

~GATH (491)
[Winepress]

- **A city of the Philistine axis lords.**
- **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)**
- **Situated as it was, to the East of the Plain of Philistia, Gath figured prominently in the Israelite-Philistine seesaw domination of the area. Gath was the birthplace of Goliath and other giant warriors, and it was occupied by the Anakim at the time that Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land.**
- **No Anakim were left in the land of the sons of Israel. It was only in Gaza, in Gath and in Ashdod that they remained. (Joshua 11:22)**
- **And a champion began to go out from the camps of the Philistines, his name being Goliath, from Gath, his height being six cubits and a span. (1 Samuel 17:4)**
- **And the Philistines came to have war again with Israel. Accordingly David and his servants with him went down and fought the Philistines, and David grew tired. (2 Samuel 21:15)**
- **And Ishbi-benob, who was among those born of the Rephaim, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of copper and who was girded with a new sword, got to think of striking David down. (2 Samuel 21:16)**
- **At once Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his help and struck the Philistine down and put him to death. At that time the men of David swore to him, saying; You must not go out with us to the battle anymore, that you may not extinguish the lamp of**

Israel! (2 Samuel 21:17)

- **And it came about after this that war arose once more with the Philistines at Gob. Then it was that Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was among those born of the Rephaim. (2 Samuel 21:18)**
- **And war arose once again with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite got to strike down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like the beam of loom workers. (2 Samuel 21:19)**
- **And war arose yet again at Gath, when there happened to be a man of extraordinary size, with six fingers on each of his hands and six toes on each of his feet, twenty-four in number, and he too had been born to the Rephaim. (2 Samuel 21:20)**
- **And he kept taunting Israel. Finally Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down. (2 Samuel 21:21)**
- **These four had been born to the Rephaim in Gath, and they came to fall by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. (2 Samuel 21:22)**
- **And it came about after this that war began breaking out at Gezer with the Philistines. It was then that Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Sippai of those born of the Rephaim, so that they were subdued. (1 Chronicles 20:4)**
- **And there came to be war again with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair got to strike down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like the beam of loom workers. (1 Chronicles 20:5)**
- **And there came to be war again at Gath, when there happened to be a man of extraordinary size whose fingers and toes were in sixes, twenty-four, and he, too, had been born to the Rephaim. (1 Chronicles 20:6)**
- **And he kept taunting Israel. Finally Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David struck him down. (1 Chronicles 20:7)**
- **These were the ones that had been born to the Rephaim in Gath, and they came to fall by the hand of David and by the hand of his**

servants. (1 Chronicles 20:8)

- The residents of **Gath** were called **Gittites**.
- From the branch of the Nile that is in front of Egypt and up to the border of Ekron to the north, it used to be reckoned as belonging to the Canaanites, five axis lords of the Philistines, the Gazites and the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites and the Ekronites, and the Avvim. (Joshua 13:3)
- Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land did not include the territory occupied by the Philistines. This was to be accomplished later.
- Nevertheless, when Yehowah instructed Joshua to assign the territory to the tribes, Judah's assignment included the territory in which **Gath** was located.
- This is the land yet remaining, all the regions of the Philistines and all the Geshurites (Joshua 13:2)
- From the branch of the Nile that is in front of Egypt and up to the border of Ekron to the north, it used to be reckoned as belonging to the Canaanites, five axis lords of the Philistines, the Gazites and the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the **Gittites** and the Ekronites, and the Avvim. (Joshua 13:3)
- And the lot of the tribe of the sons of Judah by their families came to be to the boundary of Edom, the wilderness of Zin, to the Negeb at its southern end. (Joshua 15:1)
- And the eastern boundary was the Salt Sea up to the end of the Jordan, and the boundary at the northern corner was at the bay of the sea, at the end of the Jordan. (Joshua 15:5)
- And the western boundary was at the Great Sea and its shoreland. This was the boundary all around, of the sons of Judah by their families. (Joshua 15:12)
- At unstated times both the Ephraimites and the Benjamites skirmished with the **Gittites**, as incidentally noted in the genealogies.
- And the sons of Ephraim were Shuthelah and Bered his son and Tahath his son and Eleadah his son and Tahath his son. (1

Chronicles 7:20)

- **And Zabad his son and Shuthelah his son and Ezer and Elead. And the men of **Gath** that were born in the land killed them because they came down to take their livestock. (1 Chronicles 7:21)**
- **And Beriah and Shema. These were heads of the houses of forefathers, belonging to the inhabitants of Aijalon. These were the ones that chased away the inhabitants of **Gath**. (1 Chronicles 8:13)**
- **In Samuel's day the captured ark of the covenant was brought to **Gath**, with disastrous consequences to the city's inhabitants.**
- **Consequently they sent and **gathered** all the axis lords of the Philistines to them and said; What shall we do to the ark of the God of Israel? Finally they said; Toward **Gath** let the ark of the God of Israel go around. So they brought the ark of the God of Israel around to there. (1 Samuel 5:8)**
- **And it came about that after they had brought it around to there, the hand of Yehowah came to be upon the city with a very great confusion, and he began striking the men of the city, from small to great, and piles began breaking out on them. (1 Samuel 5:9)**
- **Shortly thereafter, Israel subdued the Philistines, and certain cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel kept coming back to Israel from Ekron to **Gath**.**
- **And the cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel kept coming back to Israel from Ekron to **Gath**, and the territory of them Israel delivered from the hand of the Philistines. And there came to be peace between Israel and the Amorites. (1 Samuel 7:14)**
- **Later, when David slew the Gittite giant Goliath, Israel pursued the Philistines as far as Ekron and **Gath**.**
- **While he was speaking with them, why, here the champion, his name being Goliath the Philistine from **Gath**, was coming up from the battle lines of the Philistines, and he began speaking the same words as before, and David got to listen in. (1 Samuel 17:23)**

- And it occurred that the Philistine rose and kept coming and drawing nearer to meet David, and David began hurrying and running toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. (1 Samuel 17:48)
- Then David thrust his hand into his bag and took a stone from there and slung it, so that he struck the Philistine in his forehead and the stone sank into his forehead, and he went falling upon his face to the earth. (1 Samuel 17:49)
- So David, with a sling and a stone, proved stronger than the Philistine and struck the Philistine down and put him to death, and there was no sword in David's hand. (1 Samuel 17:50)
- And David continued running and got to stand over the Philistine. Then he took his sword and pulled it out of its sheath and definitely put him to death when he cut his head off with it. And the Philistines got to see that their mighty one had died, and they took to flight. (1 Samuel 17:51)
- At that the men of Israel and of Judah rose and broke into shouting and went in pursuit of the Philistines clear to the valley and as far as the gates of Ekron, and the fatally wounded of the Philistines kept falling on the way from Shaaraim, both as far as Gath and as far as Ekron. (1 Samuel 17:52)
- Afterward the sons of Israel returned from hotly pursuing the Philistines and went pillaging their camps. (1 Samuel 17:53)
- After this, when David was forced to flee from Saul, he took refuge in Gath. When the servants of Achish the king of Gath began to say;
 - Then David rose up and continued running away on account of Saul on that day, and at length came to Achish the king of Gath. (1 Samuel 21:10)
 - And the servants of Achish began to say to him; Is not this David the king of the land? Was it not to this one that they kept responding with dances, saying; (1 Samuel 21:11)
 - Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?

- And David began to take these words to his heart, and he became very much afraid on account of Achish the king of **Gath**. (**1 Samuel 21:12**)
- So he disguised his sanity under their eyes and began acting insane in their hand and kept making cross marks on the doors of the gate and let his saliva run down upon his beard. (**1 Samuel 21:13**)
- Finally Achish said to his servants; Here you see a man behaving crazy. Why should you bring him to me? (**1 Samuel 21:14**)
- David composed two psalms recalling this experience in **Gath**.
[Psalms 34:Sup][Psalms 56:Sup]
- On David's next visit to **Gath**, however, he came, not as a lone fugitive, but as the leader of 600 warriors and their families.
- No doubt anxious to secure David's support against Saul, Achish granted him and his men safe residence in the town of Ziklag until Saul was killed 16 months later, after which David moved to Hebron.
- So David rose up and he and six hundred men that were with him passed over to Achish the son of Maach, the king of **Gath**. (**1 Samuel 27:2**)
- At that David said to Achish; That is why you yourself know what your servant is to do. Accordingly Achish said to David; That is why guardian of my head I shall appoint you always. (**1 Samuel 28:2**)
- 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)

- And it came about after Saul's death, and when David himself had returned from striking down the Amalekites, that David continued to dwell at Ziklag two days. (2 Samuel 1:1)
- And it came about afterward that David proceeded to inquire of Yehowah, saying; Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah? At this Yehowah said to him; Go up. And David went on to say; Where shall I go up? Then he said; To Hebron. (2 Samuel 2:1)
- Accordingly David went up there and also his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. (2 Samuel 2:2)
- And the men that were with him David brought up, each with his household, and they took up dwelling in the cities of Hebron territory. (2 Samuel 2:3)
- In his dirge over Saul and Jonathan, David noted that the news of Saul's death would cause rejoicing and exultation in the Philistine cities of **Gath** and Ashkelon.
- Do not, you people, tell it in **Gath**. Do not announce it in the streets of Ashkelon, for fear that the daughters of the Philistines may rejoice, for fear that the daughters of the uncircumcised men may exult. (2 Samuel 1:20)
- During David's reign, **Gath** and its dependent towns came into Israelite hands.
- And it came about afterward that David proceeded to strike down the Philistines and subdue them and take **Gath** and its dependent towns out of the hand of the Philistines. (1 Chronicles 18:1)
- Some men from **Gath** became loyal supporters of David, and when David fled from Absalom, there were 600 **Gittites** among those who went with him.
- And all his servants were crossing at his side, and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites and all the **Gittites**, six hundred men that had followed him from **Gath**, were crossing before the king's face. (2 Samuel 15:18)

- But during Solomon's rule Achish was still referred to as king of **Gath**.
- And it came about at the end of three years that two slaves of Shimei went running away to Achish the son of Maacah the king of **Gath**, and people came telling Shimei, saying; Look! Your slaves are at **Gath**. (**1 Kings 2:39**)
- Immediately Shimei got up and saddled his ass and went to **Gath** to Achish to look for his slaves, after which Shimei went and brought his slaves from **Gath**. (**1 Kings 2:40**)
- Then Solomon was told; Shimei has gone out of Jerusalem to **Gath** and is back. (**1 Kings 2:41**)
- Evidently Achish was a vassal prince and not a king in the usual sense. Solomon's successor Rehoboam rebuilt and fortified **Gath**.
- And Rehoboam continued to dwell in Jerusalem and proceeded to build fortified cities in Judah. (**2 Chronicles 11:5**)
- Thus he rebuilt Bethlehem and Etam and Tekoa. (**2 Chronicles 11:6**)
- And Beth-zur and Soco and Adullam. (**2 Chronicles 11:7**)
- And **Gath** and Mareshah and Ziph. (**2 Chronicles 11:8**)

See Also AXIS LORDS

- King Hazael of Syria captured **Gath** from King Jehoash of Judah sometime after Jehoash's 23rd year, **876 B.C.E.**
- And it came about that by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, the priests had not yet repaired the cracks of the house. (**2 Kings 12:6**)
- Then it was that Hazael the king of Syria proceeded to go up and fight against **Gath** and capture it, after which Hazael set his face to go up against Jerusalem. (**2 Kings 12:17**)
- The Philistines must have regained control of the city later, for Uzziah recaptured it in his campaign against them.

- Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and for fifty-two years he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. (**2 Chronicles 26:3**)
- And he proceeded to go out and fight against the Philistines and break through the wall of **Gath** and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod, after which he built cities in Ashdod territory and among the Philistines. (**2 Chronicles 26:6**)
- The prophets Amos and, afterward, Micah refer to **Gath** as a foreign city.
- Make your way over to Calneh, and see, and go from there to populous Hamath, and go down to **Gath** of the Philistines. Are they better than these kingdoms, or is their territory bigger than your territory? (**Amos 6:2**)
- In **Gath** do not you men tell it out, positively do not weep. In the house of Aphrah wallow in the very dust. (**Micah 1:10**)
- Following the Assyrian king Sargon's boast of conquering it not long after **740 B.C.E.**, there are no further historical references to **Gath**, and later Biblical mention of Philistine cities does not include it.
- For, as regards Gaza, an abandoned city is what she will become, and Ashkelon is to be a desolate waste. As regards Ashdod, at high noon they will drive her out, and as regards Ekron, she will be uprooted. (**Zephaniah 2:4**)
- And I proceeded to take the cup out of the hand of Yehowah and to make all the nations drink to whom Yehowah had sent me: (**Jeremiah 25:17**)
- And all the mixed company, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines and Ashkelon and Gaza and Ekron and the remnant of Ashdod. (**Jeremiah 25:20**)
- Ashkelon will see and get afraid, and as for Gaza, she will also feel very severe pains. Ekron also, because her looked-for hope will have to experience shame. And a king will certainly perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon herself will not be inhabited. (**Zechariah 9:5**)
- And an illegitimate son will actually seat himself in Ashdod, and I

shall certainly cut off the pride of the Philistine. (**Zechariah 9:6**)

- The exact location of **Gath** is unknown. Although several sites have been proposed, archaeological excavations at most of these sites did not fit the historical description of the city of Gath.
- Some scholars now favor **Tell es-Safi**, **Tel Zafit**, 18.5 kilometers (11.5 miles) East-Southeast of Ashdod. Yohanan Aharoni states; **Since there remains no suitable tell in this more southerly region, we should reconsider an earlier proposal to equate Gath with Tell es-Safi.**
- This is a large and outstanding site with a contemporary lower city spread out at its feet in which an abundance of Philistine pottery was discovered.
- Its position at the point where the **Wadi es-Sant**, the Valley of Elah, enters the western Shephelah corresponds nicely with the account of David's victory over Goliath the **Gittite**.
- Their fight took place farther east between Sochoh and Azekah.
- And the Philistines went collecting their camps together for war. When they were collected together at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, then they took up camping between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. (**1 Samuel 17:1**)
- And afterwards the Israelites pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. [The Land of the Bible, translated and edited by A. Rainey, 1979, p. 271]
- At that the men of Israel and of Judah rose and broke into shouting and went in pursuit of the Philistines clear to the valley and as far as the gates of Ekron, and the fatally wounded of the Philistines kept falling on the way from Shaaraim, both as far as **Gath** and as far as Ekron. (**1 Samuel 17:52**)