders of the hundreds”; 2 Chr 23:1) who participated in Jehoiada’s successful coup against Athaliah. The coup led to the re-instatement of a Davidic king over Jerusalem.

14. High Priest under Uzziah/Azariah

Azariah is the name given to a chief priest who, with the support of a group of 80 priests, attempted to stop King Uzziah of Judah (2 Chr 26:17, 20; also referred to as Azariah in 2 Kings, cf. Azariah “3. King of Judah”) from entering the temple to make an offering on the altar of incense. The king became incensed when Azariah told him that only the priests may burn incense, and as a result, he was punished with a skin disease that immediately appeared in his forehead. This Azariah stands out in 2 Chronicles as a relatively rare example of a monarchic period high priest who stood for what is right in YHWH’s sight against a Davidic king bent on wrongdoing.

15. The Ephraimite

Azariah, the Ephraimite, is the first of the four “heads of Ephraim” who supported the message of the prophet Oded (2 Chr 28:12). They addressed the victorious Ephraimite army when it came back with Judahite captives and booty, after having defeated Ahaz. In response to the prophetic speech of Oded and that of the “heads of Ephraim,” the Ephraimites took good care of the captives (including feeding and clothing them as necessary) and then released them. The presence of a true prophet in the North, of pious non-kingly leadership, and of a people that responds positively to both of them, while at the same time being fully aware of its previous sin, reflects and shapes an understanding of Ephraim, and all northern Israel, as a manifestation of Israel that is potentially as pious as Judah may be. In fact, during Ahaz’s rule, the Davidic led Judah is depicted as clearly impious, while the opposite holds true for a contemporary Ephraim that listens to prophetic messages and is led by non-kingly leaders.

Bibliography: ■ Ben Zvi, E., “A Gateway to the Chronicler’s Teaching,” *SJOT* 7/2 (1993) 216–49.

16. Father of Joel

Azariah, the father of Joel, is a Levite from the line of the Kohathites whose son Joel was among those who cleansed the temple in the first year of King Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:12).

17. Son of Jehallelel

Azariah, son of Jehallelel, was a Levite from the descendants of Merari who was among those who cleansed the temple in the first year of King Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:12).

18. High Priest under Hezekiah

Azariah, as Zadokite priest, is characterized as “chief priest” and as “chief officer” (*nēgîd*) of the temple at the time of the cultic reform/purge of King Hezekiah (2 Chr 31:10, 13).

19. Son of Maaseiah

Azariah, son of Maaseiah son of Ananiah, was one of the builders of the wall during the governorship of Nehemiah. He repaired the wall beside his own house (Neh 3:23–24).

20. Returnee from Exile

Azariah is known as an important personage who came back to Judah with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and Nehemiah, among others. (Seraiah takes the place of Azariah 20 in the “parallel” list in Ezra 2:2 and cf. the case of Azariah 10 [“Grandson of Meshulam”] and see note there). Within the context of studies about the possible connotative meaning of the reference to “Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah and Azariah” (Neh 7:7), it has been noted that the name Azariah is certainly evocative of the name Ezra (that is, in fact, an hypocoristic form of Azariah).

21. Interpreter of Ezra

Azariah is one of the Levites (Neh 8:7) who explained the (divine) teaching (*tôrâ*) to the people on the occasion of Ezra’s cultic reading of the “book of the teaching of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel” (Neh 7:72b–8:12 [ET 7:73b–8:12]).

22. Contemporary of Nehemiah

Azariah is the name of one of the first individuals mentioned in the list of priests (Neh 10:3 [ET 10:2]) who signed the prominent written agreement (*‘mnah*) under Nehemiah (cf. 10:1–40 [ET 9:38–10:39]). A comparison between the lists of priests here (10:3–9) and those in 12:1–7 and vv. 12–21, along with the fact that Ezra is an hypocoristic form of Azariah, has led many scholars to think that “Azariah” in this verse stands for “Ezra.” It is worth noting also that Azariah in the present list is preceded by Seraiah (On associative occurrences of the names Seraiah and Azariah; cf. Azariah 8, 10, 22).

23. Participant in the Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem

Azariah is listed as one of the priests (Neh 12:33; v. 35a most likely refers to the persons named in the two previous verses) who participated in the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. His name appears in the list just before a priest named Ezra. It has been suggested that one of these two names is a gloss of the other (Azariah “22. Contemporary of Nehemiah,” see above), and that one of the two stood for Ezra, the scribe, who is mentioned later

in the same pericope (Neh 12:36), and who was also a priest.

24. Son of Hoshaiiah

Azariah, son of Hoshaiiah (MT Jer 43:2), is portrayed as a leader of post-destruction Judahites who said to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie. The LORD our God did not send you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to settle there.’” The other leader was Johanan son of Kareah. Many scholars think that the same Azariah is referred to in Jer 42:1. (The MT there reads Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah.)

25. Abednego

Along with Daniel, Hananiah and Mishael, Azariah was one of the Judahite youths in exile who were selected to be educated in the writings and the language of the Chaldeans so they will be able to enter the king’s service in Babylon (Dan 1:6, 7, 11, 19; 2:17). The chief eunuch called him Abednego. YHWH gave these young men unmatched knowledge in all writings, wisdom and understanding. Daniel, unlike Azariah and his other two companions was endowed also with understanding of dreams and visions. Daniel’s ability to interpret a particular dream of the king saved eventually the lives of all the wise men of Babylon, including Azariah. In one story in the Daniel cycle, their piety is construed in terms of refusing to eat royal rations and drink the king’s wine, for reasons of purity. In another story in the Daniel cycle – which interestingly does not mention Daniel – Azariah = Abednego, Hananiah = Shadrach, and Mishael = Meshach refuse to serve Nebuchadnezzar’s god and bow down and worship the golden statue made by the king. As a result, the king orders them to be thrown into a burning fiery furnace, but the fire had no effect on them. (A fourth character, who looks like a divine being joined them in the furnace). The story of Azariah/Abednego and his companions served to inculcate a willingness to suffer torture and death if the alternative is conceived as apostasy. It served also to inculcate hope for divine intervention in favor of pious people who are persecuted because of their piety. Both themes became important in Judah during and following the persecutions of Antiochus IV. Significantly, the “happy end” in this story consists of a situation in which the foreign king (none other than Nebuchadnezzar) blesses “the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,” recognizes its power and acknowledges and publicly recounts the signs and wonders that this deity has worked for him (i.e., saving the three companions from the fire). Moreover, he issues a decree forbidding any nation to speak anything offensive to that god, and promotes the three pious Judahites to high positions in the service of the king of Babylon.

See further → Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego

Bibliography: ■ Koch, K., *Daniel 1–4* (Biblicher Kommentar 22/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2005).

Ehud Ben Zvi

26. Pseudonym of the Angel Raphael

Azariah (LXX Αζαριας [“Azarias”]), is the name taken by the archangel Raphael in the book of Tobit. He travels with Tobias under the guise of being one of his kinsmen and assists Tobias and his family (5:11–17). Most significantly, he instructs Tobias to keep the heart, liver, and gall of a large fish (6:1–9), each of which later turns out to provide crucial aid – the smoke of the burnt liver and heart drives away the demon Asmodeus, who had killed each of her seven previous husbands on their wedding night, from his new bride Sarah (8:1–3), and the gall applied as a salve heals his father blindness (11:7–8). Divine help for Tobias manifested through this archangel is conveyed as well by the archangel’s names: Raphael (“God has healed”) and Azariah/Azarias (“God has helped”).

Shane Berg

27. Leader of the People

The text (1 Macc 5:18–19) describes a man named Azariah as “a leader of the people.” Judas Maccabeus appointed him along with Joseph son of Zechariah as leaders of the army left in Judea, when Judas set to campaign in the Gilead and Simon, his brother, to the Galilee.

28. Descendant of Immer

Azariah is mentioned as the 6th in a list of six priests, descendants of Immer (1 Esd 9:21), who pledged to put away his (foreign) wife at the time of Ezra. (The “parallel” text in Ezra 10:20 includes only the first two names in the list and therefore, it does not include Azariah.)

29. Companion of Ezra

In 1 Esdras’ version of Ezra’s cultic reading mentioned in reference to Azariah 21 (“Interpreter of Ezra”), an Azariah is mentioned among seven men who stood by Ezra on his right. In this version, six men stood on his left. This asymmetric order is the reverse of that in the “parallel” version of 1 Esd 9:43 in Neh 8:4 – there six were on his right and seven on Ezra’s left. The version in Neh 8:4 does not include Azariah among its 13 men.

Ehud Ben Zvi

Azariah, Prayer of

→ Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Jews

Azariah de’ Rossi

→ De’ Rossi, Azariah

Azarias

→ Azariah

Azaru

Azaru (LXX Αζουρου, Αζαρου) was the progenitor of a group of 432 who returned under Zerubbabel to Yehud from Babylon (1 Esd 5:15). His name is one of three omitted in the MT, possibly through homoioteleuton. The form, if not the person, may coincide with cognate forms elsewhere in the Ezra and Nehemiah corpus, such as Azzur (Neh 10:17) and Ezora (1 Esd 9:34).

Gerald Bilkes

Azaz

Azaz is a Reubenite (MT ᾿Αζαζ; LXX Οζουζ) whose son, father, and grandfather are listed in the genealogy of 1 Chr 5:8. The name is probably a short form of Azaziah.

J. P. Kang

Azazel

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. Judaism
- III. Islam

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

In the Bible, the term Azazel (MT ᾿אַזָּאֵזֶל) is found only in Lev 16 where it is associated with an expiation ritual. Having first been designated for the sin offering, two goats are further distinguished by lots cast at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. One goat is selected “for the LORD” while the other is for “Azazel” (Lev 16:8). Once overlaid with the guilt of the people (Lev 16:21), the latter goat is escorted to the wilderness to (or for?) Azazel.

But what – or who – is Azazel? While firm consensus on the interpretation of the term has not been reached, proposals may conveniently be classified into three approaches: ᾿אַזָּאֵזֶל refers either to the goat itself, to the place where the goat is banished, or to a demonic figure (Milgrom: 1020–21; Wright: 536).

The idea that ᾿אַזָּאֵזֶל refers to the “scapegoat” is based on the supposition that the term is derived from two words, ᾿עַז ᾿אַזַל (or ᾿עַז ᾿וֹזַל), “the goat that goes out.” The LXX’s τῷ ἀποπομπίῳ (for the one sent away, Lev 16:8), εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπὴν ἀφήσει (for the one sent away for release, Lev 16:10) and τὸν χίμαρον τὸν διεσταλμένον εἰς ἀφῆσιν (the goat distinguished for sending, Lev 16:26) suggests that ᾿עַז ᾿אַזַל or the like was before the translators. So, too, the Latin Vulgate offers caper emissarius (the goat that is sent) in the aforementioned verses. The root verb occurs in both Aramaic and Hebrew (e.g.,