

Such being the case, there is no reason to enter into the question whether the site would suit Asher, or whether Mr. Saunders is justified in making the word an adjective—preceding as it does the article. Gesenius renders Micmethah “hiding place,” and it is not impossible that the word Asher is a copyist’s error, reduplicating the word **אָשֶׁר** (“which”) that follows Micmethah in the Hebrew.

The second suggestion of Mr. Trelawney Saunders refers to En Tappuah, which he proposes as identical with the ruin *Tafsah*. The identification tempted me greatly when first considering this question, but the philological objection is too strong, for the introduction of the *Sin* (representing the Hebrew Samech) could not well be accounted for. There is, moreover, a more probable identification for this site, namely, Tiphseh (2 Kings xv, 16), noticed in connection with Tirzah and Samaria, as rebelling against Menahem, for it is impossible to suppose that in this passage the Thapsacus on Euphrates is intended.

Mr. Trelawney Saunders argues that the main line of W. Jerra’ should be considered the Brook Kanah rather than the affluent W. Yasûf, but this must remain a question of opinion, because the name Kânah only now applies to the lower part of the great valley below the confluence of these two heads.

The important passage respecting this question (Joshua xvii, 7) reads thus :—

“The border went along on the south (“right hand” in A.V.) unto Yeshebi En Tappuah,” rendered “Iassib and the spring Taphthoth” in the LXX. The A.V. rendering, “unto the inhabitants of En Tappuah,” is so unusual and unmeaning, that it is only natural to conclude that the LXX translators were right in treating *Yesheb* as a proper name.

Now the confusion of F and B is a well known Samaritan vulgarism, and there is nothing impossible therefore in the identification of Yesheb with Yasûf, especially as there are five springs in the vicinity, one of which may have been the ancient En Tappuah or “apple spring.”

It appears to me *necessary* to carry the border thus far south, because of the special definition “~~on~~ the south” as above noticed: for Mr. Trelawney Saunders’ line runs almost east from Taanath Shiloh, as will be seen on the detached diagram.

This interesting question might perhaps be still settled by a very careful investigation of the names of springs in the two valleys; for ancient names still stick occasionally to the springs. Inquiries have, however, been made in 1877 without result.

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MIZPEH.

PALESTINE is the place for panics. Seized with sudden terror, Philistines, Syrians, Romans, in turn left their fortifications and fled; now at the rustling of a few leaves even Britons forsake the choicest identifications. Let those who stay behind divide the spoil.

Dr. Robinson was "inclined to regard Neby Samwîl as the probable site of Mizpeh," where Samuel prayed and fought; judged Israel and proclaimed Saul king. It was exceedingly delightful thus to connect the most conspicuous land-mark of Southern Palestine with that grand Hebrew prophet. Afterwards an unaccountable doubt supervened and then, like a flock of sheep, away went half-a-dozen shrewd writers leaving the enthusiastic ones wavering, nor did the stampede reach only to Sha'fât or Scopus, but even beyond Beth-car.

Probably we may not rally the fugitives, but at all events let us try to re-occupy Mizpeh.

The following conditions have to be satisfied :—

(1.) Mizpeh was *in Benjamin*. Josh. xviii, 25, 26, "Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, and Mizpeh, and Cephirah, and Mozah." In Neh. iii, 7, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah are classed together. Both these indications very well suit Neby Samwîl, about a mile south of Gibeon.

(2.) The name (signifying a "watchtower") implies that it was situated *on an elevated spot*. Here Neby Samwîl has no worthy rival.

(3.) It was fortified along with Geba by King Asa, apparently to protect his northern frontier against the kingdom of Israel.

Lieut. Conder ("Tent Work," ii, 119) says of Neby Samwîl:—"The very difficult approach, the magnificent panoramic view, and the numerous springs, would have indicated the place as a fitting position for a fortress, flanking the two main north roads to Jerusalem."

(4.) It *must* be visible from Jerusalem according to 1 Macc. iii, 46, "The Israelites came to Maspha *over against* (*κατέναντι*) Jerusalem; for in Maspha was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel" (evidently identical with the Mizpeh of 1 Sam. vii, 6, 16; x, 17). As in the New Testament we have in Mark xi, 2, *κατέναντι* answering to *ἀπέναντι* in Matt. xxi, 2, in the expression "the village *over against* you," we conclude the words are interchangeable. As again in 1 Macc. vi, 32, Judas is said to have pitched in Bethzacharias (*ἀπέναντι*) "*over against* the king's camp" at Bethsura, seventy furlongs distant (Jos. Ant. xii, ix, 4), there is no force in the objection that *κατέναντι* in 1 Macc. iii, 46, is not satisfied by the position of Neby Samwîl; for this hill is but forty furlongs from Jerusalem and also in sight. This (4) condition is most important, since while admitting such positions as Scopus, Sh'afât, and even Tuleil el Fûl, it excludes (I believe) all the district to the north-west of Jerusalem except Neby Samwîl. This must be borne in mind in considering the next point.

(5.) The story of Gedaliah (Jer. xli). It is urged against Neby Samwîl that as Ishmael went out of Mizpeh to meet the fourscore pilgrims going to the house of the Lord, therefore that city must have been close to the great north road from Jerusalem, and so could not have been at Neby Samwîl. From such an eminence, however, a band of pilgrims like this would have been visible a long way off, so as to give Ishmael time to meet them; and next Josephus ventures to say (probably with truth) that they were bringing gifts to Gedaliah.

(6.) Ishmael carrying captive the people in Mizpah departs "to go over (what?—the Jordan?) to the Ammonites;" the loyal Jews, however, went to fight with him, "and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon." Some writers are pleased to adopt the version of Josephus, who foolishly substitutes Hebron for Gibeon. But I would here ask two questions:—(1.) Who would think of going from Gibeon to Rabbath Ammon round by the southern end of the Dead Sea? Such a route is almost as absurd as the theory which sends Jacob's body to Hebron round by the north end of that sea, through taking "beyond Jordan" in Gen. 1, 10, in a different sense from the same Hebrew words (A.V. "on the other side Jordan") in Deut. xi. 30, see "Land and the Book," p. 580; "Handbook," p. 238. (2.) And next, why are the Hebrew and LXX readings to be rejected in favour of such an inaccurate writer as Josephus?

Ishmael in going from Mizpah to the Ammonites doubtless went by a route which *naturally* led him near the waters which are on the eastern side of Gibeon. Accordingly we conclude that neither Sh'afât nor Scopus, nor yet Tuleil el Fûl, could have been Mizpah, since the way from each of these places to the Ammonites would lead him directly *away from* Gibeon. As therefore the only place suiting both the conditions 3, 4, 5, and 6 is Neby Samwil, we unhesitatingly assert that the only spot where Mizpeh could possibly have been was on the hill now called Neby Samwil.

A few other points may be noticed:—

- A. Asa made a (great) pit at Mizpah (Jer. xli, 9) and Dr. Robinson observes that the rock at Neby Samwil is *soft*. It is quite possible that by searching this underground cistern might even now be found.
- B. It is a natural and (I believe) correct assumption to take this Mizpeh to be the one mentioned in Judg. xx. Jephtha's victory and the expression "Shiloh in the land of Canaan" are in the Bible Dict. used as points in favour of the eastern Mizpeh. Jephtha, however, was born *after* the events in Judg. xx, and the same expression is used in Josh. xxii, 9, while in both cases Gilead is also named.
- C. Lieutenant Conder's explanation ("Handbook," p. 277) that Nob and Mizpeh are identical, becomes impossible, as Colonel Wilson has shown that Nob could not have been at Neby Samwil. In the same place the notion is broached that the Tabernacle was at Mizpeh, because the words "before the Lord" are used in 1 Sam. vii, 6. The expression, however, does not necessarily imply this. David's covenant with Jonathan in the wood of Ziph and his anointing at Hebron were also made "before the Lord," but surely neither the Tabernacle nor the Ark was there at the time.

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