



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice
#23020 Fri 24 Mar Valley of Elah, Aijalon

Everyone knows what a David vs Goliath contest is, but all to many know very little Bible about it.



Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. ³ And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. ⁴ And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span (1Sam.17:1-4).

The thing about visiting the Valley of Elah with Eli, our Israeli tour guide, is the battle stories begin when crossing through the Judean Hills. These valleys were war-torn before the Bible records Israel entering their Promised Land 1,500 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. These valleys show continual occupation and continual struggle since (what the plaque said was) the Bronze age. Mythical Bronze and Iron ages are based on deceived modernist's evolutionary hypothesis and the caveman. If you have a Bible, there is no prehistoric period and the land was occupied since the cursed Canaanites left the presence of Grandpa Noah! Sites at multiple Canaanite fortresses were found when the area was overflowed by high tech IR and photographing drones. Archaeological excavations were opened at these sites, and at the site of the city of Shaarain (cf 1Sam.17:52), sure enough, excavations discovered a city of “double gates”, exactly as the Hebrew name describes it. (Bible believers need no archaeological discoveries to be Bible believers, but it is nice to have some to rub in the face of infidels and scoffers).



*And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to **Shaaraim** <08189>, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron (1Sam.17:52). From Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Shaaraim <08189> שַׁעַרַיִם Sha'arayim, Shaaraim =" double gate", A.V. 3 times, Josh.15:36, 1Sam.17:52, 1Ch.4:31.*

Several other unique discoveries were found at the Khirbet Qeiyafa site where the city Shaarain was found. Olive pits radiocarbon dated to the times of King David, hundreds of kosher animal bones showing this to be a Jewish city, and pottery pieces by the thousands. The 5 ½ acre, circular site was not a tel, so it contains only one layer and all discoveries date back to the same era, King David's era. Broken shards of pottery used for writing notes and recipes were called "ostrakon", and many were found here with Hebrew writings.



Eli described other epic battles fought here in these valleys. We would of course explore 1 Samuel 17, and the sun that stood still in Joshua 10, but this prime land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Judean hills, hills that protected Jerusalem, was a very war-torn area. In the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the day after Israel's May 14th Declaration of Independence, there was a major battle here where Ariel Sharon the Israeli general was severely wounded. A wounded private carried him 3 miles to the IDF lines and he later served as the 11th prime minister of Israel. Back in the 12th century the Knights of



Valley of Elah & Valley of Aijalon maps by <https://bibleatlas.org> Created using Biblemapper 3.0



Columbus built a castle here, called Via Dome, to blockade Jerusalem from the sea. These valleys were home of the Maccabean revolts in 161 BC, when Jews united with the Maccabees to overthrow the vile Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC. He desecrated the temple and controlled all Judea with intent of destroying the Jews. The Maccabean Revolt reestablished Judaism just in time for the Savior to step into the Temple that was expanded and rebuilt by

King Herod the Great. No coincidence here.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a lunatic used by Satan to attempt to annihilate the Jews; Herod the Great was a lunatic used by God to construct the Temple, so that his Christ would enter as “the glory of God.” You got to love irony; God does.

Eli continued, the Valley of Elah connects the Judean Hills, the city of Bethlehem, and the City of Hebron with the Mediterranean Sea. It is just east of the Philistine city of Gath, and southeast of their Ekron and Timnah.



The bus let us off at the base of a small hill and we scurried to the top on a wide well-worn path. Well, those who used up their scurry in earlier years casually strolled up. It was a beautiful day in Israel and we looked out over the large Valley of Elah; we could just make out a host of Israelites gathered on the hill across from us. There was a shrub covered knoll heaved up between us and them, and we watched as a giant of a man, over 9 feet tall and in full armor, walked to the top of the knoll before us.

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. 4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. ... 10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together” (1Sam.17:3-4,10).

I needed binoculars to see King Saul and all Israel in dismay and greatly afraid, but I didn't bring them. Instead Deacon Dave Johnson opened our Bibles to 1 Samuel 17 and gave focus to what all was going on in the Israeli camp on the other side of the Valley of Elah.





When the shepherd boy held the head of their hero high above his huge dead carcass, however, our vantage point here was just about perfect for watching the Philistines scatter in fear and turmoil. *“And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron”* (1Sam.17:52).

After over 3,000 years it was obvious that every smooth stone that ever laid in this Valley of Elah had long since been hand gathered, in groups of five, and put into someone's memorabilia. It started with the Israelites of Saul's army. It likely included enemy soldiers still serving the Five Lords of the

Philistines, who secretly, maybe mockingly, kept such a memorabilia for themselves. Just the same, on the way back to the bus I kicked around in the hillside and picked up five stones of my own, (plus five for a preacher friend who asked). It was a 3,086 year old memorabilia of a Shepherd Boy who said, *“I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied.”*

On the bus some question arose about whether five stones, smooth or not, would be authentic memorabilia since we picked them up on the Philistine hillside. I left mine tucked away in my bulging pocket, and did not enter into the debate. Nor did our guide Eli, but as our bus began to ramble down the hill into the



Valley of Elah he picked up the mic and gave this profound insight. I heard it before but never with the authority that Eli gave it.



Recall that in 70 AD Rome utterly destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and killed every Jew in the city. They were (hell) bent on wiping Israel off the face of the earth. There were then two provinces in this area, one for Philistines and one called Paletina. With Rome's diabolical hatred for the Jews, and their political aspirations to eliminate them from the land, they combined these two province names and called this land Palestine. Arab "sojourners" of the land took to the name Palestinians trying to show themselves the owners of this land. The name Palestine and Palestinian comes from the political ambitions of Rome, and their efforts to wipe out all Jews, consequently Palestinians

supposed they were here first. It is a brazen lie from Rome.

Before Eli framed this in a paragraph, I had long heard pieces of this truth. A Bible word study of the Hebrew for Palestine brings out the connection to the Philistines.

Palestine is derived from פלשת P@lesheth [pel-eh'sheth] AV-Palestina 3, Philistia 3, Philistine 1, Palestine 1; 8 times in the Holy Bible, Philistia =" land of sojourners", the general territory on the west coast of Canaan (<06429> Palestina 3x Exod 15:14, Isa. 14:29,31, Philistia 3x Ps. 60:8, 87:4, 108:9, Philistine 1x Ps. 83:7 usually <06430>, Palestine 1x Joel 3:4, in context in Joel 3:4 "Palestine" is used slanderously to label the land when God regathers Israel.)



Israel Museum
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But Eli succinctly detailed the Palestinian origin in such a way that it locked many things together. It always amazed me that the lie about “Palestine” makes the majority of people think Israel is the occupier of Palestinian land! Even some who purport to know a Jew named Jesus, born in Bethlehem, Israel, think Israel didn't get here until 1948! Presbyterians are wholesale sold on this lie, they promoted sanctions against Israel for occupying

Palestinian land!¹ Martin Luther wrote a shameful tirade of hate toward the Jews², and of course Rome has always hated Jews, their Church ignorantly teaches they should be hated, they killed Jesus! Every bit of it is diabolical, straight from the pits of hell.

The bus rambled across the Valley of Elah and started up through the Judean foothills. We passed the shepherd boy, David, who was carrying the head of Goliath off to Jerusalem



(1Sam.17:54). He would doubtless put it on the mount, shaped like a skull, where Abraham offered his only begotten son, it would be a fitting tribute for a verse David knew, “It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”(Gen.3:15). (of course David knew it in

1 “We who have seen things worsen exponentially, are certain that our Lord Jesus Christ will return in our lifetime; we have read the 2009 antisemitic policy and resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (saying in part “Israel's occupation (of Palestine)... has proven to be at the root of evil acts committed against innocent people...”), and we heard our president, President Barack Hussein Obama II, call Israel the evil occupiers of Palestinian land instead of the blessed occupiers of Jehovah God's promised land. Jesus said, “*Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*” Dr. DeHaan saw 1948, and he believed it. So does this author.” An excerpt from authors “Systematic Theology for the 21st Century, Volume 11 Eschatology”, pg 350.

2 “In 1543, Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation, wrote a 13-part booklet titled “On the Jews and Their Lies”. It spewed such vitriolic hatred of the Jewish people that it influenced the German perception of Jews for centuries to come and helped Adolf Hitler and the Nazis justify their “final solution to the Jewish question,” an euphemism for the annihilation of European Jewry. An excerpt from this author's “Journaling a Preacher's 2022 Pilgrimage to Israel”, pg 54.

(. הוא יְשׁוּפֶךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפְנוּ עִקְבִי: Hebrew..



As we passed into the Judean hills we passed Beth Shemesh, Mount Jearim, and Mount Seir, and we headed toward Mount Heres. There was a rough spot in the road and I was pretty sure we bounced back in time 400 years before David, and landed in Aijalon, in 1451 BC when Joshua was in a great war with the Amorites. The Amorite would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim (place of foxes) (Judges 1:35).

We left the bus at the base of a hill in Aijalon, and again climbed a small hill on a well-worn path. This one was marked by several active archaeological digs. At the top we overlooked the large valley where Joshua asked God to make the sun stand still, and he did!

Pastor David Ellis stood before us and waved his open Bible across the

panoramic view of the great valley spread before us. “A man stood here and A-S-Ked God for an out of this world request, and God answered him!” Jesus taught that A-S-K is an acronym standing for Ask, Seek, and Knock. (I always figured, with no proof, that Noah Webster spellednock with a silent k just to make the acronym reverberate). Pastor Ellis opened our Bibles to Joshua 10 and unfolded the profound miracle that occurred here.

Josh 10:1 Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, ... 5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, ... So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. 8 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; ... And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter ... 11 And it came to pass, ... that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them ... and they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. 12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the

LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel (Josh.10:1-13).



As we headed down from our perch over the Valley of Aijalon there was a very large cache of broken pottery pieces at the base of the path. Eli, our Israeli guide, told us to help ourselves to pottery pieces to keep for memorabilia. I supposed he had permission or authority to say so, and Beverly and I both picked up a pocket size shard of pottery, or two, ... or more. We carefully checked each piece for any writing, of

course we found none. I was careful to keep them separate from my five smooth stones.

Overwhelmed with rich detail of this busy day, it was good to stop for a late, all junk food, lunch. The outdoor pavilion area rang with laughter and relaxed conversation amongst this group of exhausted but always smiling tourists. The bus loaded up about 3:00 p.m. We were to be back in Jerusalem before Sabbath. Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, was to be a day off, spent in Jerusalem anyway we wanted. There was talk of chartered shopping trips, and the Canadians were off to a mission church that they knew of. Bev and I, I being old and stricken in years (Josh.13:1), decided we would sleep in till 8:00 a.m., eat a casual breakfast, and then accompany Pastor Lee Pickett to the Israeli museum to see a whole wing we had not visited before. Nothing is free over here, it was \$20 cab fare, and a \$20 entry fee, but a very pleasant day.

At the close of Sabbath a couple streets of Jerusalem clogged with peaceful demonstrators in response to their government's push for wide-ranging judicial reforms. The thing about peaceful demonstrations in Israel, is that they are peaceful; no rocks or frozen water bottles are thrown, no one has Molotov cocktails; these are not like the American Liberal left's "peaceful protests" organized by Marxist agitators. In Israel, we were comfortable with peaceful demonstrations, even though the American Liberal left's media made them out to be much more than they were.

On our last night at the Prima Kings Hotel, in Jerusalem we dined in elegance with friends eager to talk about all that they did and saw on a free day in Jerusalem. I can't say this small talk was half of what an Israel tour was all about, but it was a pretty good portion. Shabbat Shalom.