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Tsiyon News

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Judah's Redemption

Genesis 38

Judah's Redemption

"Tamar took off of her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim ..When Judah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face."

Genesis 38:14-16

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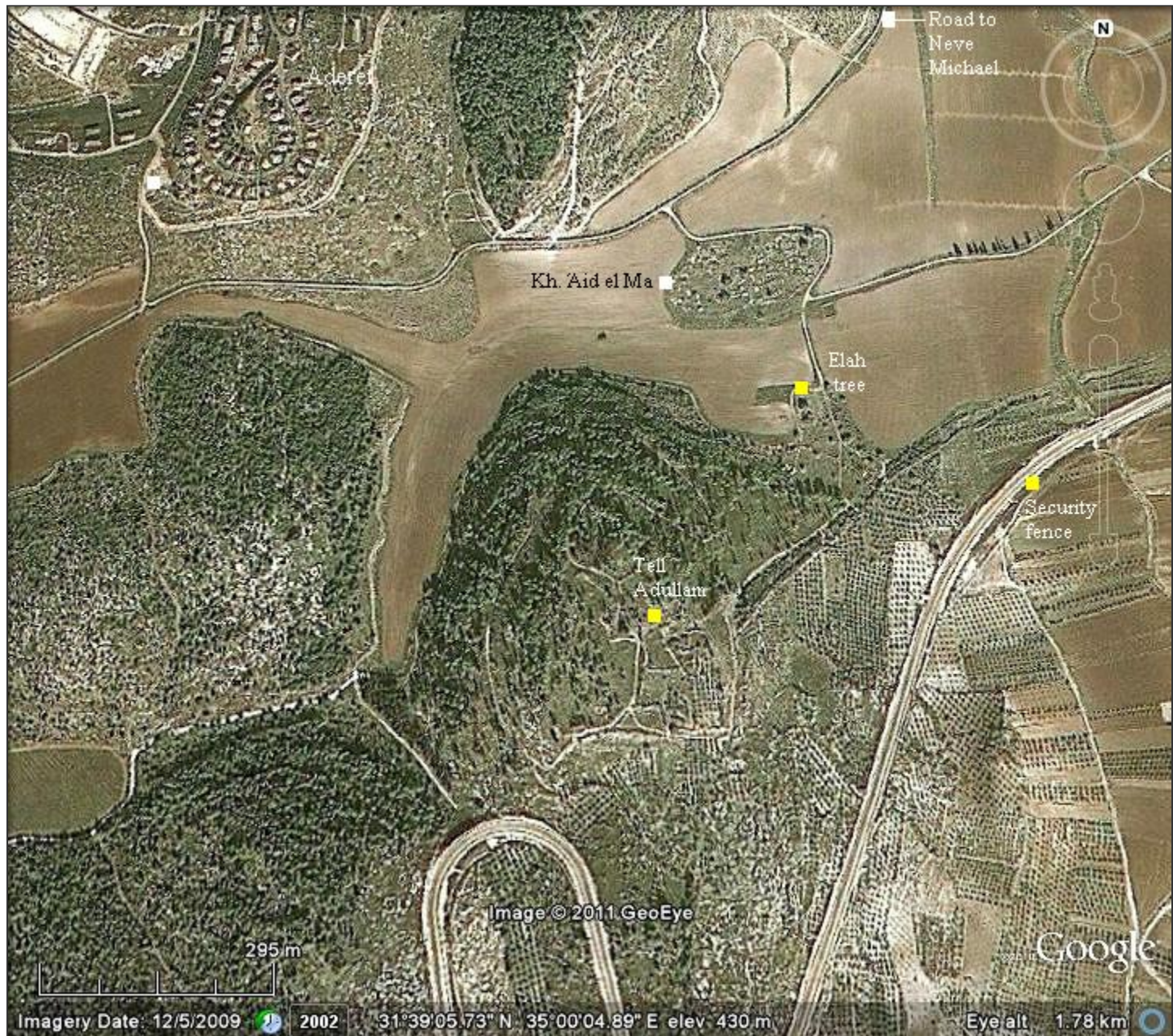
Adullam

Note the archaeological remains of this Biblical city, located south of the valley of Elah. This was the home village of Judah's wife, daughter of Shuah, the hiding place of future king David, and was fortified by King Rehoboam.

Location:

The following aerial view shows the points of interest, with the hill of Tell Adullam in the center. The south side of the valley of Elah is located on the top-right side. The security fence, between Israel and the West Bank, is seen on the bottom right side.

To arrive to the site you can either go south from Moshav-Aderet (the gate is open during the day), or by a semi-paved road from Neve Michael / Rogalit.



History:

Tell Adullam was first inhabited from the middle of the 2nd Millennium BC, and was one of the Canaanite cities captured by Joshua during his campaign of the cities of the Shephelah (Joshua 10 28-35).

■ Biblical

Adullam appears in the Bible in several locations:

- **Judah's wife** - Judah married his first wife, the daughter of Shuah from Adullam, after he and his brothers sold Joseph to the Midianites merchantmen (Genesis 38 1): "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in

to a certain **Adullamite**, whose name was Hirah".

Judah's wife gave birth to two sons, Er and Onan, who later died. His wife also died (Genesis 38, 12): "And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite". Judah then married his son's widow Tamar in Adullam (Genesis 38 20).

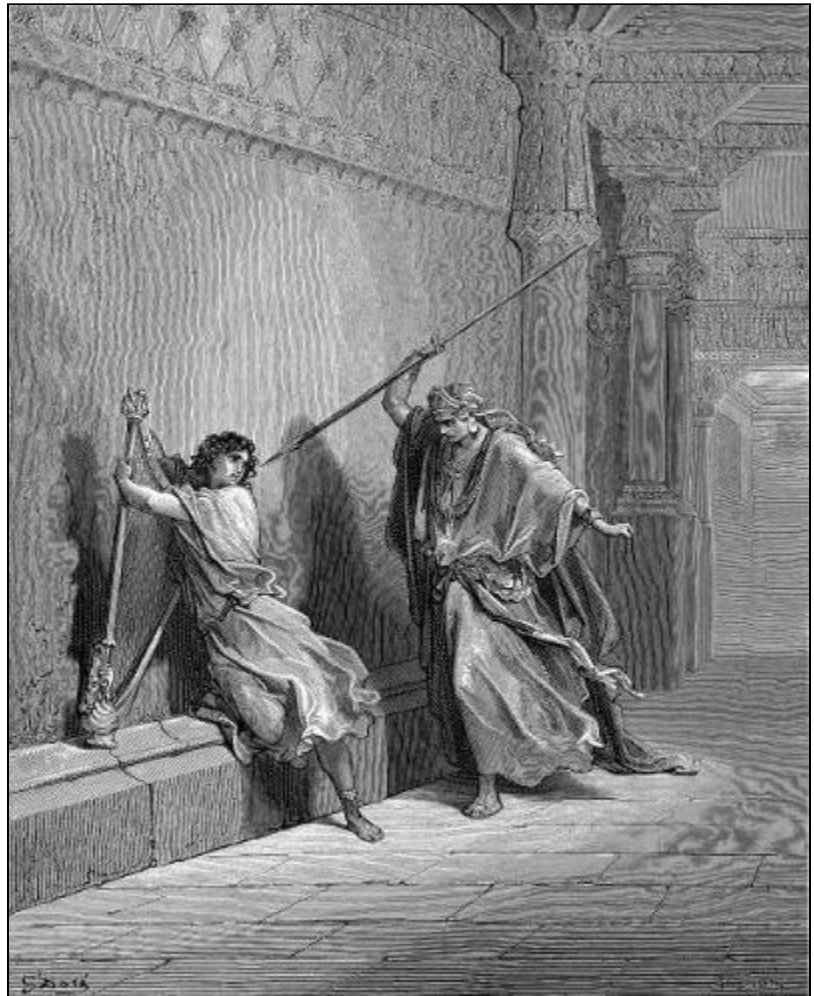
- **Conquest of Joshua** - Adullam is listed as one of the cities conquered by the Israelites (Joshua 12 7, 15): "And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west... The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one." Adullam became one of the cities of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15 20,);"This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families... Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, ". Its location according to this verse is near Socoh (actually, the distance is 4KM to the north-west of Adullam).
- **David hides from Saul**

After the battle of David and Goliath and David's victories over the Philistines, he becomes the great hero of Israel. However, this caused his relationship with King Saul to deteriorate.

The jealous Saul tried to kill David, as illustrated here. David fled to the Judean desert, and eventually came to Adullam where he hid inside the cave together with his 400 followers.

1 Samuel 22:1: "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave **Adullam**: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."

The cave of Adullam is also mentioned in David's speech after David becomes King (2 Samuel 23:13): "And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim". This is repeated (in 1 Chronicles 11:15): "Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of **Adullam**; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim".



King Saul tries to kill David -
Drawing by Gustav Dore (French artist, 1832-1883)

■ **King Rehoboam**, son of Solomon, fortified the city (2 Chronicles 11 5-12): "And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. He built ... Shoco, and **Adullam**, And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph, And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah... And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine. And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong..."

- **Assyrians (8th - 7th C BC):**

The Assyrian empire, a rising force in the region, conquered the North Kingdom of Israel in 732BC, destroying most of the cities and villages in the land.

The South Kingdom of Judah managed to survive this onslaught by teaming up with the Assyrians, but not for long. After the death of the Assyrian King Sargon II (722 – 705BC), King Hezekiah mutinied against the Assyrians, joining other cities in the area who attempted to free themselves from the Assyrian conquest.

Anticipating the coming Assyrian intrusion, he fortified Jerusalem and the major cities, including Adullam. The Assyrian army came in 701, led by Sennacherib, son of Sargon II (2 Chronicles 31 1): "After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself". According to an Assyrian clay tablet, Sennacherib conquered 46 cities in Judea, including Adullam.

Adullam is also mentioned by the prophet Micah the Morasthite, who describes this destruction of Sennacherib (Micah 1, 15): "Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall come unto **Adullam** the glory of Israel."



Sennacherib's stele with relief and inscription; Nineveh; limestone [Istanbul Archaeological Museum]

■ Persian period (538 - 332):

After the return of the exiles to Zion, Adullam was one of the cities resettled by the children of Judah (Nehemiah 11 25, 30): "And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt... Zanoah, **Adullam**, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof."

The site was abandoned during the Hellenistic or Roman period, as part of the urbanization trend of migration from the high mounds to the new larger villages.

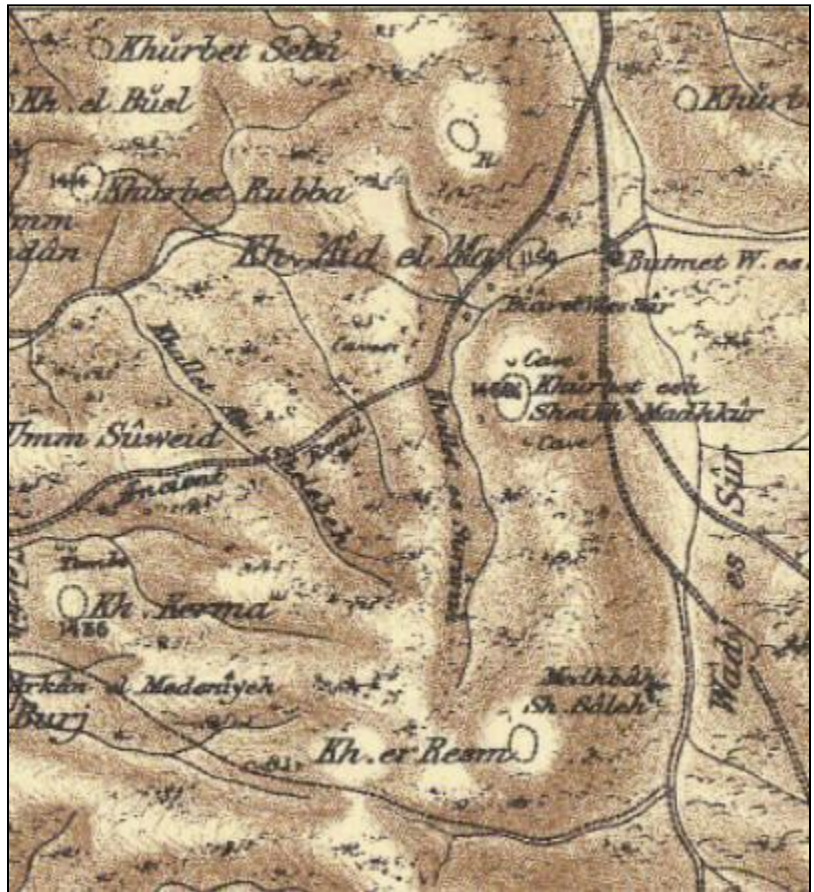
■ Ottoman period - PEF survey

The area around the site was examined in the Palestine Exploration Foundation (PEF) survey (1866-1877) by Wilson, Conder and Kitchener. Tell Adullam appears on this map of 1878 in its Arabic form - "Khirbet esh Sheikh Madhkur". In 1871 Conder visited the hill above these ruins and provided a fascinating account (pp. 326-367) and explanation of the identification of Adullam in the PEF 1875 quarterly summary.

Conder reported on Khurbet ed Sheikh Madhkur (Adullam) in 1875 (p. 261):

"A steep and almost isolated hill, with terraced sides, is surrounded on the north and west by a narrow valley, which runs into the broad open corn valley on the east. The place rises 300 to 400 feet above the valley, and is a position of great natural strength, being only joined to the general range of hills on the south by a narrow neck. On the summit stands the little Mukam, and round it are heaps of stones and ruins extending over some distance. On the north side of the hill near the top is a cave of moderate size. The rock is quarried on the west, and on this side is a rock-cut tomb now blocked up with a cross cut in front. In the branch valley on the north are two wells, one apparently of great antiquity, with some 30 stone troughs round it and full of water. To the east of

this is a magnificent Terabinth (Butmet wady es Sur). On the west, opposite the ruin, is a row of caves on the sides of the narrow valley. These are used by the peasantry in spring for stables. The cave on the hill itself was also inhabited when visited".



Part of Map Sheet 21 of Survey of Western Palestine, by Conder and Kitchener, 1872-1877. (Published 1880, reprinted by LifeintheHolyLand.com)

An Arab village is located in the valley north of the hill, named Kh. 'Aid el Ma (see map above) - which may have preserved the ancient name. Conder noted (p. 362): "I was struck by the resemblance of the Hebrew word Adullam with that of a ruin called Ed el Miye, situated on the road from Jerusalem to Beit Jibrin, not far from Shuweikeh or Socho...". Conder's report on Kh. Aid el Ma (p. 347): "The name is at present applied to some foundations and heaps of stones in the valley near the two great wells. North of them there are ruined caves on the hillside, and two or three cisterns. The name preserves that of Adullam, but the ancient site is described under the head Khūrbet esh Sheikh Madhkur." This report is part of the fascinating accord of the exhibition's survey in Adullam.

■ Modern Period

Tell Adullam is part of the Adullam caves park. You can approach the site from a north-east road, and climb up the steep hill. On the summit are few remains, but you are rewarded by the great views of the hills of Bethlehem and the sensations of being amidst the remains of this historic site.

Now where is the cave of David? There are many caves on the west side, but none of them large enough to hold all David's men. Perhaps they hid in several of the caves in the area. In any case, use your imagination and step into the time machine.

[Our thanks to <http://biblewalks.com/Sites/Adullam.html> for this article.]



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From Eliyahu

This Shabbat we consider one of the most scandalous chapters in all of the Bible, that is, Genesis 38. Over the millennia pious religionists and Bible teachers of all stripes have had a habit of avoiding this portion of Scripture whenever possible. Sometimes it can't be avoided, at which times one is likely to hear all manner of moralizing, speculating and all around pontificating, in an attempt to get through the offending material, while also struggling to retain some measure of religious decorum. In fact, it is often suggested by embarrassed Bible teachers that this chapter shouldn't really be in the Bible at all.

To all of those people I have only one thing to say; "Grow Up!"

We should be glad the Scriptures are not afraid to deal with reality. Indeed, whatever religionists would like to hide in the darkness, YHWH prefers to bring out into the light, where we can all get a good look at it, the way He sees it. Genesis 38 has a message of hope and encouragement for all of us, and especially for men. If you want to hear the unvarnished and astonishing truth about Judah and Tamar - and YHWH - don't miss this Midrash.

Blessings and Shalom!

Eliyahu ben David
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