

~GAZA 1 (432)

(Ga'za)

- Occupied By The Philistines
- Under Assyrian And Babylonian Rule
- Destroyed

- An ancient city listed in the earliest Canaanite boundary description.
- So the boundary of the Canaanite came to be from Sidon as far as Gerar, near **Gaza**, as far as Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, near Lasha. (**Genesis 10:19**)
- Aside from some 20 Scriptural references to **Gaza**, ancient Egyptian records and inscriptions of Ramses II, Thutmose III, and Seti I mention the city. **Gaza** was apparently the most southwesterly city assigned to the tribe of Judah.
- This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Judah by their families. (**Joshua 15:20**)
- Ashdod, its dependent towns and its settlements. **Gaza**, its dependent towns and its settlements, down to the torrent valley of Egypt, and the Great Sea and the adjacent region. (**Joshua 15:47**)
- And it occurred that, if Israel sowed seed, Midian and Amalek and the Easterners came up, yes, they came up against them. (**Judges 6:3**)
- And they would camp against them and would ruin the yield of the earth all the way to **Gaza**, and they would not let any sustenance or sheep or bull or ass remain in Israel. (**Judges 6:4**)
- Its inhabitants were called **Gazites**.
- 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 report was made to the Gazites, saying; Samson has come in here. So they surrounded him and lay in wait for him all night long in the city gate. And they kept quiet the whole night, saying; As soon as the morning gets light, we must also kill him. (**Judges 16:2**)
- Some would identify **Gaza** with **Tell el-`Ajul**, **Tel Bet `Eglayim**, but this has not been confirmed by archaeological diggings there. Generally, the ancient city is linked with modern **Gaza** or **Ghazzeh `Azza**, located about 80 kilometers (50 miles) West-Southwest of Jerusalem. Although separated from the Mediterranean Sea by about 5 kilometers (3 miles) of rolling sand dunes, **Gaza** lies in a well-watered region known for its olive groves, fruit and sycamore trees, grapevines, and grain.
- Agriculture likely contributed to the prosperity of ancient **Gaza**. But its importance stemmed primarily from its location on the main road linking Egypt with Palestine. This made **Gaza** a gateway both for caravans and military traffic.

•• **Occupied By The Philistines**

- Sometime before Israel's Exodus from Egypt in **1513 B.C.E**, the Hamitic Caphtorim
- And the sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. (**Genesis 10:6**)
- And Mizraim became father to Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim (**Genesis 10:13**)
- And Pathrusim and Casluhim, from among whom the Philistines went forth, and Caphtorim. (**Genesis 10:14**)
- Dispossessed the Avvim, who were dwelling in settlements as far as **Gaza**.
- As for the Avvim, who were dwelling in settlements as far as **Gaza**, the Caphtorim, who came out from Caphtor, annihilated them, that they might dwell in their place. (**Deuteronomy 2:23**)
- When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, **Gaza** itself was a Philistine city and its inhabitants included some of the Anakim. Although Israel's war operations under Joshua extended as far as

Gaza, the city apparently was not taken. It remained a Philistine city, and some of the Anakim continued to live there.

- And Joshua went striking them from Kadesh-barnea to **Gaza** and all the land of Goshen and up to Gibeon. (**Joshua 10:41**)
- 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**)
- 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**)
- Assigned to Judah, **Gaza** was afterward conquered by this tribe, but the Judeans did not retain control over the city.
- This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Judah by their families. (**Joshua 15:20**)
- Ashdod, its dependent towns and its settlements. **Gaza**, its dependent towns and its settlements, down to the torrent valley of Egypt, and the Great Sea and the adjacent region. (**Joshua 15:47**)
- After that Judah captured **Gaza** and its territory and Ashkelon and its territory and Ekron and its territory. (**Judges 1:18**)
- In Samson's day **Gaza** was again a fortified city of the Philistines, with a house used for Dagon worship that could accommodate about 3,000 persons, if not more, on its roof.
- While Samson was at **Gaza** on one occasion, he rose at midnight and grabbed hold of the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar and put them upon his shoulders and went carrying them up to the top of the mountain that is in front of that faces Hebron.
- Once Samson went to **Gaza** and saw a prostitute woman there

and came in to her. (**Judges 16:1**)

- And report was made to the **Gazites**, saying; Samson has come in here. So they surrounded him and lay in wait for him all night long in the city gate. And they kept quiet the whole night, saying; As soon as the morning gets light, we must also kill him. (**Judges 16:2**)
- However, Samson kept lying till midnight and then rose at midnight and grabbed hold of the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar and put them upon his shoulders and went carrying them up to the top of the mountain that is in front of Hebron. (**Judges 16:3**)
- Hebron was a distance of some 60 kilometers (37 miles) from **Gaza**. The exact location of the mountain facing Hebron is uncertain. For Samson to carry the gates and sideposts any distance, and up a mountain at that, was clearly a manifestation of miraculous power made possible only by Yehowah's spirit.
- Later, Samson caused the collapse of the aforementioned house used for Dagon worship, this resulting in his own death and that of the Philistines who had assembled there.
- So the Philistines grabbed hold of him and bored his eyes out and brought him down to **Gaza** and bound him with two fetters of copper, and he came to be a grinder in the prison house. (**Judges 16:21**)
- Meanwhile the hair of his head started to grow luxuriantly as soon as he had been shaved. (**Judges 16:22**)
- As for the Philistine axis lords, they gathered together to sacrifice a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and for rejoicing, and they kept saying; Our god has given into our hand Samson our enemy! (**Judges 16:23**)
- When the people got to see him, they at once gave way to praising their god, because, said they, our god has given into our hand our enemy and the devastator of our land and the one who multiplied our slain. (**Judges 16:24**)
- And it came about that because their heart was merry, they began to say; Call Samson that he may offer us some

amusement. So they called Samson out of the prison house that he might make sport before them, and they proceeded to stand him between the pillars. (**Judges 16:25**)

- Then Samson said to the boy that was holding him by his hand. Do permit me to feel the pillars upon which the house is firmly established and let me lean against them. (**Judges 16:26**)
- Incidentally, the house was full of men and women and all the Philistine axis lords were there, and upon the roof there were about three thousand men and women who were looking on while Samson offered some amusement. (**Judges 16:27**)
- Samson now called to Yehowah and said; Sovereign Lord Yehowah, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, just this once, O you the true God, and let me avenge myself upon the Philistines with vengeance for one of my two eyes. (**Judges 16:28**)
- With that Samson braced himself against the two middle pillars upon which the house was firmly established, and got a grasp on them, one with his right and the other with his left hand. (**Judges 16:29**)
- And Samson proceeded to say; Let my soul die with the Philistines. Then he bent himself with power, and the house went falling upon the axis lords and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead that he put to death in his own death came to be more than those he had put to death during his lifetime. (**Judges 16:30**)
- **Gaza** apparently continued to be a Philistine city throughout the period of the Judges.
- 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 during the rule of Israel's kings. King Solomon held dominion as far as **Gaza** in the Southwest, but evidently the Philistines were still there.
- As for Solomon, he proved to be ruler over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the boundary of

Egypt. They were bringing gifts and serving Solomon all the days of his life. (1 Kings 4:21)

- For he was holding in subjection everything this side of the River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, even all the kings this side of the River, and peace itself became his in every region of his, all around. (1 Kings 4:24)

• Under Assyrian And Babylonian Rule

- Toward the close of the Ninth Century B.C.E, through his prophet Amos, Yehowah stated that he would send a fire onto the walls of Gaza, this in retribution for its taking exiles to hand over to the Edomites.

- This is what Yehowah has said; On account of three revolts of Gaza, and on account of four, I shall not turn it back, on account of their taking into exile a complete body of exiles to hand over to Edom. (Amos 1:6)

- And I will send a fire onto the wall of Gaza, and it must devour her dwelling towers. (Amos 1:7)

- Although the exiles are not specifically identified as Hebrews, likely the allusion is to captives taken by the Philistines in raids on Judah.

- Accordingly Yehowah aroused against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs that were by the side of the Ethiopians. (2 Chronicles 21:16)

- So they came up into Judah and forced it open and took captive all the goods that were to be found in the king's house and also his sons and his wives, and there was not left to him a son but Jehoahaz, his youngest son. (2 Chronicles 21:17)

- And, also, what do you have to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Is it the treatment that you are giving me as a reward? And if you are giving such treatment to me, swiftly, speedily I shall pay back your treatment upon your heads. (Joel 3:4)

- Because you men have taken my own silver and my own gold, and you have brought my own desirable good things into your

temples. (Joel 3:5)

- And the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem you have sold to the sons of the Greeks, for the purpose of removing them far from their own territory. (Joel 3:6)
- Not long thereafter, about the middle of the Eighth Century B.C.E, Gaza began to experience the fire of war. According to Assyrian annals, Tiglath-pileser III conquered Gaza, but its king, Hanno, fled to Egypt. [Ancient Near Eastern Texts, edited by J. Pritchard, 1974, p. 283]
- Apparently Hanno was soon able to return to Gaza, for Sargon II claims to have defeated both him and the Egyptian army under Sib'e allied with him. Sargon II claims to have personally captured Hanno and taken him away in fetters. [Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 285]
- From this time onward, Gaza appears to have been generally loyal to Assyria. Hence, it may be that King Hezekiah's striking down the Philistines as far as Gaza was a phase of his revolt against Assyria.
- And it came about in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah the king of Israel that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz the king of Judah became king. (2 Kings 18:1)
- And Yehowah proved to be with him. Wherever he would go out, he would act prudently, and he proceeded to rebel against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. (2 Kings 18:7)
- It was he that struck down the Philistines clear to Gaza and also its territories, from the tower of the watchmen clear to the fortified city. (2 Kings 18:8)
- After this revolt, King Sennacherib launched his campaign against Judah and, according to his annals, gave captured Judean towns to Mitinti the king of Ashdod, Padi the king of Ekron, who had been imprisoned at Jerusalem, and Sillibel the king of Gaza. [Ancient Near Eastern Texts, pp. 287,288]
- In the time of Jeremiah, Egypt's army struck down Gaza.
- This is what proved to be the word of Yehowah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh proceeded to strike down Gaza. (Jeremiah 47:1)

- Before this event, Yehowah's utterance against the Philistines indicated that calamity from the North awaited them; Baldness must come to **Gaza**.
- This is what Yehowah has said; Look! Waters are coming up from the north and have become a flooding torrent. And they will flood the land and what fills it, the city and those inhabiting it. And the men will certainly cry out, and everyone dwelling in the land must howl. (**Jeremiah 47:2**)
- At the sound of the stamping of the hoofs of his stallions, at the rattling of his war chariots, the turmoil of his wheels, the fathers will actually not turn around to the sons, because of the dropping down of their hands. (**Jeremiah 47:3**)
- On account of the day that is coming to despoil all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and from Sidon every survivor that was helping. For Yehowah is despoiling the Philistines, who are the remaining ones from the island of Caphtor. (**Jeremiah 47:4**)
- Baldness must come to **Gaza**. Ashkelon has been put to silence. O remnant of their low plain, how long will you keep making cuts upon yourself? (**Jeremiah 47:5**)
- 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**)
- As suggested by other passages in;
- At this Yehowah said to me; Out of the north the calamity will be loosened against all the inhabitants of the land. (**Jeremiah 1:14**)
- By other passages in;
- Egypt is as a very pretty heifer. From the north a mosquito itself will certainly come against her. (**Jeremiah 46:20**)
- The waters from the north mentioned at;

- This is what Yehowah has said; Look! Waters are coming up from the north and have become a flooding torrent. And they will flood the land and what fills it, the city and those inhabiting it. And the men will certainly cry out, and everyone dwelling in the land must howl. (**Jeremiah 47:2**)
- Evidently denote the Babylonian armies. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did, in fact, gain control over this area.
- In his days Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up, and so Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. However, he turned back and rebelled against him. (**2 Kings 24:1**)
- And never again did the king of Egypt come out from his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that happened to belong to the king of Egypt from the torrent valley of Egypt up to the river Euphrates. (**2 Kings 24:7**)
- And the king of **Gaza** is mentioned in Babylonian inscriptions. [**Ancient Near Eastern Texts**, p. 308] Consequently, the words before Pharaoh proceeded to strike down Gaza.
- This is what proved to be the word of Yehowah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh proceeded to strike down **Gaza**. (**Jeremiah 47:1**)
- Appear simply to identify the time when the utterance of Yehowah regarding the Philistines came to Jeremiah. They would not necessarily be directly related to the coming expression of judgment from the north thereafter discussed.

.. Destroyed

- The prophet Zephaniah, a contemporary of Jeremiah, sounded a like judgment from Yehowah for **Gaza**. An abandoned city is what she will become.
- 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 Zechariah's prophecy, recorded after Babylon's fall, pointed to future calamities. **Gaza** will also feel very severe pains.

- 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**)
- History confirms the fulfillment of the foretold calamities. In the latter half of the **Fourth Century B.C.E**, Alexander the Great, after a five-month siege, two months, according to [**Jewish Antiquities**, XI, 325, viii, 4], took **Gaza**.
- Many of its inhabitants were slain and the survivors were sold into slavery. Over 200 years later, the Jew Alexander Jannaeus, after a year's siege, completely devastated the city. [**Jewish Antiquities**, XIII, 364, xiii, 3]
- Although the Roman governor of Syria, Gabinius, ordered the rebuilding of **Gaza**, this was likely done on a new site. [**Jewish Antiquities**, XIV, 87,88, v, 3]. Some scholars think that at;
- However, Yehowah's angel spoke to Philip, saying; Rise and go to the south to the road that runs down from Jerusalem to **Gaza**. This is a desert road. (**Acts of Apostles 8:26**)
- The **Greek** word *e're-mos*, desolate place, refers to the old, abandoned **Gaza**. The **AT**, for example, reads; The town is now deserted. Others understand *e're-mos* to refer to the road leading to the city, hence the rendering this is a desert road. **NW**, compare **JB**, **NE**, **RS**