

~EZION-GEBER (263)

(E'zi-on-ge'ber)

.. During Solomon's Reign

.. Storage Depot

- **A place first mentioned as an Israelite campsite toward the close of the nations 40 years in the wilderness. The next campsite was at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.**

- **Then they pulled away from Abronah and went camping in **Ezion-geber**. (**Numbers 33:35**)**

- **After that they pulled away from **Ezion-geber** and went camping in the wilderness of Zin, that is to say; Kadesh. (**Numbers 33:36**)**

- **From Kadesh the request was made to the king of Edom for authorization to pass through his land, but this was denied.**

- **Subsequently Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom; This is what your brother Israel has said; You yourself well know all the hardship that has overtaken us. (**Numbers 20:14**)**

- **And our fathers proceeded to go down to Egypt, and we continued to dwell in Egypt many days, and the Egyptians began doing harm to us and our fathers. (**Numbers 20:15**)**

- **Finally we cried out to Yehowah and he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt, and here we are in Kadesh, a city at the extremity of your territory. (**Numbers 20:16**)**

- **Let us pass, please, through your land. We shall not pass through a field or a vineyard, and we shall not drink the water of a well. On the kings road we shall march. We shall not bend toward the right or the left, until we shall pass through your territory. (**Numbers 20:17**)**

- **However, Edom said to him; You must not pass through me, for fear I may come out with the sword to meet you. (**Numbers 20:18**)**

- **In turn the sons of Israel said to him; By the highway we shall**

- go up, and if I and my livestock should drink your water, I shall also certainly give the value of it. I want nothing more than to pass through on my feet. (**Numbers 20:19**)
- Still he said; You must not pass through. With that Edom came on out to encounter him with a great many people and a strong hand. (**Numbers 20:20**)
 - So Edom refused to grant Israel to pass through his territory. Hence Israel turned away from him. (**Numbers 20:21**)
 - And the sons of Israel, the entire assembly, proceeded to pull away from Kadesh and come to Mount Hor. (**Numbers 20:22**)
 - As Moses later recounted; So we passed on away from our brothers, the sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, from the way of the Arabah, from Elath and from **Ezion-geber**.
 - So we passed on away from our brothers, the sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, from the way of the Arabah, from Elath and from **Ezion-geber**. Next we turned and passed on by the way of the wilderness of Moab. (**Deuteronomy 2:8**)
 - Both Elath or Eloth and **Ezion-geber** are shown elsewhere to have been situated on the Red Sea, evidently at the head of the Gulf of `Aqaba, the Northeast arm of the Red Sea.
 - And there was a fleet of ships that King Solomon made in **Ezion-geber**, which is by Eloth, upon the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. (**1 Kings 9:26**)
 - It was then that Solomon went to **Ezion-geber** and to Eloth upon the shore of the sea in the land of Edom. (**2 Chronicles 8:17**)
 - So we passed on away from our brothers, the sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, from the way of the Arabah, from Elath and from **Ezion-geber**. Next we turned and passed on by the way of the wilderness of Moab. (**Deuteronomy 2:8**)
 - The earlier account at;
 - While they continued trekking from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, the soul of the people began tiring out because of the way. (**Numbers 21:4**)

- Describes the Israelites as trekking from Mount Hor, where Aaron died, by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom. Some scholars suggest that the Israelites, after leaving Mount Hor, traveled to the southern end of the Dead Sea and went up the torrent valley of Zered, the boundary between Edom and Moab.
- Many commentators, however, hold that the foregoing texts require a more circuitous route in avoidance of Edom's heartland, a route that led them back by the way of the Red Sea and hence to the region of **Ezion-geber**.
- They suggest that the route followed took the Israelites South toward the Gulf of `Aqaba, and that, upon reaching a point North of **Ezion-geber**, they likely turned to the Northeast through the Wadi Yatm, thereby skirting the southern extremity of Edom's southern mountain range.

• During Solomon's Reign

- The next mention of **Ezion-geber** comes over 400 years later, in the reign of Solomon **1037-998 B.C.E.** At this location on the gulf, Solomon had a fleet of ships constructed and launched, manned by a Phoenician-Judean crew. Phoenician King Hiram of Tyre, also very active in the shipping business, cooperated with Solomon in this enterprise.
- And there was a fleet of ships that King Solomon made in **Ezion-geber**, which is by Eloth, upon the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. (**1 Kings 9:26**)
- And Hiram kept sending in the fleet of ships his own servants, seamen, having a knowledge of the sea, along with the servants of Solomon. (**1 Kings 9:27**)
- And they proceeded to go to Ophir and take from there four hundred and twenty talents of gold and bring it in to King Solomon. (**1 Kings 9:28**)
- And Hiram's fleet of ships that carried gold from Ophir also brought from Ophir timbers of algum trees in very great amount and precious stones. (**1 Kings 10:11**)

- About a century later, King Jehoshaphat **936 B.C.E. circa 911 B.C.E.** endeavored to revive this shipping industry based at **Ezion-geber**, but he failed, as Yehowah had foretold, his ships being wrecked.
- Jehoshaphat, for his part, made Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, because the ships were wrecked at **Ezion-geber**. (**1 Kings 22:48**)
- It was then that Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat; Let my servants go with your servants in the ships, but Jehoshaphat did not consent. (**1 Kings 22:49**)
- So he made him a partner with himself in making ships to go to Tarshish and they made ships in **Ezion-geber**. (**2 Chronicles 20:36**)
- However, Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Maresha spoke prophetically against Jehoshaphat, saying; Inasmuch as you have had partnership with Ahaziah, Yehowah will certainly break down your works. Accordingly the ships were wrecked, and they did not retain strength to go to Tarshish. (**2 Chronicles 20:37**)
- It may be noted that both in Solomon's case and in that of Jehoshaphat some of the ships were intended to go not only to Ophir but also to Tarshish.
- For ships belonging to the king were going to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. Once every three years ships of Tarshish would come in, carrying gold and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks. (**2 Chronicles 9:21**)
- So he made him a partner with himself in making ships to go to Tarshish and they made ships in **Ezion-geber**. (**2 Chronicles 20:36**)
- However, Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Maresha spoke prophetically against Jehoshaphat, saying; Inasmuch as you have had partnership with Ahaziah, Yehowah will certainly break down your works. Accordingly the ships were wrecked, and they did not retain strength to go to Tarshish. (**2 Chronicles 20:37**)
- Since the evidence is strong that Tarshish was in Spain, some have doubted that ships sailing from **Ezion-geber** could have made such a trip in ancient times. As to this, see the article **TARSHISH 4**,

where the possibility of the existence of a Nile, Red Sea canal is presented.

- Such a canal might also explain how King Hiram could send not only men but ships to **Ezion-geber** and Elath or Elath, for Solomon's use.
- It was then that Solomon went to **Ezion-geber** and to Elath upon the shore of the sea in the land of Edom. (**2 Chronicles 8:17**)
- And Hiram regularly sent to him by means of his servants ships and servants having a knowledge of the sea, and they would come with Solomon's servants to Ophir and take from there four hundred and fifty talents of gold and bring it to King Solomon. (**2 Chronicles 8:18**)
- On the other hand, it has also been suggested that these ships may have been sent to a point on the Philistine coast, dismantled, and transported overland to the Gulf of `Aqaba, where they were reconstructed.
- Those holding this view point out that the Crusaders later used a similar method. Whether by some Nile, Red Sea canal or by an overland route, it seems likely that at least timber was supplied from forest lands elsewhere, since the region around **Ezion-geber** has palm groves but no trees suitable for ship construction.

See Also TARSHISH 4

- **Location.** Just where ancient **Ezion-geber** stood cannot be determined with certainty. Most scholars accept **Tell el-Kheleifeh**, **`Ezyon Gever**, some 500 meters (1,600 feet) from the Gulf of `Aqaba and over 3 kilometers (2 miles) Northwest of the modern village of `Aqaba, as the most likely possibility.
- Excavations there have uncovered five major periods of occupation, the oldest conjectured to date back to Solomon's time. However, the archaeologists found nothing that they would date beyond that period, hence nothing dating back to the time of the Exodus.
- For this reason some conclude that the **Ezion-geber** of Moses day was either at another point, or that, because the native buildings were

simple structures of mud brick, the early settlement has dissolved into the earth, leaving no trace behind.

•• **Storage Depot**

- The excavators at **Tell el-Kheleifeh** found the remains of a massive city gate and also a structure that was confidently declared to have been the center of a large copper-mining and smelting industry, they attributed its operation to King Solomon.
- More recently it was acknowledged that this identification was incorrect, and although some copper smelting was evidently done in that area, archaeologists now hold that the building was undoubtedly a storage depot.
- Such a fortified depot would be convenient at this point where important sea and land trade routes intersected, to house the gold, precious stones, and algum wood from Ophir till their being transported by caravans to their point of destination.
- And there was a fleet of ships that King Solomon made in **Ezion-geber**, which is by Eloth, upon the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. (**1 Kings 9:26**)
- And Hiram's fleet of ships that carried gold from Ophir also brought from Ophir timbers of algum trees in very great amount and precious stones. (**1 Kings 10:11**)
- And the king proceeded to make out of the timbers of the algum trees supports for the house of Yehowah and for the house of the king, and also harps and stringed instruments for the singers. Timbers of algum trees like this have not come in nor have they been seen down to this day. (**1 Kings 10:12**)
- For further details on this site.

See Also ARCHAEOLOGY (Palestine and Syria)