

present it is a vase with a curved stone projecting, but Herr Schick's section shows that holy water might still be poured on it, and find a receptacle.

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THE SITE OF EBENEZER.

MANY years ago, after considerable study of the subject and repeated examination of the ground, I formed the opinion that the place of Ebenezer is now occupied by the village of Beit Ikša, and, notwithstanding that another site has been advocated by distinguished investigators, I still venture to think that this is the only spot which satisfactorily meets all the requirements of the case.

1. The spot should be "between Mizpah and Shen," and, as we may suppose, be a prominent and conspicuous spot. Such a spot is Beit Ikša. Taking Neby Samwīl to be Mizpah, and Deir Yesin to represent Shen, an examination of the map will show that a line drawn from one to the other would intersect this village. It is also remarkable that owing to an opening in the hills a person standing at Deir Yesin and looking towards Neby Samwīl has Beit Ikša in full view, although at a short distance the right or left it is not visible at all. From many other points it is very conspicuous, owing to its position near the summit of a hill abutting on the great valley of Beit Hannīna, which is there very open.

2. The locality should be adapted for the camping ground of a large army (1 Sam. iv, 1), have a supply of water, be easily defensible, so situated as to render communications with the interior of the Israelite territory easy, and afford a ready means of retreat in the event of an unsuccessful battle with the Philistine invaders. All these characterise the position of Beit Ikša. The hill on which it is built is nearly surrounded by deep valleys, whose steep, and in some parts precipitous, sides render the place almost impregnable in that direction, whilst a narrow ridge connects it with the only road along which the Philistines could march to the attack, which road, moreover, would expose the flank of the attacking force to an assault from the side of Mizpah. There is some water at the place itself, still more at Neby Samwīl, and an unlimited supply at the neighbouring fountain of Lifta, which must have been well within the Israelite lines.

3. There should be in the near neighbourhood some spot meriting the name of Aphek, the stronghold, in which the Philistines could securely encamp, and from which they could make their attack on the Israelite position. Such a spot is Kūstūl, *castellum*, which commands the modern road between Jerusalem and Jaffa. To the north of the miserable hamlet called by this name there is a broad plateau which affords evidence of having been used for a camping ground in ancient times, being still

surrounded by the remains of a rampart of large stones. From this position the Philistines could march in great security along the summit of the hill, past the site of the present Beit Surik, until they came to where Biddu now is, when turning to the right they could direct their attack against either Mizpah or an enemy on the hill to the south, where Beit Ikka is situated.

4. The place should be so situated that a runner could reach Shiloh from it in a few hours. "There ran a man of Benjamin out of the army and came to Shiloh *the same day*," bearing news of the defeat of the Israelites, and loss of the ark. From Beit Ikka this might be accomplished by an eager and active messenger in four hours, or less; the distance being about eighteen miles. From Deir Abân Shiloh is eleven or twelve miles further.

5. Mizpah should be so situated that an attacking force, if badly beaten, seized with panic, and thinking only of escape to its own territory in the south-western plain, would naturally flee down the valley which passes "under Beth Car," and that the pursuing Israelites, especially if they happened to be imperfectly armed (Josephus, Ant. 6, 2, 2), would not deem it prudent to follow the fugitives further than that. The valley which divides the hill of Beit Surik from that on which Beit Ikka stands affords such a means of retreat from Neby Samwil, and it was probably down this valley, past 'Ain el 'Alik and 'Ain Beit Tulma, that the terrified Philistines (2 Sam. vii, 10, 11) reached the great watercourse which they knew would conduct them to their own country. Pressed by their pursuers, they would rush on by Motza (Különfeh) under their late camping ground at Aphek, over the boulders and rocks in the bed of the wady, and through the olive gardens at its sides, until they came "under Beth Car," which may be taken to be the village now called 'Ain Karim, where their foes would give up the pursuit, lest, becoming entangled in the narrow and stony valley, they should expose themselves to great risk in the event of the discomfited host rallying and turning upon them.

It may be objected to this identification that Neby Samwil has never been *proved* to be Mizpah, Deir Yesin Shen, or 'Ain Karim Beth Car. Yet, when all the circumstances connected with the events narrated being taken together support this theory; when it is found that the ancient names of two of the places are still retained; when it is remembered that the position of Neby Samwil and the tradition connecting it with that prophet are by almost all investigators held to favour the supposition that it is Mizpah; and when it is considered that the identification of each of these four places in a very remarkable manner supports that of the others, there is surely a strong presumption that we need go no further in search of the site of this famous monument of the last of Israel's Judges.

It may not be altogether idle to enquire why Samuel placed his memorial "between Mizpah and Shen" instead of at Mizpah. The latter was not only a very conspicuous spot, as its name implies, but it was also a seat of government, and a centre of the religious life of the people. It

was not to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was, but to Mizpah that Samuel gathered all Israel and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and prayed to the Lord for them. Perhaps the answer to such an enquiry is, that he placed his monument where the ark of God had once stood. We are taught in the second book of the Chronicles (viii, 11) that a place whereunto the ark of the Lord had come was regarded as holy, and what more natural, after the signal deliverance which had been experienced, than that the great ruler and guide of the nation should erect "the stone of help" upon the spot once sanctified by the sacred emblem of the Divine strength? Josephus tells us the stone was called *ισχυρος*, "the stone of strength." In Psalm lxxviii, 61, we have "and delivered *his strength* (*i.e.*, the ark) into captivity;" and again in 2 Chron. vi, 41, "arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou and the *ark of Thy strength*;" in the Septuagint *ἡ κιβωτος της ισχυρος σου*. If the memorial came to be called in late times by its Greek name, it is not impossible that in *Ikka*, a word the derivation of which no one seems to know, we have a corruption of *ischuros*, like 'Amwas of Emmaus, Nablus of Neapolis. I have heard the place called Beit Iska, and a Mohammedan Sheikh once told me that that is the right name. The point is not of importance. The tendency of the Arabs to transpose consonants is well known.

It would seem that this idea of Ebenezer having marked the place on which the ark was once set misled Eusebius and his translator into supposing that the monument occupied the spot to which the Philistines brought back the ark. It is needless to say that there is no indication of this in the Bible; and it may reasonably be supposed that if Samuel had erected his trophy at Bethshemesh, or in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, the narrative would have said so.

I have often questioned with myself whether these struggles with the Philistines did not (as some seem to suppose) take place nearer to the Philistine frontier than Neby Samwil and Beit Ikka are. But I find no confirmation of this suggestion in the sacred text. Other important battles against the same foes took place still further in the heart of the Israelite country, as at Michmash and on Mount Gilboa.

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NOTE.

Dr. Chaplin having kindly sent me the proof of his paper on Ebenezer, I have only one or two remarks to offer on the subject.

I do not hold it to be proved that Deir Abân is Ebenezer, but, as I have pointed out in the "Memoirs," Deir Abân is the place which Jerome supposed to be Ebenezer. It is quite possible that Jerome was wrong in this as in other cases. The site of Mizpah is uncertain, as it may be either at Neby Samwil or perhaps at Shâfât. The identity of Shen and Deir Yasin seems to me doubtful, because names with Deir preceding are usually of Christian origin. 'Ain Kârim is, I believe, the Biblical Beth