

## ~FORTIFICATIONS (664)

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- The **Hebrew** term for fortification has the basic sense of a place that is **impenetrable, inaccessible**.
- Howl, O juniper tree, for the cedar has fallen. Because the majestic ones themselves have been despoiled! Howl, you massive trees of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down! (**Zechariah 11:2**) Footnote
- **Fortifications** of a town were costly and difficult and required an adequate defense force, so not all towns were fortified. The larger cities were usually walled cities, the smaller towns in that area, known as dependent towns, were unwalled.
- Ekron and its dependent towns and its settlements. (**Joshua 15:45**)
- 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 there came to belong to Manasseh in Issachar and in Asher Beth-shean and its dependent towns and Ibleam and its dependent towns and the inhabitants of Dor and its dependent towns and the inhabitants of En-dor and its dependent towns and the inhabitants of Taanach and its dependent towns and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its dependent towns, three of the heights. (**Joshua 17:11**)
- Inhabitants of these towns could flee to the walled city in the event of an invasion by the enemy. Fortified cities thus served as a refuge for the people in the area. Cities were also fortified when they

were strategically located to protect highways, water sources, routes to supply bases, and communication lines.

- The strength and height of the **fortifications** of many cities in the Promised Land were such that the unfaithful spies sent by Moses to spy out Canaan reported that the **fortified** cities are very great and **fortified** to the heavens. From their faithless viewpoint the cities looked impregnable.

- Nevertheless, the facts are that the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the **fortified** cities are very great, and, too, those born of Anak we saw there. (**Numbers 13:28**)

- Where are we going up? Our brothers have caused our heart to melt, saying; A people greater and taller than we are, cities great and **fortified** to the heavens and also the sons of the Anakim we saw there. (**Deuteronomy 1:28**)

- Cities in Bible lands generally covered an area of but a few acres. Some, however, were much larger. The capital cities of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Rome were exceptionally large.

- Babylon was one of the most strongly defended cities in Bible times. Not only did it have unusually strong walls but it was situated on a river that provided a fine moat for defense as well as a water supply. Babylon felt she could hold her captives forever.

- Those seeing you will gaze even at you. They will give close examination even to you, saying; Is this the man that was agitating the earth, that was making kingdoms rock. (**Isaiah 14:16**)

- That made the productive land like the wilderness and that overthrew its very cities, that did not open the way homeward even for his prisoners? (**Isaiah 14:17**)

- But the city was taken in one night by the strategy of Cyrus the Persian, who diverted the Euphrates so that his forces could enter the city through gates in the walls along the quays.

- In that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed (**Daniel 5:30**)

- Three essentials were required for a fortified city:

- **(1) walls to act as a barrier to the enemy**
- **(2) weapons so that the defending forces could retaliate to repel the attackers**
- **(3) an adequate water supply. Foodstuffs could be stored during times of peace, but a constant, accessible source of water was essential for a city to withstand a siege of any length.**

### **·· Moats And Ramparts**

- **Some cities were surrounded by a moat filled with water, especially if a river or lake was nearby. Babylon on the Euphrates was a notable example, as was also No-amon or Thebes on the Nile canals.**
- **Are you better than No-amon, that was sitting by the Nile canals? Waters were all around her, whose wealth was the sea, whose wall was from the sea. (Nahum 3:8)**
- **Where there were no nearby bodies of water, a dry moat was often constructed. Jerusalem was rebuilt with a moat.**
- **And you should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square and moat, but in the straits of the times. (Daniel 9:25)**
- **Rising from the side of the moat was a rampart built from the earth dug up when the moat was excavated.**
- **And they proceeded to come and lay siege against him in Abel of Beth-maacah and cast up a siege rampart against the city, as it was standing within a rampart. And all the people that were with Joab were undermining the wall, to throw it down. (2 Samuel 20:15)**
- **This rampart sometimes was covered with a stone facing and formed a glacis, or incline, sloping up to the wall built on top of the rampart.**
- **The moat discovered by archaeologists on the western defenses of the city of Hazor was 80 meters (262 feet) wide at the top, 40**

meters (131 feet) across the bottom, and about 15 meters (50 feet) deep.

- The rampart rising from the moat was an additional 15 meters (50 feet). This made the top of the rampart nearly 30 meters (100 feet) high, measuring from the bottom of the moat. On top of this stood the city wall.
- May peace continue within your rampart, freedom from care within your dwelling towers. ([Psalms 122:7](#))
- This rampart was, of course, very difficult to ascend, especially with battering rams, for which reason the attackers built a ramp, or siege rampart, up which the battering rams were moved.
- And they proceeded to come and lay siege against him in Abel of Beth-maacah and cast up a siege rampart against the city, as it was standing within a rampart. And all the people that were with Joab were undermining the wall, to throw it down. ([2 Samuel 20:15](#))
- The moat was so wide that it greatly weakened the archery fire of the attacking army, and shooting from the bottom of the moat accomplished little.
- On the other hand, the builders of the ramps for their battering rams were under constant fire from the city walls, being subjected to a rain of arrows, stones, and sometimes firebrands.
- Of course, not all cities had moats or sloping ramparts, some basing their defense entirely on vertical walls.

**See Also BATTERING RAM**

### **•• The Walls**

- After the moat and rampart, the wall was the next feature of the defenses. Some walls and towers provided **fortified** positions for soldiers and rooms for storage as well as ladders to the top.
- The wall was made up of large stones, brick, and earth. Some of the stones were enormous in size. Earlier walls were mostly made of stones without mortar.

- **Later on, mortar was often used between the stones. Mortar was made by treading clay with the feet and mixing it with water, as in making bricks. Otherwise it would crack and weaken the defensive wall.**
- **And my hand has come to be against the prophets that are visioning untruth and that are divining a lie. In the intimate group of my people they will not continue on, and in the register of the house of Israel they will not be written, and to the soil of Israel they will not come, and you people will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Yehowah. (Ezekiel 13:9)**
- **For the reason, yes, for the reason that they have led my people astray, saying; There is peace! When there is no peace, and there is one that is building a partition wall, but in vain there are those plastering it with whitewash. (Ezekiel 13:10)**
- **Say to those plastering with whitewash that it will fall. A flooding downpour will certainly occur, and you, O hailstones, will fall, and a blast of windstorms itself will cause a splitting. (Ezekiel 13:11)**
- **And, look! the wall must fall. Will it not be said to you men, Where is the coating with which you did the plastering? (Ezekiel 13:12)**
- **Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said; I will also cause a blast of windstorms to burst forth in my rage, and in my anger there will occur a flooding downpour, and in rage there will be hailstones for an extermination. (Ezekiel 13:13)**
- **And I will tear down the wall that you men have plastered with whitewash and bring it into contact with the earth, and its foundation must be exposed. And she will certainly fall, and you must come to an end in the midst of her, and you will have to know that I am Yehowah. (Ezekiel 13:14)**
- **And I will bring my rage to its finish upon the wall and upon those plastering it with whitewash, and I shall say to you men; The wall is no more, and those plastering it are no more. (Ezekiel 13:15)**
- **The prophets of Israel that are prophesying to Jerusalem and**

that are visioning for her a vision of peace, when there is no peace, is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Yehowah. (**Ezekiel 13:16**)

- **Water for a siege draw out for yourself. Strengthen your fortified places. Get into the mire, and trample down in the clay, grab hold of the brick mold. (**Nahum 3:14**)**
- **The wall system often consisted of a high inner wall and a lower outer wall. A dry moat was sometimes constructed between these walls. Along the outer wall were bastions, round or square in shape.**
- **They were crenellated, indented with battlements, so that the archers could shoot through the embrasures and at the same time receive some protection against enemy arrows and rock slingers. Bastions extended out from the wall so that the archers not only could command the area in front of them but could also shoot to the right or to the left at the flanks of the enemy forces that might be trying to scale or breach the wall.**
- **The inner wall was heavier and thicker. After the invention of the heavy battering rams, especially like those used by the Assyrians, much stronger, thicker walls were built to withstand the devastations of this instrument.**
- **A stone wall at **Tell en-Nasbeh** or **Mizpah** was found to average 4 meters (13 feet) in thickness, and it is estimated to have been 12 meters (39 feet) high. The top of the wall was crenellated, as were nearly all city walls.**

### **•• Towers And Gates**

- **Towers were built into the inner walls, in addition to bastions or towers in the outer walls. They were higher than the wall, protruding from the wall sometimes as much as 3 meters (10 feet).**
- **They were equipped with crenellations on top and sometimes with openings below the crenellations, for the convenience of archers and stone throwers.**
- **The fact that the towers protruded from the wall and were never placed farther than two bowshots apart, but were usually much closer, enabled the defenders to command all the area along the wall.**

- **Also, a balcony at the towers top had openings in the floor so that archery fire, stones, and firebrands could be directed straight down at the invaders below. These towers are mentioned many times in the Scriptures.**
- **And Eliashib the High Priest and his brothers, the priests, proceeded to get up and build the Sheep Gate. They themselves sanctified it and went setting up its doors, and as far as the Tower of Meah they sanctified it, as far as the Tower of Hananel. (Nehemiah 3:1)**
- **Look! There are days coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, and the city will certainly be built to Yehowah from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. (Jeremiah 31:38)**
- **The whole land will be changed like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon to the south of Jerusalem, and she must rise and become inhabited in her place, from the Gate of Benjamin all the way to the place of the First Gate, all the way to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel all the way to the press vats of the king. (Zechariah 14:10)**
- **Towers served also as posts for watchmen, who could see the enemy approaching from a distance.**
- **And he proceeded to call out like a lion; Upon the watchtower, O Yehowah, I am standing constantly by day, and at my guardpost I am stationed all the nights. (Isaiah 21:8)**
- **And here, now, there is coming a war chariot of men, with a span of steeds! And he began to speak up and say; She has fallen! Babylon has fallen! All the graven images of her gods he has broken to the earth! (Isaiah 21:9)**
- **Usually the citadel was built on the highest elevation in the city. It had a tower fortress and its own walls, less massive than the walls surrounding the city.**
- **The citadel was the last stronghold of refuge and resistance. When the soldiers of the enemy breached the city walls, they would have to fight through the streets of the city to reach the tower.**

- **Such a tower was the one at Thebez, which Abimelech attacked after capturing the city and where a woman broke his skull by pitching an upper millstone upon his head.**
- **And Abimelech proceeded to go to Thebez and to camp against Thebez and capture it. (Judges 9:50)**
- **As a strong tower happened to be in the middle of the city, there was where all the men and women and all the landowners of the city went fleeing, after which they shut it behind them and climbed onto the roof of the tower. (Judges 9:51)**
- **And Abimelech made his way to the tower and began fighting against it, and he went on up close to the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire. (Judges 9:52)**
- **Then a certain woman pitched an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head and broke his skull in pieces. (Judges 9:53)**
- **So he quickly called the attendant bearing his weapons and said to him; Draw your sword and put me to death, for fear they should say about me, It was a woman that killed him. Immediately his attendant ran him through, so that he died. (Judges 9:54)**
- **Besides these city towers, other towers Hebrew, *migh-dal'*, plural, *migh-da-lim'* were built in isolated places.**
- **These were constructed as police stations to protect wells or other water sources, highways, frontiers, communication lines, or supply lines. King Uzziah of Judah is noted for building towers in Jerusalem as well as in the wilderness, these apparently were erected to protect the cisterns that he built for watering his livestock.**
- **Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem by the Corner Gate and by the Valley Gate and by the Buttress, and made them strong. (2 Chronicles 26:9)**
- **Further, he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for there was a great deal of livestock that became his, and also in the Shephelah and on the tableland. There were farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for a lover of agriculture he proved to be. (2 Chronicles 26:10)**



- **Several of such towers have been found in the Negeb.**
- **The weakest part of the defenses of a city were its gates, therefore the gates were the most hotly defended points in the walls. Only as many gates were constructed as necessary for the traffic of the inhabitants in and out of the city during peacetime.**
- **Gates were made of wood or of wood and metal, sometimes being metal covered to resist fire. In archaeological diggings the gateways are often found to be charred, indicating that fire was used in an attempt to burn the gates down.**

**See Also GATE, GATEWAY**

- **Some of the kings of Judah noted for their construction of **fortifications** were Solomon, who built fortified cities with walls, doors and bar, Asa, who put up cities with walls around and towers, double doors and bars, and Uzziah, who built towers in the wilderness and engines of war in Jerusalem.**
- **Furthermore, Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and prevailed over it. (2 Chronicles 8:3)**
- **Then he rebuilt Tadmor in the wilderness and all the storage cities that he had built in Hamath. (2 Chronicles 8:4)**
- **And he went on to build Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon, fortified cities with walls, doors and bar. (2 Chronicles 8:5)**
- **And Asa proceeded to do what was good and right in the eyes of Yehowah his God. (2 Chronicles 14:2)**
- **And he went on to build fortified cities in Judah, for the land had no disturbance, and there was no war against him during these years, for Yehowah gave him rest. (2 Chronicles 14:6)**
- **So he said to Judah; Let us build these cities and make walls around and towers, double doors and bars. For us the land is yet available, because we have searched for Yehowah our God. We have searched, and he gives us rest all around. And they went building and proving successful. (2 Chronicles 14:7)**
- **Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem by the Corner Gate**

and by the Valley Gate and by the Buttress, and made them strong. (2 Chronicles 26:9)

- Further, he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for there was a great deal of livestock that became his, and also in the Shephelah and on the tableland. There were farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for a lover of agriculture he proved to be. (2 Chronicles 26:10)
- Moreover, Uzziah came to have a force engaging in war, those going out on military service in troops, by the number of their registration by the hand of Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the control of Hananiah of the king's princes. (2 Chronicles 26:11)
- The entire number of the heads of the paternal houses, of the valiant, mighty men, was two thousand six hundred. (2 Chronicles 26:12)
- And under their control the army forces were three hundred and seven thousand five hundred men engaging in war with the power of a military force to help the king against the enemy. (2 Chronicles 26:13)
- And Uzziah continued to prepare for them, for the entire army, shields and lances and helmets and coats of mail and bows and slingstones. (2 Chronicles 26:14)
- Further, he made in Jerusalem engines of war, the invention of engineers, that they might come to be upon the towers and upon the corners, to shoot arrows and great stones. Consequently his fame went out to a great distance, for he was helped wonderfully until he was strong. (2 Chronicles 26:15)

### •• Fortifications Of The Besieging Armies

- At times the besieging army built **fortifications** of its own around its camp. This protected the camp from sorties on the part of those besieged or from attacks by outside allies of the city.
- These **fortified** camps might be round or oval in shape and surrounded by a wall, which was often crenellated and had crenellated towers. For these **fortifications**, they would cut down the trees, sometimes for miles around the city.

- **Yehowah's Law directed the Israelites not to cut down fruit trees for this purpose.**

- **In case you lay siege to a city many days by fighting against it so as to capture it, you must not ruin its trees by wielding an ax against them, for you should eat from them, and you must not cut them down, for is the tree of the field a man to be besieged by you? (Deuteronomy 20:19)**

- **Only a tree that you know is not a tree for food, it is the one you should ruin, and you must cut it down and build siegeworks against the city that is making war with you, until it falls. (Deuteronomy 20:20)**

### **·· Fortifications With Pointed Stakes**

- **When foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ indicated that her enemies would build around her a **fortification** with pointed stakes, or, palisade. **Int****

- **Because the days will come upon you when your enemies will build around you a **fortification** with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side. (Luke 19:43)**

- **The historian Josephus confirms the accurate fulfillment of this prophecy. Titus argued in favor of building a **fortification** to keep the Jews from leaving the city, in order to bring about their surrender or, if this did not materialize, to make it easier to take the city because of the resultant famine.**

- **His arguments won out, and the army was organized to undertake the project. The legions and lesser divisions of the army competed with one another to finish the task, individually the men were spurred on by a desire to please their superiors.**

- **To provide materials for the construction of this fortification, the countryside about Jerusalem within a distance of about 16 kilometers (10 miles) was denuded of its trees.**

- **Amazingly, according to Josephus, the over 7-kilometer-long (4.5 miles) **fortification** was completed in just three days, an undertaking that ordinarily would have required a number of months.**

- Outside the wall of this **fortification**, 13 places for garrisons were constructed, and their combined circumference amounted to about 2 kilometers (1 mile). [The Jewish War, V, 491-511,523, xii, 1,2,4]

## · Archaeological Discoveries

- Following up the building operations of his father David, King Solomon was outstanding for his construction works. Besides building the magnificent temple of Yehowah at Jerusalem, he strengthened Jerusalem's walls and built extensive **fortifications** at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. Archaeologists were guided in their excavation of these fortifications by the Bible's statement at;

- Now this is the account of those conscripted for forced labor that King Solomon levied to build the house of Yehowah and his own house and the Mound and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer. (1 Kings 9:15)

- Now this is the account of those conscripted for forced labor that King Solomon levied to build the house of Yehowah and his own house and the Mound and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer.

- They found that the gates of these three last-named cities were all built to a single unique plan, each being 17 meters (56 feet) wide, with an entrance flanked on both sides by square towers and leading into a vestibule 20 meters (66 feet) long, with three chambers on each side.

- They were somewhat similar to the description of the gates of Ezekiel's visionary temple.

- And, look! There was a wall outside the house all round about. And in the hand of the man there was the measuring reed of six cubits, by a cubit and a handbreadth. And he began to measure the breadth of the thing built, one reed, and the height, one reed. (Ezekiel 40:5)

- Then he came to the gate, the front of which is toward the east, and went up by its steps. And he began to measure the threshold of the gate, one reed in width, and the other threshold, one reed in width. (Ezekiel 40:6)

- And the guard chamber was one reed in length and one reed in

- width, and between the guard chambers there were five cubits, and the threshold of the gate beside the porch of the gate toward the interior was one reed. ([Ezekiel 40:7](#))
- And he proceeded to measure the porch of the gate toward the interior, one reed. ([Ezekiel 40:8](#))
  - So he measured the porch of the gate, eight cubits, and its side pillars, two cubits, and the porch of the gate was toward the interior. ([Ezekiel 40:9](#))
  - And the guard chambers of the gate toward the east were three on this side and three on that side. The three of them were of the same measurement, and the side pillars were of the same measurement, on this side and on that side. ([Ezekiel 40:10](#))
  - Then he measured the width of the entrance of the gate, ten cubits, the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. ([Ezekiel 40:11](#))
  - And the fenced area in front of the guard chambers was one cubit, and there was a fenced area of one cubit on either side. And the guard chamber was six cubits on this side and six cubits on that side. ([Ezekiel 40:12](#))
  - And he went on to measure the gate from the roof of the one guard chamber to the roof of the other, a width of twenty-five cubits, entrance was across from entrance. ([Ezekiel 40:13](#))
  - Then he made side pillars of sixty cubits, even to the side pillars of the courtyard in the gates all around. ([Ezekiel 40:14](#))
  - And by the front of the gate of the entryway to by the front of the porch of the inner gate was fifty cubits. ([Ezekiel 40:15](#))
  - And there were windows of narrowing frames for the guard chambers and for their side pillars toward the inside of the gate all around, and that is the way it was for the porches. And the windows were all around toward the inside, and on the side pillars there were palm-tree figures. ([Ezekiel 40:16](#))
  - Immediately above walls built by Solomon at Megiddo and Hazor, other walls were constructed, possibly by Ahab. These were more thickly and strongly built, doubtless because of the heavy Assyrian battering rams in use during that later period.

- The source of water for Megiddo was a well in a natural cave at the western foot of the mound on which the city was built. To get water into the city, they sent a vertical shaft 30 meters (98 feet) deep, 22 meters (72 feet) of this distance through solid rock, this brought them to the level of the well.
- From this level they cut a horizontal tunnel with a slight gradient for a distance of 67 meters (220 feet) to the well. The slight slope from the well to the bottom of the shaft allowed the water to flow into the city by gravity. The well was sealed from the outside by a thick wall.
- Even greater engineering skill was required when Hezekiah sealed up the course of the water flowing from Gihon and cut a channel of some 533 meters (1,749 feet) to bring water into Jerusalem, thereby enabling the city to withstand a long siege.
- And Hezekiah was the one that stopped up the upper source of the waters of Gihon and kept them directed straight along down to the west to the City of David, and Hezekiah continued to prove successful in every work of his. ([2 Chronicles 32:30](#))
- Often cisterns, both public and individual, were built inside a city to supply the city with water during times of siege. On the monument, now located in the Louvre of Paris, erected at Dibon, in Moab, by Mesha the king of Moab, we find the inscription;
- I also built its gates and I built its towers and I built the king's house, and I made both of its reservoirs for water inside the town. And there was no cistern inside the town even at the acropolis, so I said to all the people, Let each of you make a cistern for himself in his house.

### · Symbolic Uses

- Since the towers in the wilderness were the safest places of refuge for miles around, we can see the appropriateness.
- The name of Yehowah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection. ([Proverbs 18:10](#))
- Also significant are the expressions in ([Psalms Chapter 48](#)). In Zion's dwelling towers God himself has become known as a secure height. March around Zion, you people, and go about it, count its

**towers. Set your hearts upon its rampart. Inspect its dwelling towers, in order, that you may recount it to the future generation.**

- **But you have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels. ([Hebrews 12:22](#))**
- **This would be especially meaningful to Jews who would look up at the great stronghold of Jerusalem situated on an elevation higher than nearly any other major capital city in human history, with its mighty walls of defense.**
- **Through the prophet Zechariah, Yehowah speaks of himself as a wall of fire all around Jerusalem. This gives his people encouraging assurance that, while walls of stone can be broken down, Yehowah himself is really the defense of his servants.**
- **In her dwelling towers God himself has become known as a secure height. ([Psalms 48:3](#))**
- **May Mount Zion rejoice, may the dependent towns of Judah be joyful, on account of your judicial decisions. ([Psalms 48:11](#))**
- **March around Zion, you people, and go about it, count its towers. ([Psalms 48:12](#))**
- **Set your hearts upon its rampart. Inspect its dwelling towers, in order, that you may recount it to the future generation. ([Psalms 48:13](#))**
- **Then he said to him; Run, speak to the young man over there, saying; As open rural country Jerusalem will be inhabited, because of the multitude of men and domestic animals in the midst of her. ([Zechariah 2:4](#))**
- **And I myself shall become to her, is the utterance of Yehowah, a wall of fire all around, and a glory is what I shall become in the midst of her. ([Zechariah 2:5](#))**