

~APHEK 4 (154)

(A'phek) [Streambed]

- A town apparently located in the Plain of Jezreel between the towns of **Shunem** and **Jezreel**. In the battle between the Philistines and the Israelites that resulted in King Saul's death, the original position of the Philistines was at **Shunem**, while the Israelites took a position on Mount Gilboa.
- Subsequently the Philistines collected together and came and pitched camp in **Shunem**. So Saul collected all Israel together and they pitched camp in Gilboa. (**1 Samuel 28:4**)
- The account thereafter indicates that the Philistines advanced to **Aphek** while Israel descended to the spring at Jezreel. At **Aphek** the axis lords of the Philistines now reviewed their marshaled forces and discovered David and his men accompanying Achish in the rear. David's forces were ordered to leave on the following morning, and then the Philistines advanced to the battle site at Jezreel.
- And the Philistines proceeded to collect all their camps together at **Aphek**, while the Israelites were camping by the spring that was in Jezreel. (**1 Samuel 29:1**)
- And the axis lords of the Philistines were passing along by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing along afterward with Achish. (**1 Samuel 29:2**)
- And the princes of the Philistines began to say; What do these Hebrews mean? At this Achish said to the princes of the Philistines; Is this not David the servant of Saul king of Israel, who happened to be with me here a year or two, and I have not found in him a single thing from the day of his deserting to me until this day? (**1 Samuel 29:3**)
- And the princes of the Philistines became indignant at him, and the princes of the Philistines went on to say to him; Make the man go back, and let him go back to his place where you assigned him, and do not let him go down with us into the battle, that he may not become a resister of us in the battle. And with what should this person put himself in favor with his lord? Is it not with the heads of those our men? (**1 Samuel 29:4**)

- **Is this not David to whom they kept responding in the dances, saying; Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his tens of thousands? (1 Samuel 29:5)**
- **Consequently Achish called David and said to him; As Yehowah is living, you are upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the camp has been good in my eyes, for I have not found badness in you from the day of your coming to me until this day. But in the eyes of the axis lords you are not good. (1 Samuel 29:6)**
- **And now return and go in peace, that you may not do anything bad in the eyes of the axis lords of the Philistines. (1 Samuel 29:7)**
- **However, David said to Achish; Why, what have I done, and what have you found in your servant from the day that I came to be before you until this day, that I should not come and actually fight against the enemies of my lord the king? (1 Samuel 29:8)**
- **At this Achish answered and said to David; I well know that you have been good in my own eyes, like an angel of God. Only it is the princes of the Philistines that have said; Let him not go up with us into the battle. (1 Samuel 29:9)**
- **And now rise up early in the morning with the servants of your lord that came with you, and you men must rise up early in the morning when it has become light for you. Then go. (1 Samuel 29:10)**
- **Accordingly David rose up early, he and his men, to go in the morning and return to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines themselves went up to Jezreel. (1 Samuel 29:11)**
- **From there they pushed the defeated Israelites back up into Mount Gilboa, where the slaughter was completed and Saul and his three sons died.**
- **Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel took to flight from before the Philistines, and they kept falling down slain in Mount Gilboa. (1 Samuel 31:1)**
- **And the Philistines kept in close range of Saul and his sons, and**

- the Philistines at last struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, Saul's sons. (1 Samuel 31:2)
- And the fighting became heavy against Saul, and the shooters, the bowmen, finally found him, and he got severely wounded by the shooters. (1 Samuel 31:3)
 - Then Saul said to his armor-bearer; Draw your sword and run me through with it, that these uncircumcised men may not come and certainly run me through and deal abusively with me. And his armor-bearer was unwilling, because he was very much afraid. So Saul took the sword and fell upon it. (1 Samuel 31:4)
 - When his armor-bearer saw that Saul had died, then he too fell upon his own sword and died with him. (1 Samuel 31:5)
 - Thus Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer, even all his men, came to die together on that day. (1 Samuel 31:6)
 - When the men of Israel that were in the region of the low plain and that were in the region of the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled, and that Saul and his sons had died, then they began to leave the cities and flee, after which the Philistines came on in and took up dwelling in them. (1 Samuel 31:7)
 - And it came about the next day that, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they got to find Saul and his three sons fallen upon Mount Gilboa. (1 Samuel 31:8)
 - Some scholars suggest that the events leading up to this battle are not written in chronological order and, therefore, identify this **Aphek** with the one in the Plain of Sharon. **Yohanan Aharoni** favors this view, stating; **The narrative of this war has been truncated to some degree by the insertion of the story about David. But one can still follow its general line. The Philistine rulers assembled their forces at Aphek at the sources of the Yarkon.**
 - And the Philistines proceeded to collect all their camps together at **Aphek**, while the Israelites were camping by the spring that was in Jezreel. (1 Samuel 29:1)
 - Preparatory to marching on Jezreel,
 - Accordingly David rose up early, he and his men, to go in the

morning and return to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines themselves went up to Jezreel. (1 Samuel 29:11)

- Saul's troops were encamped by the fountain which is in Jezreel on the eve of the battle they ranged themselves on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines made camp across from them at Shunem.
- Subsequently the Philistines collected together and came and pitched camp in Shunem. So Saul collected all Israel together and they pitched camp in Gilboa. (1 Samuel 28:4)
- The conflict ended in Philistine victory, while Saul and his three sons fell during the retreat at Gilboa. [The Land of the Bible, translated and edited by A. Rainey, 1979, pp. 290,291]

See Also APHEK 3