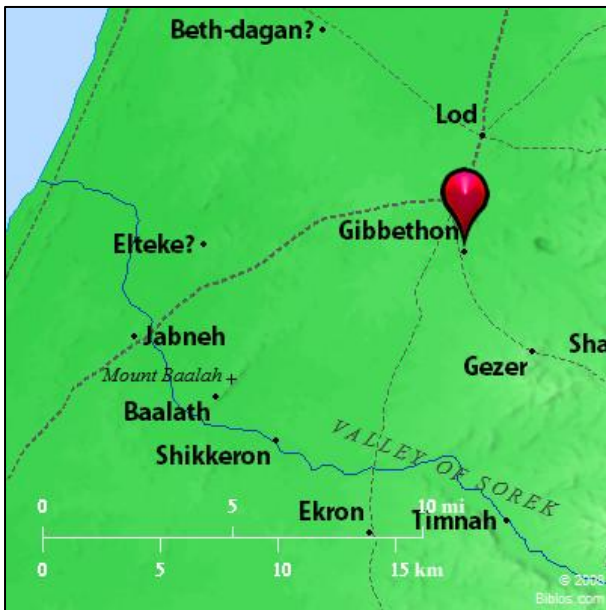


Gibbethon

Etymology

גבתון the word in Hebrew meaning “a mound”; “a height.”

Location/Description



Originally a Philistine city within the bounds of the inheritance given to the tribe of Dan in the land of Canaan which they occupied after the land was conquered.

Gibbethon is generally identified with Tell el-Melat (Tel Malot), about 9 km (5.5 miles) north of the site of the Philistine city of Ekron.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

Gibbethon, is mentioned 5 times in the Bible - Josh. 9:44, 21:23; 1 Kings 15:27; 16:15,17.

Famous characters

Nadab, Baasha, Zimri, Omri.

Brief history

Gibbethon was ultimately gifted as a Levitical city to the Kohathites from the tribe of Dan.

Centuries later, Gibbethon was in the hands of the Philistines, and Nadab, son of Jeroboam, who had been the king of Israel for just over a year, while besieging it, was slain under its walls by Baasha, one of his own officers.

Baasha then slew all the members of the family of Jeroboam and made himself king.

A quarter of a century later, Israel again camped against the Philistine occupiers of Gibbethon when Zimri killed king Elah, the son of Baasha, and usurped the throne. Just days prior to the people encamping near Gibbethon, Zimri (who was captain of half of Elah's chariots) was in Tirzah with Elah, king of Israel and wanting to become king, smote and killed the king, who had reigned over Israel for 2 years, while he was drunk in the house of the king's steward Arza.

Zimri's first act as king of Israel was to kill all the family and friends of Baasha's house. However, Zimri was only to be king of Israel for 7 days!

The knowledge of Zimri's coup became known in the camp of Israel as they encamped against Gibbethon. They made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel (1 Kings 16:17). Omri and his supporters left Gibbethon and attacked Tirzah to overthrow Zimri. Faced with certain defeat, Zimri committed suicide by burning down the king's palace over himself. His treason came to nought. Civil war then erupted in Israel.

Sources:

Smiths Bible Dictionary; Ungers Bible Dictionary; Wikipedia

Study notes on The Kings of Israel and Judah - J.A. Cowie

(Compiler – Paul Myers)