

The background of the entire page is a grayscale image of an open book. The book is centered horizontally and vertically, with its pages fanning out. The image is intentionally blurred, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this background.

NAME, A STORY

A BIBLE STUDY SERIES ABOUT 5 OBSCURE PEOPLE

PREPARED BY DR. ANDREW CORBETT

Name, A Story

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A Series of 5 Bible Studies About Some of the Bible's Most Obscure People

Prepared by Dr. Andrew Corbett

<http://www.andrewcorbett.net/bible-studies-for-small-groups/>

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Behind every name there is a story. F.W. Boreham opens his autobiography with the statement about every person has a story to tell. In fact, he says, the person whose story is not worth telling has never been born. One of the unique things about the Bible compared with other so-called religious holy books, is that it is a *story*. Not only is there a grand story which undergirds it, there are numerous short stories punctuating it. Some of these short stories have entire biblical books dedicated to them. Others warrant a chapter or two. But these five people, with whom we are about to become more acquainted, receive no more than a one-verse mention. Yet their impact on the world was profound. They, like most true heroes, are the unsung heroes of this world. It is my hope that by considering the lives and works of these people, you may even reconsider your own contribution to our world and decrease your possible desire for fame or even acknowledgement, and come to realise that the One who truly matters always honours those who know it and seek to give Him all the fame and acknowledgement they can.

Andrew Corbett

RIDGE ROAD, LEGANA, TASMANIA, MAY 2017



What does your name mean? What's the strangest story behind someone's name that you've ever heard?

There are certain things that make human beings *unique*. *Music* is one of those things. Not long after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, the Bible tells us that mankind sought to express themselves with *music*.

1. What does Psalm 101:1 tell us about the role of singing, music, and worship?

In a profound way, music is an expression of the Trinity. As the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one yet three in perfect harmony, so music also takes diverse notes to make one harmonious chord.

2. What does Revelation 14:1-2 tell us about how angels sound, and what people do in heaven?

Jubal is described as the inventor and developer of musical instruments. It is said that *necessity is the mother of invention*. Jubal lived at a time when the earth's population was relatively low and geographically very concentrated. Assuming that there are no gaps in the genealogical records of Scripture, he was only a few generations removed from Adam, the first man. Jubal may not have had the best home life. Consider the character of his father, Lamech (Gen. 4:23) and how this could have shaped him.

3. What did Jubal invent or develop according Genesis 4:21?

Coincidentally, archaeologists tell us that the first instrument used by human beings (apart from their voices) was a flute or pipe. Pictured right is a discovery of what is believed to be a piece of the oldest known musical instrument. It is estimated to be around 67,000 years old (<https://www.smashinglists.com/10-earliest-known-musical-instruments/>). It is made from a piece of bone with holes bored into it in precisely the right places for a diatonic scale, according to Canadian musicologist Bob Fink .

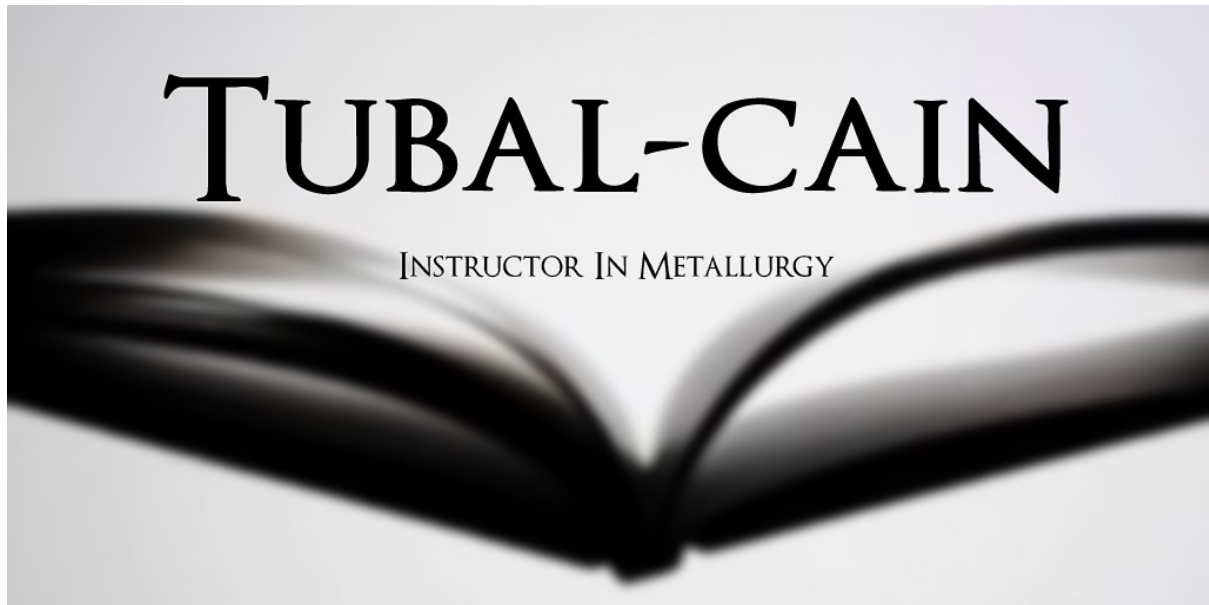


Jubal probably experimented with various methods of making music. Experimentation is often the pathway to invention. But he wasn't merely the father of musical instruments, he was also the developer of these instruments.

4. What does Genesis 4:21 say that Jubal was the father of?

This would have necessarily involved *teaching* others to play these instruments. It almost certainly would have resulted in some forms of musical pieces also being developed. From these humble beginnings, music and the instruments used to produce continued to evolve. By the time we come to the Psalms, we see that the various Psalmists had developed music to be played with various instruments (Ps. 150) and sung by choirs. The next time you enjoy your favourite music don't forget to thank God for *Jubal*.

Amen.



Does your family have a family crest with a motto? If so, what is it? If not, what would you want it to be?

The half brother of the Father of Musical Instruments, *Jubal*, was Tubal-cain (also written as *Tubalcain*). Two brothers, albeit half-brothers, could not be more different. Sometimes people assume that the members of one family are all alike. The name, *Tubal-cain* is believed to mean *metal smith*. That is, *the mixer of metals*. Some Hebrew scholars believe that Tubal-cain was the first to develop metal weapons, since it is believed that since Adam and Abel “tilled the ground” they probably used metal implements to do so (Gen. 3:23; 4:2). Some scholars believe that Tubal-cain’s inventions of weapons may have enabled his father, *Lamech* to commit manslaughter (Gen. 4:23).

We now know that bronze is an amalgam of 80% copper and 20% tin. How would Tubal-cain have discovered this?

1. Circle the traits an inventor needs to have (and Tubal-cain probably had) —
 - a. Too much time on their hands
 - b. A willingness to experiment
 - c. A lot of curiosity
 - d. A PhD in physics and chemistry

Iron is formed from smelting (“heating and melting”) *iron ore* which looks remarkably like *a stone*! What would have caused Tubal-cain to think that he could *melt* a stone? Great inventors view ‘failure’ totally differently to the rest of us.

2. In what way do inventors see ‘failure’ in a positive light?



It is said that before Thomas Edison invented the incandescent light globe he had made nearly 10,000 ‘failed’ attempts to do so. When asked about this repeated string of failures, Edison positively replied that he hadn’t failed, rather, he had *successfully* discovered 10,000 ways *not* to make a light globe!

During the Middle Ages before the enlightenment period was about to dawn, men who became known as ‘Alchemists’ were experimenting with all sorts of matter and minerals in an attempt to make gold. They ‘failed’; but along the way they discovered what has now become known as *The Periodic Table of Elements*. Perhaps you have been battling with some past failure and could benefit from a change of perspective inspired by these Alchemists? In a real way, Tubal-cain was the first Alchemist.

3. Many scholars see a link between Tubal-cain’s inventions with metal mentioned in Genesis 4:22 and what is reported in Genesis 4:23. What may have been Tubal-cain’s motive in experimenting with metal?

History tells us that many inventors do not realise the full potential of their inventions. While Tubal-cain’s motives for developing forged metals may have been evil, today we can see how God has redeemed the use of metal for His glory.

4. In what ways has God redeemed the use of metal for His glory today? Circle each true answer -
- a. In the production of engines which make rapid and long distance travel possible
 - b. For use in telecommunications
 - c. In the manufacturing of life-saving medical equipment and implants

As with music or any material object, metal in itself is neither good or bad. What makes a song, or any object, good or bad is *how it is used*.

5. Note which Scripture refers to a good use of metal and an evil use of metal-
Deuteronomy 27:15 _____
First Kings 7:23 _____

Jubal and Tubal-cain were sons of the same father, Lamech, but to different mothers, Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:19). This is the first recorded instance of *polygamy* (the taking of more than one wife). This was not God's intention for marriage.

6. How did Jesus describe God's original intention for marriage? (Matthew 19:4-5)

When Tubal-cain's Great-Great-Grandfather, Cain, killed Abel (Cain's brother) he fled *east* from Eden. As you read through Scripture, notice how the Bible highlights that when someone rebels against God they head east, but when people seek God they head west, or to put it another way, *they come from the east* (Mtt. 2:1).

It seems that Cain's wanderings ('Nod' means wanderings) led him to establish a 'city'.

"In vv.20-24 the author names the originators of the primary components of city life: animal husbandry (Jabal, v.20), arts (Jubal, v.21), craftsmanship (Tubal-Cain, v.22), and it appears, law (Lamech vv.23-24)."

THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY, Vol. 2, John H. Sailhamer, 1990, p.67

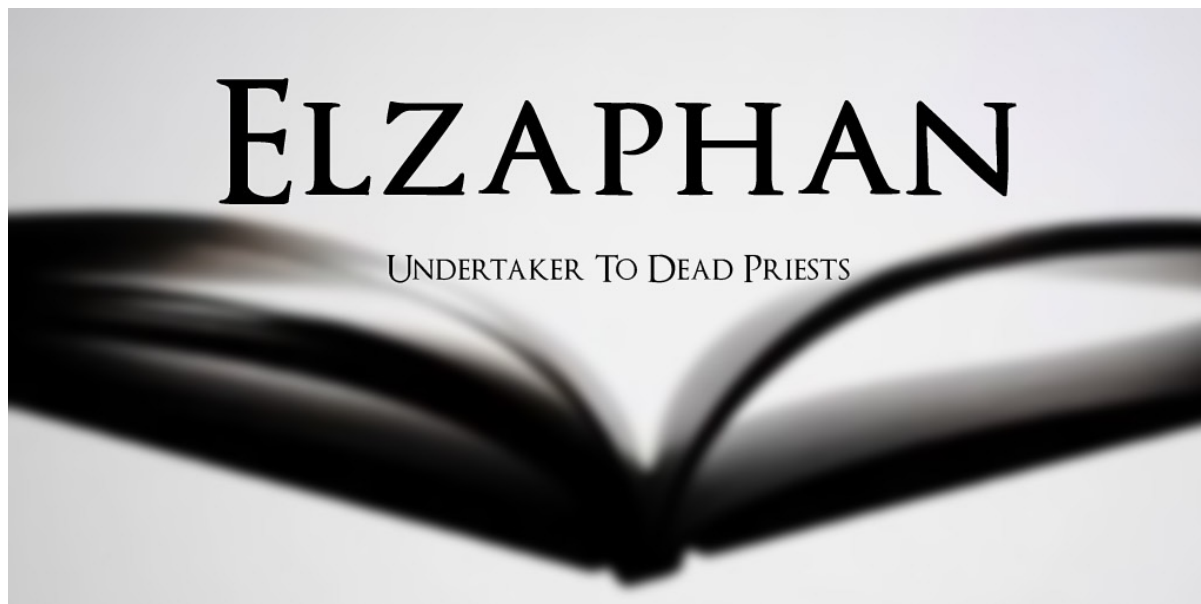
Tubal-cain's father, Lamech, told his two wives that he had *avenged* himself by killing a man (Gen. 4:23). That is, he said that it was in *self-defence*. His Great Grandfather, Cain, had killed his brother and was then confronted by God who put a mark of protection on him. But Cain did not murder Abel in self-defence. Lamech then claimed sanctuary from God.

7. If God was to punish someone 7 times as much if they killed Cain for murdering Abel, how much more did he claim God would punish anyone for killing him for killing someone in self-defence? (Genesis 4:24)

This is the basis for the legal distinction between *murder* (Deut. 19:11) and *manslaughter* (Num. 35:12). Lamech's appeal tells that the 'city' in which he and children lived not only had an agricultural economy and an arts community, it also had a system of law.

Tubal-cain's story tells us that God has probably invested even more great discoveries in this world that are currently 'concealed' from us, but which God has designed for mankind to seek to discover (note Proverbs 25:2). Maybe God might use you to make one of these discoveries which could result in millions of lives being enriched and the God who loves them receiving even greater glory.

Amen.



We are introduced to this obscure but important character in Leviticus 10. His appearance reveals a man who was humble with a servant spirit. His mission often involved dealing with extremely delicate matters discreetly. Elzaphan was a Levite. His cousins were Aaronites. Levites and Aaronites worked together in the House of God. The Tribe of Levi served the Priestly Tribe of Aaron (the “Aaronites”).

1. When all of Israel had abandoned God by worshiping the Golden Calf, there was one tribe which had remained faithful to God. Which tribe was that? (Exodus 32:26)

2. As a result of their allegiance to the LORD, they were *ordained* (‘set apart’, ‘dedicated’) for what? (Exodus 32:29)

As a Levite, Elzaphan's life was dedicated to serving others. This service was done in support of the Priests. In the New Covenant, God has also called some to dedicate their lives to serving in a supportive way to those who are called to preach and teach.

3. Read Acts 6:1-7. Note how the apostles served in a 'priestly' capacity by dedicating themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer. Who served them, and in what way? (What was the result of the apostles being released to focus on the Word and prayer?)

4. What qualities does the New Testament prescribe for 'deacons' according to First Timothy 3:8-13?

We are introduced to Elzaphan in the midst of tragedy. His nephews were priests. But they had acted improperly.

5. What did his nephews do that was improper and how did God respond? (Leviticus 10:1-2)

At first, this may seem to be a trivial incident with a disproportionate response from God. But Leviticus 10:3 indicates that there was more to this incident than first meets the eye.

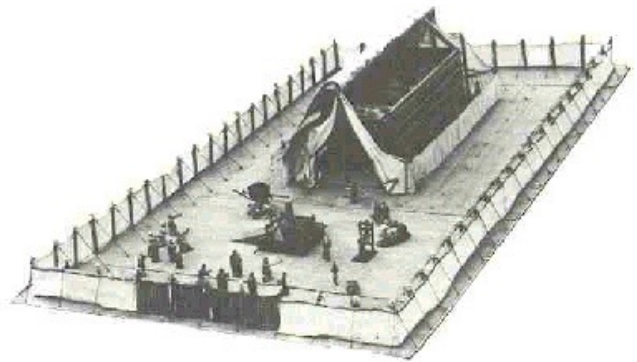
6. How does what God said to Aaron in Leviticus 10:9 indicate that Nadab and Abihu had done more than just *bring fire* into the Tabernacle?

7. How did Elzaphan respond to his cousin's directive to undertake the removal of these priests' dead bodies from the Tabernacle? (Lev. 10:4-5)

Sometimes leaders ask us to do things we don't agree with or understand.

8. What if we don't agree with our leader's decision? How does Hebrews 13:17 tell us to respond in such instances, and why? (Note Hebrews 13:7)

Elzaphan's nephews, Nadab and Abihu, had treated the sacred things of God with contempt by entering into the Tabernacle intoxicated. This flippancy with sacred things infuriated God and His judgment was swift and appropriate.


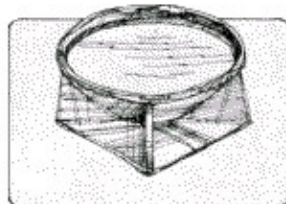
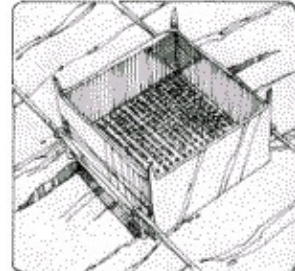

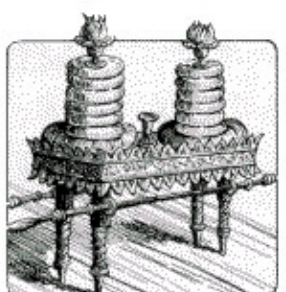
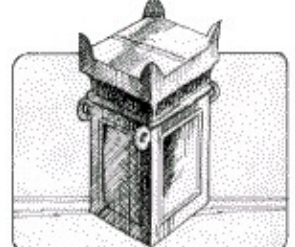


9. What instructions did the Lord give the grieving Aaron in Leviticus 10:8-11?

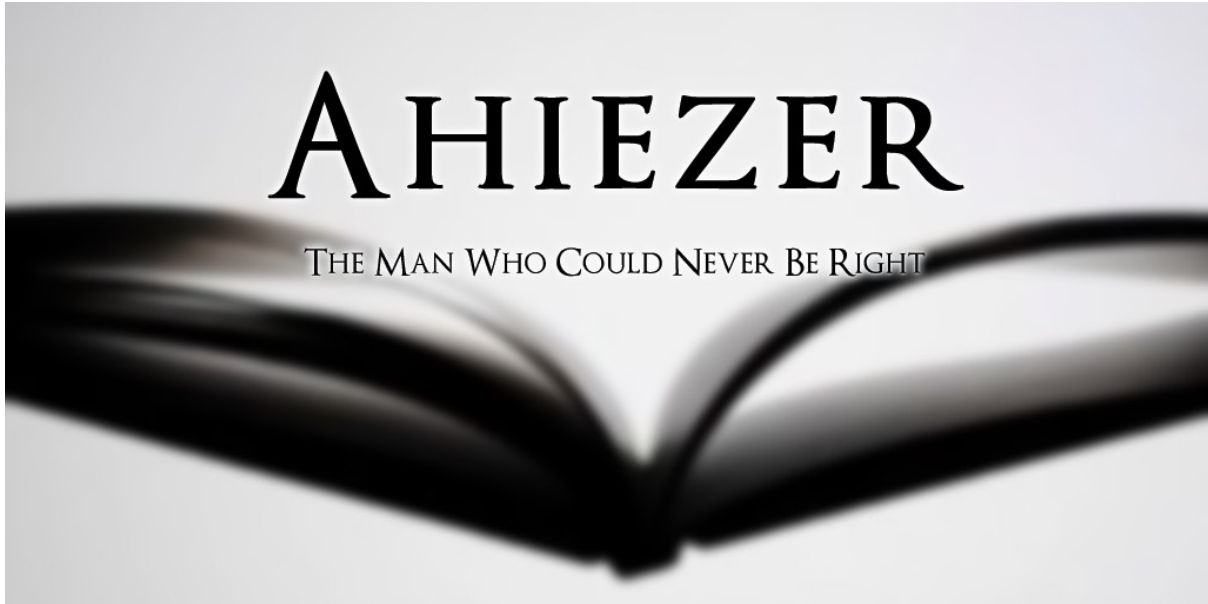
Elzaphan faithfully served the priests of the Tabernacle (depicted above). He was among the first generation of Levites whose task was to serve in the Tabernacle then later, the Temple. I doubt that he ever thought this would include being an undertaker to dead priests struck by God's judgment.

10. What lessons from the life of Elzaphan can we apply to our lives today?

The Furniture of the Tabernacle

		
<p>Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:10-22) The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments, which summarized the whole covenant.</p>	<p>Bronze Laver (Ex. 30:17-21) It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.</p>	<p>Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex. 27:1-8) Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.</p>
		
<p>Golden Lampstand (Ex. 25:31-40) The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.</p>	<p>Table of Showbread (Ex. 25:23-30) The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.</p>	<p>Altar of Incense (Ex. 30:1-10) The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of sweet-smelling aroma.</p>

Amen.



In today's vernacular, Ahiezer would be described as the Commander of a Special Forces Unit - or, more precisely, *The Secret Service*. As we are going to discover, Ahiezer would have had a keen sense of justice, enormous courage, been extremely loyal, been very dedicated to his assignments, and an extremely inspirational leader. By the time we are introduced to him, he is already a seasoned soldier who has a loyal platoon of soldiers dedicated to him. This would probably mean that we are meeting him when he was at least in his late thirties or early forties and probably in his fifties.

1. Read First Chronicles 12:1-3. Particularly note verse 1. Which of the above descriptions of Ahiezer does First Chronicles 12:1 support and why?

2. Ahiezer had switched his loyalty from King Saul, to the would-be King, David. Why do you think Ahiezer would have done this, and what does it tell us about him?

3. Just as we can deduce Ahiezer's approximate age at the time we are introduced to him, we can also deduce David's approximate age around this time as well. Note Second Samuel 5:4 (1Kings 2:11). Since Ahiezer came to David before David was crowned King, how old would David had been at the time Ahiezer came to him?

What does *this* tell us about Ahiezer?

While the Scriptures describe *individuals* whom God raises up to great prominence, they are *few*. That is, there are far more people whom God raises up who play an equally, if not more important, role than these *few* individuals. But without the *many* God's purpose could not be wrought in the *few*. While Ahiezer only gets a one verse mention in Scripture, his supporting role for King David was indispensable. God may not call you to preeminence or great prominence. But His call on a person's life is always pivotal to His greater purpose. Rather than being frustrated about your lack of limelight, rejoice in the fact the Father's eyes are always on you. Your audience is not primarily the world because ultimately you have an audience of One.

4. Read First Chronicles 12:2. What skill of Ahiezer is described in this verse which would have been unusual (since it is being noted in this verse)?

Warriors from the tribe of Benjamin had become famous for their ability to use their *left* hands in battle.

5. What does Judges 20:16 tell us the ability level of these Benjaminite warriors?

Rendering your enemies virtually useless by cutting off their right hands had become a cruel way to suppress them around the time of the Judges of Israel (note Judges 1:6, 7). Quite possibly these 700 Benjaminites, who were so skilled with their left hands (Judges 20:16), had been de-limbed by their enemies when their right hands had been cut off in battle or time of war. Rather than resign themselves to a life of disability and despair, these Benjaminites seem to have worked hard to learn how to use their left hands as they once did with their right. It also seems that this ability was passed down the generations among the Benjaminites. Thus, Ahiezer seems to have been a left-hander in a right-hander's world who had maintained the Benjaminite tradition of learning to master the use of both hands.

6. First Chronicles 12:3 describes the position that Ahiezer held. What does this position description tell us about how Ahiezer was thought of by his men?

For a platoon of battle-hardened men to follow their commander into battle would have meant that he had earned not only their trust but their respect as well. Ahiezer was no desk-jockey soldier. Years of combat would have taught Ahiezer that life was something to be prized and not lightly thrown away.

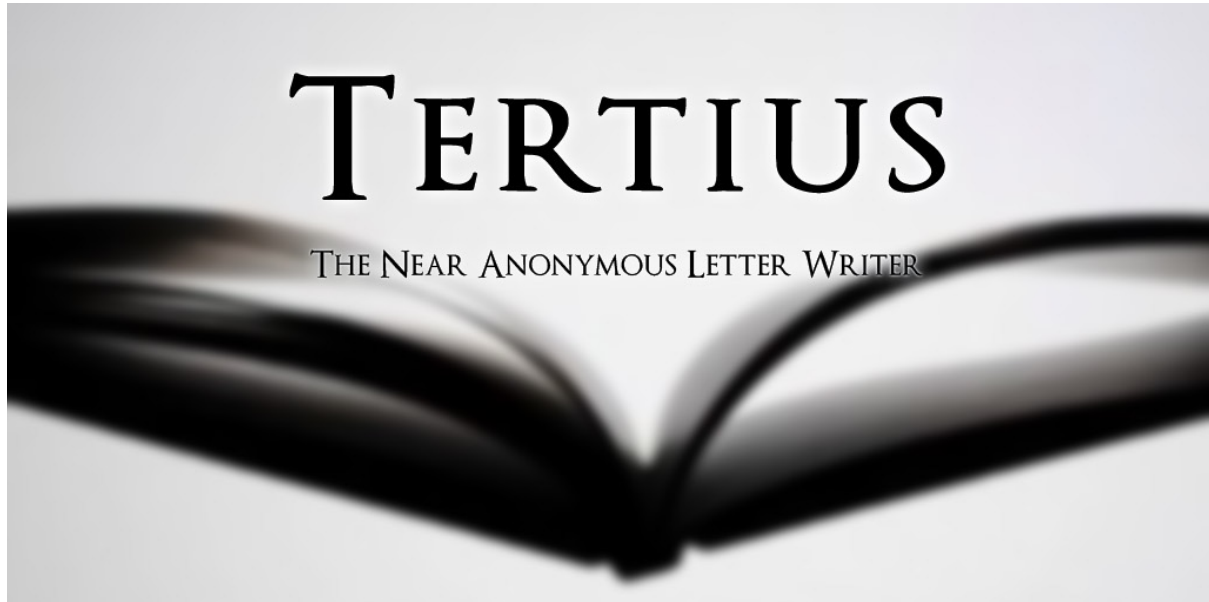
7. How might Ahiezer felt toward King Saul as he saw the way his king acted at the time Goliath had challenged any Israelite to fight him? (1Sam. 17:1-11)

Perhaps it was on that day when Ahiezer saw a sixteen year old shepherd walk out of the King's tent, with nothing but a staff and a sling-shot in his hand, to face a giant, that his loyalty to his King was challenged? (1Sam. 17:32-37)

8. What might the much older Ahiezer seen in the young shepherd boy that would eventually lead him to become his chief military officer? Discuss.

David could never have fulfilled his destiny to be the King of Israel without the support of Ahiezer. His important role in this vital chapter of Israel's history only granted him a one verse mention in Scripture. This should remind us that in God's eyes despite how many accolades we receive or don't receive in this life, our contribution of our gifts, talents and abilities are often vital to God's purpose being fulfilled in this generation.

Amen.



The Epistle to the Romans is considered to be the most profound Scriptural treatment of God's plan of salvation. It highlights not just the academic brilliance of the Apostle Paul but the unfathomable depths of God's gracious redemption through Jesus Christ. But none of this would have been possible without the skill of *Tertius*.

1. Why is this so based on Romans 16:22?
-

He was Paul's *amanuensis* for his epistle to the Romans. An amanuensis was a dictation scribe. It appears that Paul used several amanuenses to write his epistles. Each one not only wrote what Paul dictated, but it also seems that they were occasionally at liberty to put what the Apostle dictated into their own words - and at times, add to what was dictated. Knowing this helps us to understand why some liberal scholars have rejected Paul as the author of some of the epistles ascribed to him, such as Colossians.

...Trusted scribes were given great freedom to shape the form, style, and even the content of the author's letter. This broad role for an amanuensis must be kept in mind when scholars compare the vocabulary and stylistic differences among Paul's letters to determine questions of authorship. Sometimes a minor word choice belonged to Paul. Sometimes it may have belonged to someone like Tertius.

GARY BURGE, The Real Writer of Romans, Christianity Today, 1995, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-47/real-writer-of-romans.html>

2. Since Paul used amanuenses, should we still have confidence that the New Testament was inspired by God? (Note Second Timothy 3:16-17?)

3. Paul was not the only apostle to use a literary secretary to help write his epistles. Refer to First Peter 5:12 and note who the Apostle Peter also used.

4. Some scholars believe that the Apostle Paul had a physical problem. Note Galatians 4:15. What might this have been, and how might this explain Paul's need for an amanuensis? (Refer also to Galatians 6:11.)

'Tertius' is a Greek name. This doesn't necessarily mean that Tertius was Greek, but it almost certainly means that he wasn't Jewish.

5. How does Romans 16:21 indicate that Tertius was not Jewish?

There is good reason to believe that Tertius would have been *Roman*. While Paul may have had other dictation secretaries he could have used to write his epistle to the Romans, since we know he had used Sosthenes to pen First Corinthians (1Cor. 1:1), Timothy to pen Second Corinthians (2Cor. 1:1), Silvanus to pen First and Second Thessalonians (1Thess. 1:1; 2Thess. 2:1), and he was travelling with Timothy, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (each of whom he could have used), he chose to use *Tertius*.

6. If indeed Tertius was a Roman, why might it have been strategic for Paul to use a Roman to write to Romans? Discuss.

Language is not merely about *words*. The Dutch have an idiom that when translated word-for-word into English sounds most odd - yet it is a high compliment to use it when praising someone for their cooking -

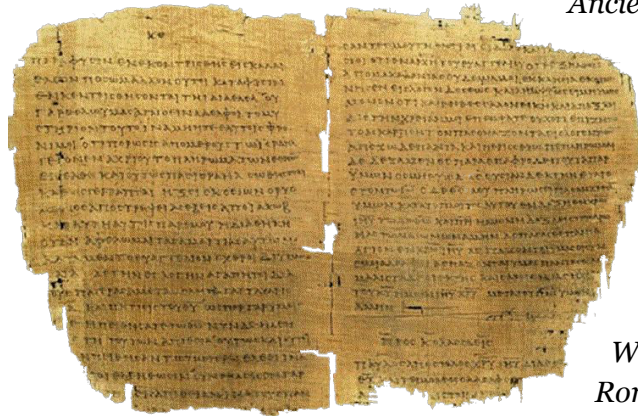
Alsofer een engeltje over je tong piest.

Which translates directly into English as - “*It’s like an angel is peeing on my tongue!*” Which apparently, is high praise for how delicious the food is!

While all the known world spoke Koine (pronounced, *coin-ay*) Greek at the time of the New Testament’s writing, there were still regional expressions that may have sounded odd or confusing to other ears. Consider that even though Brits, Americans, and Australians all speak *English*, we each have regional expressions which we understand yet may not be understood by someone outside of that region. For example, what would an American think an Englishman meant when they say, “*Tea time*”? Or what would an Englishman think if an American told them, “*You really hit that out of the park!*” What would an American think if an Australian said to them, “*Stone the crows!*”? Even though we each speak English we don’t always speak the same *language*. This is why Paul’s use of Tertius may have been so apt.

7. Have you ever encountered a regional expression that was confusing? Smile and share...

Tertius would have had to have been resourceful and a man of means. It would have been his responsibility to supply the materials for writing down what Paul was dictating.



Ancient authors wrote to fit volumes, and like Luke, sometimes produced two-volume works (the Gospel and Acts). Obviously, length was a problem. Callimachus, a famous cataloguer at the great library of Alexandria, liked to say “A big book is a big nuisance.”

When Tertius began working on Romans, he had in hand a fresh scroll and a pen with brown or black ink. Scribes wrote on the side of the papyrus where the fibers ran horizontally, the fiber lines serving as a guide. Tertius would then organize the roll into three-inch wide columns for text.

As he worked, he likely wrote entirely in capital letters, giving the text a splendid dignity. And, remarkably, he never left spaces between words, letting one word spill into the next. The final effect gave a block text with straight margins on both right and left sides.

...Trusted scribes were given great freedom to shape the form, style, and even the content of the author’s letter. This broad role for an amanuensis must be kept in mind when scholars compare the vocabulary and stylistic differences among Paul’s letters to determine questions of authorship. Sometimes a minor word choice belonged to Paul. Sometimes it may have belonged to someone like Tertius.

GARY BURGE, *The Real Writer of Romans*, Christianity Today, 1995, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-47/real-writer-of-romans.html>

8. How did Paul let his readers know that what they were reading was genuinely from him and why would this have mattered? (See Col. 4:18 and Second Thessalonians 3:17)
-
-

Thank God for Tertius! He helped to shape the New Testament’s grandest explanation of the New Covenant. All his years of learning, training, and even socialising were used by God to enable the salvation of millions of people from all

over the globe. You may not appreciate the experiences you are currently going through maybe being ordained by God so that He can use *you* one day to bring others to know Him. If you are a student, you can glorify God by being the *best* student you can be. If you are an employee being trained in a job, you can glorify God by being the best employee you can be. If you are a stranger who has just arrived in a strange neighbourhood, you can glorify God by making connections with locals and learning their language. And if, after having studied the lives of these five obscure Biblical characters you still feel left out, unrecognised, ignored, and of little use to God, then you haven't been paying attention. ;)

What now? Simply this- *Bloom where YOU are planted*. Don't make fame your goal in life. Rather, live with an awareness that your praise should not come from men, but from God (Rom. 2:29). In the famous faith chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the anonymous writer refers to thousands of faithful servants of God as "others" without *naming* them (Heb. 11:36). While *we* will never know the names of these *others*, God does! Remarkably Hebrews 11 concludes (vs. 40) by reminding us of something the ancient Church creed referred to as *the communion of saints*. This interconnection between believers in Christ transcends time, language, skin colour, culture, and customs. Just as well God has given us each *eternal* life because in heaven we may well need eternity to get to know each other so that ultimately, no one, including you, will ever be obscure again.

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