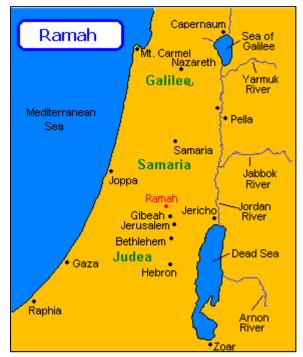# 99 Ramah

Names (also known as)

Identified with modern er-Ram.

Etymology

Strong's H7414 - *ramah* - meaning 'to be high, height'.

Many ancient cities and towns of Palestine were located on the tops of hills for safety purposes, and those that were specially conspicuous came to be called 'the height'; and this in time came to be used as a proper name.

Location/Description

Ramah was approximately 10 km (6 miles) north of Jerusalem on the road to Bethel and Shechem.

It was a strategic town commanding a height (definition of the name) overlooking the route to Jerusalem.

Scriptural references

Old Testament

Ramah is the name of several places in the Holy Land:

1. Border town in tribal territory of Asher (Josh. 19:29).

2. One of the 19 fortified city of tribal territory of Naphtali (Josh. 19:36) – Ramah of Asher and Ramah of Naphtali could have been the same community since the boundaries of Asher and Naphtali join.

3. One of the cities of the allotment of Benjamin (Josh. 18:25) – roughly 8 kms (5 miles) from Jerusalem.

4. A city of the Negev, the arid south of Judea, in the tribal inheritance of Simeon (Josh. 19:8) – David gave a present to this town following his successful battle with the Amalekites (1 Sam. 30:27).

This study is about Ramah of Benjamin, the home of Samuel - Josh. 18:25; 1 Sam. 1:19; 2:11; 7:17; 8:4; 15:34; 16:13; 19:18,19,22,23; 20:1; 22:6; 25:1; 28:3; 1 Kings 15:17,21,22; 2 Chron. 16:1,5,6; Neh. 7:30; Isa. 10:29; Jer. 31:15; 40:1; Hos. 5:8.

Famous characters

Elkanah, Hannah, Samuel, Baasha, Asa, Jeremiah

Brief history

In ancient times this location placed the city between the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah – which led to dire consequences (1 Kings 15:16-22; 2 Chron. 16:2,5-6).

Ramah was the home of Elkanah, Samuel's father (1 Sam. 1:19; 2:11), and the birthplace, home and burial place of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:19; 2:22; 7:17; 8:4; 15:34; 25:1).

Samuel built an altar to Yahweh at Ramah – from there he 'judged' Israel and went on his yearly circuit which included Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpeh and then returned to Ramah (1 Sam. 7:15-17), in connection with the schools of the prophets.

Baasha selected an ideal position to prevent migration from the Northern Kingdom (1 Kings

15:17). Baasha was later forced to abandon Ramah to focus on stopping the Syrian progress in the north (1 Kings 15:21 – went down to Tirzah).

In 2 Chron. 16:5-6 Asa fortified Geba which was about 3 kms (2 miles) N.E. of Ramah and Mizpeh which was situated some 5 km (3 miles) north of Ramah with materials from Baasha's work at Ramah.

Deborah dwelt and judged Israel from the vicinity around Ramah (Jud. 4:4-5).

Isaiah prophesied that the Assyrian army (and in the type – Gog) would march through Ramah (Isa. 10:29).

The Babylonians used Ramah as a prisoner-of-war camp where captives from Jerusalem were sent into Babylonian exile. It was here that Jeremiah was released from his chains and allowed to remain in Judah (Jer. 40:1-6).

People returning from captivity in Babylon settled in Ramah (Ezra 2:26; Neh. 7:30).

Sources:

Ungers Bible Dictionary

Smiths Bible Dictionary

The Geography of the Bible – D. Baly (1957)

Kings Notes CSSS – Bro. Jim Cowie

'Typology in the Book of Judges of the mission of Christ – First and Second Advent' – Bro. Jim Cowie

(Compiler – Stephen Macfarlane)