

Azekah

Azekah guarded the west edge of the Elah Valley. It sets in the Shephelah on a high hill overlooking the Elah Valley guarding the Israelite/Philistine border. Gath is 5.2 miles west of Azekah and Hebron is 16 miles to the southeast..



English archaeologists Frederick Bliss and R.A. Stewart Macalister excavated Azekah in 1898-1900 and uncovered the water system, Bar Kokhba revolt hideouts and the famous lamelech seal impressions on the handles of jars. “Lamelech” (LMLK) refers to the ancient Hebrew word *Imlk* which means “belonging to the king.” (See page 155)

Recent excavation 1 mile east of Azekah at Khirbet Qeiyafa has uncovered a city wall, a typical four-chamber gate and an ostrakon (a piece of broken pottery with an inscription) from the Iron Age including 1000-900 BC.

In the Bible: **Joshua 10:10-11**, Joshua pursued the Canaanite kings “all the way to Azekah” when they attacked Gibeon. A hailstorm helped destroy these Canaanite/Amorite kings; **Joshua 15:35**, Azekah is allotted to Judah; **1 Samuel 17:1**, David killed Goliath in the Elah Valley with the Philistines army “between Socoh and Azekiah”; **2 Chronicles 11:9**, Rehoboam fortified Azekah; **Jeremiah 34:7**, Azekah along with Lachish and Jerusalem, was one of the last three cities to fall to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.



View from Azekah looking into the Valley of Elah where David killed Goliath.



Toni holds a card in Azekah to identify locations mentioned in 1 Samuels 17:1 (David vs. Goliath)