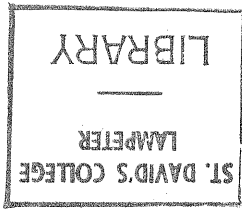
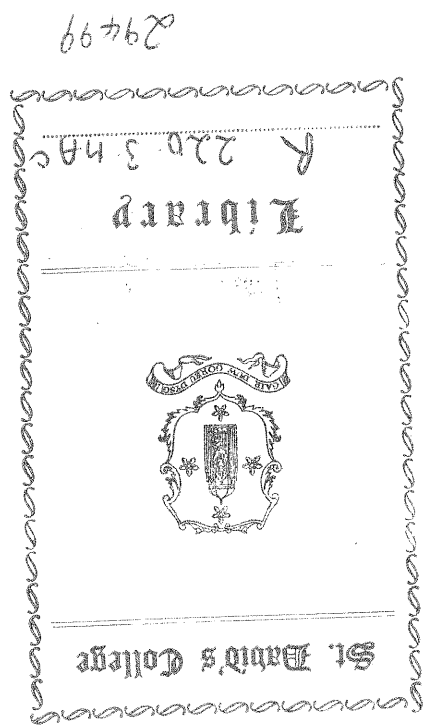


DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE

John L. McKenzie, S.J.



GEORGEY CHAPMAN
LONDON-DUBLIN 1965



Meni (Hb *mēni*), the name of a god mentioned with Gad* as worshiped by the Israelites (Is 65:11) with offerings of food and drink. The word possibly means "portion" and is thought to signify a god of destiny or fortune; but the name is not attested elsewhere.

Mephibosheth (Hb *mēpibōšet*, altered from *mēbāval*, the form of the name which appears in I Ch 8:34; 9:40 in order to remove the divine name Baal), a personal name borne by two men, both of the house of Saul. 1. Son of Saul and Rizpah*, executed by the Gibeonites* in atonement of the wrong done them by Saul (2 S 21:7ff). 2. A son of Jonathan*, crippled when his nurse dropped him while she fled after the death of Saul and Jonathan in battle. David* brought him, as the only survivor of the house of Saul, to the palace and supported him from the royal table (2 S 9:1-13). In the inscription of Absalom Mephibosheth took the part of Absalom, or at least was so charged by his servant Ziba* (2 S 16:1-4). When David returned after his victory Mephibosheth pleaded that he had been slandered by Ziba and that he had remained in Jerusalem because of his lameness; David, apparently not believing either one entirely, made Mephibosheth divide his estate with Ziba (2 S 19:25-31).

Merab (Hb *mērab*, meaning and etymology uncertain), elder daughter of Saul* (1 S 14:49); promised to David in marriage but given to Adriel (1 S 18:17-19). This was a slur upon David, since the eldest daughter, like the eldest son, was regarded as the most desirable (cf FIRSTBORN).

Merari (Hb *mērari*, meaning and etymology uncertain), son of Levi* and eponymous ancestor of the Levite clan of Merari (Gen 46:11; Ex 6:16, 19; Nm 3:33ff; 4:29ff; 7:8, 10:17). The cities and territories of the clan are described in Jos 21:7, 34-40, its clans and territories in I Ch 6:14, 29, 62 ff.

Mercury. Cf HERMES.

Mercy. The Hb word *hesed*, translated in the LXX by *eleos* and in the Vg by *misericordia*, is rendered by *mercy* in all but the most modern Eng Bibles. The translation *mercy* is unfortunate; but scholars are not agreed on the proper translation of *hesed*.

(AA 28:1 ff). There can be little doubt that Melita is to be identified with Malta, although this form of the name is comparatively late in appearance; a few scholars have proposed an island in the Adriatic. Malia lies 60 mi S of the SE tip of Sicily and 20 mi from Cape Bon, the nearest point in Africa. It is 17 mi long and 9 mi wide at its greatest extent, 60 mi in circumference and 95 sq mi in area. Little is known of its early history; it passed under Carthaginian rule at an unknown date and was permanently acquired by Rome in 218 bc during the Second Punic War. Its people acquired Roman citizenship at an unknown date, but before Paul's visit to the island. Luke calls them *barbaroi* (AA 28:1) in the technical sense of people who did not speak Greek. Their language was probably Punic. The title *protos* (first) given to Publius (AA 28:7) appears also in an inscription from Malia. "St Paul's Bay" on the N side of the island suits the narrative of AA well, even to the direction of the prevailing winds.

Mem. The 13th letter of the Hb alphabet, with the value of *m*.

Memphis (Gk *memphis*, Hb *mop* in Ho 9:6, *nop* elsewhere, represent the Egyptian Menof), one of the greatest and most ancient cities of Egypt. The site lies about 20 mi S of Cairo on the W bank of the Nile. Memphis was the royal residence during most of the 3rd-4th dynasties, its greatest period, and occasionally up to the 6th. Even after it was no longer the royal residence it was an important city, and its necropolis is large and imposing, containing most of the pyramids erected by the Pharaohs for their tombs. It was rebuilt by the pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties. Because of its position Memphis was often exposed to the attacks of invading enemies; it was taken by the Ethiopians, the Assyrians, and the Persians. The city declined in importance after the foundation of Alexandria. Today scattered remains of Memphis are visible. The threat of Babylonian invasion in Je 46:14 was never verified. The destruction of Memphis is predicted in Je 46:19; Ezk 30:13, 16 not in particular, but as an Egyptian city. Je 44:1 mentions Jews living in Memphis, one of the places in Egypt to which they migrated after the fall of Judah in 587 bc.

Menahem (Hb *mēnāhēm*, "consoler"), a personal name; king of Israel 745-738 bc. He seized the throne of Israel by the assassination of his predecessor Shallum, himself a usurper; he put down resistance to his reign

Mēnahēm (Gk *mēnephis*, Hb *mōp* in Ho 9:6, *mōp* elsewhere, represent the Egyptian Memphis, one of the greatest and most ancient cities of Egypt. The site lies about 20 mi S of Cairo on the W bank of the Nile. Memphis was the royal residence during most of the 3rd–4th dynasties, its greatest period, and occasionally up to the 6th. Even after it was no longer the royal residence it was an important city, and its necropolis is large and imposing, containing most of the pyramids erected by the Pharaohs for their tombs. It was rebuilt by the pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties. Because of its position Memphis was often exposed to the attacks of invading enemies; it was taken by the Ethiopians, the Assyrians, and the Persians. The city declined in importance after the foundation of Alexandria. Today nothing remains of Memphis except a few scattered stones. It is mentioned in Is 19:13; Je 2:16; Ho 9:6. The threat of Babylonian invasion in Je 46:14 was never verified. The destruction of Memphis is predicted in Je 46:19; Ezk 30:13, 16 not in particular, but as an Egyptian city. Je 44:1 mentions Jews living in Memphis, one of the places in Egypt to which they migrated after the fall of Judah in 587 BC.

and here it may be described as the will to save; cf Gn 19:19; 40:14).

Hesed is associated with *ṣedāqāh*, righteous-

ness. These are attributes which Yahweh

manifests to the righteous and those who

know Him (Ps 36:11; 40:11; 143:11f.).

The last of these three passages again signi-

fies the will to save. They are also the atti-

butes of the human ruler, the Davidic king,

by which his throne is established (Is 16:5;

the same thought occurs in Pr 20:28); the

hesed of the king is exhibited in his execu-

tion of judgment.

Hesed as the will to save is more clearly

perceived in its association with *yšā'a*, sal-

vation* and cognate words. The psalmist who

trusts in the *hesed* of Yahweh rejoices in

the deliverance of Yahweh (Ps 13:6), and

asks that Yahweh will show His *hesed* and

grant His salvation (Ps 85:8). The same

element appears in the association of *hesed*

with *šālôm* (cf PEACE; Ps 85:11). Where

Yahweh withdraws His *hesed* there is no

longer any *šālôm* (Je 16:5).

Other associations unite *hesed* with states

of feeling; *hesed* is not merely a quality or

an attribute, but a sentiment. As a youthful

bride of Yahweh Israel exhibited *hesed* and

love* (Je 2:2); and in the restoration of

Israel Yahweh shows His own *hesed* and

love of Israel (Je 31:3). It is also frequently

joined with *rahūm*, another word difficult

to translate; but its relationship with *reḥēm*,

womb or belly, shows that it indicates a

genuine emotional state and is often best

rendered by mercy or pity. The sentiment

of *rahūm* is exhibited toward those who

have suffered misfortune or those who, like

children, are helpless; thus it is seen in

Ps 85:8; 90:14; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1+).

It sustains the history of Israel's salvation

into the indefinite future. The endurance of

hesed tends to identify it with Yahweh Him-

self as other attributes are not so clearly

identified, and to make the *hesed* of Yahweh

the key to the understanding of His character.

This survey of some of the uses of the

word illustrate why a single word cannot

translate its richness of meaning. We have

a preservation of *hesed*, a demonstration of

hesed (2 S 7:15; 1 K 3:6; Ps 89:29, 34, 50).

While the preservation of *hesed* is said to

depend on the fidelity of Israel to the cove-

nant (cf above), this is only a partial view

of the *hesed* of the covenant; for it is the

covenant *hesed* to which Israel and its repre-

sentatives appeal as a motive why Yahweh

should forgive their infidelity to the covenant.

Hesed in Yahweh is more enduring than

hesed in man and is a forgiving attribute

which maintains good relations even when

men attempt to destroy them (Ex 34:6; Nm

14:19; Je 3:12f.). As a consequence of

covenant Yahweh expects *hesed* in Israel

(Ho 4:1; 6:4, 6). The context in these pas-

sages suggests that the *hesed* which is de-

sired is directed to Yahweh rather than to

men; *hesed* toward Yahweh could be only

that dependable good will which is reflected

in most of the uses of the word sketched

above.

It has been indicated above that the *hesed*

of Yahweh sometimes indicates or implies

His will to save. There are some passages

in which *hesed* appears as the movement

of the will of Yahweh which initiates and

sustains the history of Israel (Is 54:10;

63:7; Je 31:3; Mt 7:20). The entire history

of the dealing of Yahweh with Israel can be

summed up as *hesed*; it is the dominating

motive which appears in His deeds and

the motive which gives unity and intelligibil-

ity to all His dealings with men, including

such things as anger* and judgment*. This

is emphasized in the numerous passages which

affirm that the *hesed* of Yahweh endures for-

ever (Is 54:8; 55:3; Je 33:11; 33:20;

Pss 85:8; 90:14; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1+).

It sustains the history of Israel's salvation

into the indefinite future. The endurance of

hesed tends to identify it with Yahweh Him-

self as other attributes are not so clearly

identified, and to make the *hesed* of Yahweh

the key to the understanding of His character.

This survey of some of the uses of the

word illustrate why a single word cannot

translate its richness of meaning. We have

to these attributes for forgiveness (Ps 25:6;

40:12; 51:3).

The *hesed* of Yahweh is most frequently

associated with the covenant*. In the cove-

nant narratives of Ex (20:6; 34:6) the con-

tinuation of the *hesed* of Yahweh to Israel

is conditioned upon the fidelity of Israel to

His commandments. Yahweh preserves His

covenant and His *hesed* to those who walk

before Him (1 K 8:23). The covenant itself

is called a *hesed* (Is 55:3). This conjunction

of covenant and *hesed* is noticed especially

in the covenant by which David is promised

an eternal dynasty; the covenant is a *hesed*,

goodness of the heart from which love and

kindness arise.

The NT use of *eleos*, also translated

"mercy" in most Eng versions, is broader

than the word "mercy" suggests. *Eleos* ap-

pears frequently in contexts where it renders

hesed or is used in a way reminiscent of

hesed. This is true, for instance, of the Bene-

dictus* and the Magnificat* of Lk 1. The

Gospels present *eleos* as the duty of one

of the Pharisees* on those who do not ob-

serve the Pharisaic traditions and interpreta-

tions of the law*. With righteousness and

fidelity, *eleos* is one of the more important

features of the law (Mt 23:23); the refer-

ence here is once again to the rigid inter-

pretation of the law. In these passages *eleos*

signifies breadth and tolerance. Jesus makes

the *eleos* which one shows another the con-

dition of the *eleos* which one may expect

from God (Mt 5:7; 18:33). The proof

of the love of one's neighbor is the demon-

stration of *eleos* (Lk 10:37), and in this

parable *eleos* is the rendering of assistance

to one in need. In Mt 18:33 *eleos* is a

readiness to forgive, and Mt 5:7 is very

probably to be understood in the same way.

Js 2:13 echoes this saying; here judgment

without *eleos* may easily be rendered judg-

ment without mercy. *Eleos* is a component

of the wisdom from above; in contrast to

worldly wisdom it shows itself in good

deeds (Js 3:17).

The *eleos* of God appears most frequently

as the will to save, echoing the OT use of

hesed. With His love it is the *eleos* of God

Christ (Eph 2:4; 1 Pt 1:3). The *eleos* of

God is the motive of His saving will, not

the merits of man (Tt 3:5). In Rm 9:22 f

eleos and anger* are contrasted as motives

of God's dealing with men; the passage is

difficult, but *eleos* is clearly the antecedent

will to save. *Eleos* is the motive which moves

God to confer the apostolic office on Paul*

attribute which heals illness (Phl 2:27).

The NT *eleos* can, when it is the *eleos*

of God, much more easily be understood

as His saving will which is antecedent to

any deed of man. It initiates and consum-

mates the process of salvation in Christ.

In men it comes very near *agapē* (cf LOVE).

It is chiefly manifested in the readiness to

do good and to forgive, and "mercy" appears

to be too narrow a rendition. The NT *eleos*

ception of love, which is a revolutionary

development in the NT and places a deeper

motivation behind *eleos* than we find in

the OT.

Mercy seat. Cf ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Meribah (Hb *meribāh*, "quarrel?"), the

scene of a dispute between the Israelites

and Moses* in the desert of Zin* (Nm 20:

1-13). Moses produced water from the rock.

It was here that Moses committed the mys-

terious fault which has not been preserved

in the traditions (Nm 20:12). In this con-

text Meribah is identified with Kadesh*; the

same identification appears in the name

Meribath-kadesh (Nm 27:14; Dt 32:51; Ezk

47:19; 48:28). The story is difficult to dis-

tinguish from the story of Massah* of which

it is a variant; Ps 81:8 speaks of a "testing"

features of the law (Mt 23:23); the refer-

ence here is once again to the rigid inter-

pretation of the law. In these passages *eleos*

signifies breadth and tolerance. Jesus makes

the *eleos* which one shows another the con-

dition of the *eleos* which one may expect

from God (Mt 5:7; 18:33). The proof

of the love of one's neighbor is the demon-

stration of *eleos* (Lk 10:37), and in this

parable *eleos* is the rendering of assistance

to one in need. In Mt 18:33 *eleos* is a

readiness to forgive, and Mt 5:7 is very

probably to be understood in the same way.

Js 2:13 echoes this saying; here judgment

without *eleos* may easily be rendered judg-

ment without mercy. *Eleos* is a component

of the wisdom from above; in contrast to

worldly wisdom it shows itself in good

deeds (Js 3:17).

The *eleos* of God appears most frequently

as the will to save, echoing the OT use of

hesed. With His love it is the *eleos* of God

Christ (Eph 2:4; 1 Pt 1:3). The *eleos* of

God is the motive of His saving will, not

the merits of man (Tt 3:5). In Rm 9:22 f

eleos and anger* are contrasted as motives

of God's dealing with men; the passage is

difficult, but *eleos* is clearly the antecedent

will to save. *Eleos* is the motive which moves

God to confer the apostolic office on Paul*

attribute which heals illness (Phl 2:27).

The NT *eleos* can, when it is the *eleos*

of God, much more easily be understood

as His saving will which is antecedent to

any deed of man. It initiates and consum-

mates the process of salvation in Christ.

In men it comes very near *agapē* (cf LOVE).

It is chiefly manifested in the readiness to

do good and to forgive, and "mercy" appears

to be too narrow a rendition. The NT *eleos*

ception of love, which is a revolutionary

development in the NT and places a deeper

motivation behind *eleos* than we find in

the OT.

Mercy seat. Cf ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Meribah (Hb *meribāh*, "quarrel?"), the

scene of a dispute between the Israelites

and Moses* in the desert of Zin* (Nm 20:

1-13). Moses produced water from the rock.

It was here that Moses committed the mys-

terious fault which has not been preserved

in the traditions (Nm 20:12). In this con-

text Meribah is identified with Kadesh*; the

same identification appears in the name

Meribath-kadesh (Nm 27:14; Dt 32:51; Ezk

47:19; 48:28). The story is difficult to dis-

tinguish from the story of Massah* of which

it is a variant; Ps 81:8 speaks of a "testing"

features of the law (Mt 23:23); the refer-

ence here is once again to the rigid inter-

pretation of the law. In these passages *eleos*

signifies breadth and tolerance. Jesus makes

the *eleos* which one shows another the con-