

~BETH-SHEMESH 1 (231)
(Beth-she'mesh) [House of the Sun]

- A city located on the northern boundary of Judah, listed between Chesalon and Timnah.
- And the boundary went around from Baalah westward to Mount Seir and passed over to the slope of Mount Jearim at the north, that is to say; Chesalon, and it went down to **Beth-shemesh** and passed over to Timnah. (**Joshua 15:10**)
- It is evidently called **Ir-shemesh**, meaning, **City of the Sun** at,
- And the border of their inheritance came to be Zorah and Eshtaol and **Ir-shemesh**. (**Joshua 19:41**)
- Where it appears as a boundary town of the tribe of Dan, Judah's neighbor to the north. Judah subsequently bequeathed **Beth-shemesh** to the Levites as a priestly city.
- And to the sons of Aaron the priest they gave the city of refuge for the manslayer, namely, Hebron, and its pasture ground, also Libnah and its pasture ground. (**Joshua 21:13**)
- And Ain and its pasture ground, and Juttah and its pasture ground, **Beth-shemesh** and its pasture ground, nine cities out of these two tribes. (**Joshua 21:16**)
- And Ashan with its pasture grounds and **Beth-shemesh** with its pasture grounds. (**1 Chronicles 6:59**)
- **Beth-shemesh** is identified with **Tell er-Rumeileh**, **Tel Bet Shemesh** just West of the ruins of the Byzantine city near present-day 'Ain Shem's, this latter place partly preserving the ancient name.
- **Beth-shemesh** thus lay about 26 kilometers (16 miles) West of Jerusalem and was situated on the main road from that city to the Philistine cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon. It was evidently a strategic point militarily as it guarded the upper portion of the torrent valley of Sorek and one of the main approaches from the coastal plains into the Shephelah region and the mountains of Judah. Excavations carried out

at the site indicate an ancient history for the city, with considerable evidence of Philistine influence.

- When the Philistines, plagued by disease, sent the ark of Yehowah back to Israel, the cows pulling the wagon of their own accord headed for this Levite city of **Beth-shemesh**. However, the improper action of some of the inhabitants of **Beth-shemesh** in looking upon the ark of the covenant brought death to 70 of them.
- And you must look. If it is the road to its territory that it goes up, to **Beth-shemesh**, it is he that has done to us this great evil, but if not, we must know that it was not his hand that touched us, an accident it was that happened to us. (**1 Samuel 6:9**)
- And the men proceeded to do accordingly. So they took two cows that were giving suck and hitched them to the wagon, and their young one's they shut up at home. (**1 Samuel 6:10**)
- Then they put the ark of Yehowah upon the wagon, and also the box and the golden jerboas and the images of their piles. (**1 Samuel 6:11**)
- And the cows began to go straight ahead on the road to **Beth-shemesh**. On the one highway they went, lowing as they went, and they did not turn aside to the right or to the left. All the while the axis lords of the Philistines were walking after them as far as the boundary of **Beth-shemesh**. (**1 Samuel 6:12**)
- And people of **Beth-shemesh** were reaping the wheat harvest in the low plain. When they raised their eyes and saw the Ark, they gave way to rejoicing at seeing it. (**1 Samuel 6:13**)
- And the wagon itself came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and kept standing there, where there was a large stone. And they went splitting up the wood of the wagon, and the cows they offered up as a burnt offering to Yehowah. (**1 Samuel 6:14**)
- And the Levites themselves took the ark of Yehowah down and the box that was with it, in which the golden articles were, and they proceeded to put it upon the large stone. And the men of **Beth-shemesh**, for their part, offered up burnt offerings, and they continued rendering up sacrifices on that day to Yehowah. (**1 Samuel 6:15**)

- And the five axis lords of the Philistines themselves saw it and went their way back to Ekron on that day. (1 Samuel 6:16)
- Now these are the golden piles that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to Yehowah, for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one. (1 Samuel 6:17)
- And the golden jerboas were to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five axis lords, from the fortified city to the village of the open country. And the great stone upon which they rested the ark of Yehowah is a witness down to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. (1 Samuel 6:18)
- And he went striking down the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked upon the ark of Yehowah. So he struck down among the people seventy men, fifty thousand men, and the people began mourning because Yehowah had struck down the people with a great slaughter. (1 Samuel 6:19)
- Further, the men of Beth-shemesh said; Who will be able to stand before Yehowah this holy God, and to whom will he withdraw from off us? (1 Samuel 6:20)
- The phrase fifty thousand men occurring at 1 Samuel 6:19 in the Hebrew is not connected with the seventy men by any conjunction, and this is considered by some to indicate an interpolation. Josephus [Jewish Antiquities, VI, 16, i, 4] in discussing the Biblical account mentions only 70 men as killed, omitting all reference to the 50,000.
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- Beth-shemesh was one of the cities connected with King Solomon's administrative arrangement to provide food for the royal table.
- And Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, and they provided the king and his household with food. It would devolve upon each one to provide the food one month in the year. (1 Kings 4:7)

- The son of Deker, in Makaz and in Shaalbim and **Beth-shemesh** and Elon-beth-hanan. (**1 Kings 4:9**)
- Long, narrow rooms believed to have been used for grain storage have been found there, as well as a huge stone-lined silo some 7 meters (23 feet) in diameter and almost 6 meters (20 feet) deep. Numerous winepresses and olive presses unearthed indicate that the area was very productive in oil and wine.
- King Amaziah **858-830 B.C.E**, unwisely challenged Jehoash of Israel and suffered defeat and capture at **Beth-shemesh**.
- At that Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah the king of Judah, saying; The thorny weed itself that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying; Do give your daughter to my son as a wife. However, a wild beast of the field that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thorny weed down. (**2 Kings 14:9**)
- You have unmistakably struck down Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Enjoy your honor and dwell in your own house. Why, then, should you engage in strife under unfavorable conditions and have to fall, you and Judah with you? (**2 Kings 14:10**)
- And Amaziah did not listen. So Jehoash the king of Israel came up, and they proceeded to look each other in the face, he and Amaziah the king of Judah, at **Beth-shemesh**, which belongs to Judah. (**2 Kings 14:11**)
- And Judah came to be defeated before Israel, so that they took to flight, each one to his tent. (**2 Kings 14:12**)
- And it was Amaziah the king of Judah the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah that Jehoash the king of Israel captured at **Beth-shemesh**, after which they came to Jerusalem and he made a breach in the wall of Jerusalem at the Gate of Ephraim clear to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits. (**2 Kings 14:13**)
- At that Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah the king of Judah, saying; The thorny weed itself that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying; Do give your daughter to my son as a wife. However, a wild beast of the field that was

- in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thorny weed down. (**2 Chronicles 25:18**)
- You have said to yourself; Here you have struck down Edom. And your heart has lifted you up to be glorified. Now do keep dwelling in your own house. Why should you engage in strife in a bad position and have to fall, you and Judah with you? (**2 Chronicles 25:19**)
 - But Amaziah did not listen, for it was from the true God for the purpose of giving them into his hand, because they had searched for the gods of Edom. (**2 Chronicles 25:20**)
 - So Jehoash the king of Israel went up, and they proceeded to look each other in the face, he and Amaziah the king of Judah, at **Beth-shemesh**, which belongs to Judah. (**2 Chronicles 25:21**)
 - And Judah came to be defeated before Israel, so that they took to flight each one to his tent. (**2 Chronicles 25:22**)
 - And it was Amaziah the king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, that Jehoash the king of Israel seized at **Beth-shemesh**, after which he brought him to Jerusalem and made a breach in the wall of Jerusalem, from the Gate of Ephraim clear to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits. (**2 Chronicles 25:23**)
 - During the reign of Ahaz **761-746 B.C.E**, national degradation and infidelity resulted in the loss of **Beth-shemesh** to the Philistines.
 - As for the Philistines, they made a raid upon the cities of the Shephelah and the Negeb of Judah and got to capture **Beth-shemesh** and Aijalon and Gederoth and Soco and its dependent towns and Timnah and its dependent towns and Gimzo and its dependent towns, and they took up dwelling there. (**2 Chronicles 28:18**)
 - For Yehowah humbled Judah on account of Ahaz the king of Israel, because he let unrestraint grow in Judah, and there was an acting with great unfaithfulness toward Yehowah. (**2 Chronicles 28:19**)
 - A stamped jar handle bearing the inscription belonging to Eliakim, steward of Jaukin, a shortened form of the name Jehoiachin, was excavated at **Beth-shemesh** and is suggested to relate to the king

of that name, perhaps indicating that the kingdom of Judah in time regained control of the city from the Philistines.