

Jezreel

On the northwest edge of Mount Gilboa, Jezreel overlooks the Valley that took its name. Built as a fortress in Omri's day in the 800's BC, King Ahab had a palace in Jezreel and some believe it was a cavalry base for King Ahab's military. A view from the city and its position helped command the highway through the Jezreel Valley from Megiddo and Beth Shean.



It was a small village in the early Bronze Age (2700 BC). In 1987 a bulldozer accidentally uncovered ancient structures and David Ussishkin and John Woodhead led the excavation from 1990-1996. They uncovered four towers and a casemate wall around the fortress built with ashlar and boulders. The fortress covered 11 acres and was surrounded by a 20 ft. deep moat on 3 sides.

In the Bible: **Jos.19:18**, Jezreel is in Issachar; **1 Kg.18:45-46**, Elijah outran Ahab's chariot from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel; **1 Kg.21:1-24**, Naboth lost his life and his vineyard in Jezreel to Ahab; **2 Kg.8:28-29,9:14-37**, Jehu drove his chariot to Jezreel from the Jordan Valley and killed the King of Israel, the king of Judah (Jehoram) and the Queen Mother (Jezebel); **2 Kg.19:1-11**; **Hosea 1:4**, Jehu killed all Ahab's descendants at Jezreel and the prophet Hosea condemned him.