

Joshua 15:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,

Analysis

Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah—these four cities represent major strategic locations in the Shephelah. **Jarmuth** (יָרְמֹת) was one of five Amorite cities whose kings attacked Gibeon and were defeated by Joshua in the famous battle where the sun stood still (Joshua 10:3-5, 23). **Adullam** (אֲדָלָם, "refuge" or "retreat") became David's stronghold when fleeing Saul; his family and mighty men gathered there (1 Samuel 22:1; 2 Samuel 23:13). The prophet Micah later lamented Jerusalem's coming judgment, crying "pass ye unto Adullam" (Micah 1:15).

Socoh (שָׂכוֹה, "branches" or "hedge") controlled a major valley; the Philistines camped there before David fought Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1). **Azekah** (אֲזָקָה, "dug over" or "tilled ground") stood nearby; Goliath's defeat occurred between Socoh and Azekah. Later, Azekah was one of Judah's last fortified cities resisting Babylonian siege (Jeremiah 34:7). These cities weren't merely administrative centers but witnessed pivotal moments in redemptive history—divine intervention for Joshua, David's refuge and victory, and resistance unto destruction.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations confirm these cities' strategic importance. Jarmuth (Khirbet Yarmuk) was a substantial Bronze Age city destroyed in the Late Bronze Age, consistent with Joshua's conquest. Adullam's caves provided refuge for David and 400 men—the limestone Shephelah is honeycombed with natural caves suitable for hiding. Socoh (Khirbet Abbad) and Azekah (Tell Zakariyeh) controlled the Elah Valley, the main route from Philistia to Judah's heartland. David's defeat

of Goliath occurred in this valley, securing this critical pass.

The Lachish Letters, ostraca from the Babylonian siege (587 BCE), mention Azekah's fall just before Lachish, confirming Jeremiah 34:7's account that Lachish and Azekah were the last fortified cities standing. Archaeological evidence of destruction layers from this period validates biblical chronology. These cities' fortifications—massive walls, gate systems, towers—testify to their strategic significance throughout Israel's history.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Adullam's role as David's refuge illustrate Christ as our stronghold and gathering place when we flee from spiritual enemies and trials?
2. What does the geographical concentration of pivotal events (Joshua's victory, David's triumph over Goliath, Judah's last resistance) in these Shephelah cities teach about recurring spiritual battlegrounds?
3. How should remembering God's past victories in specific locations encourage faith when facing present challenges in your own 'strategic territories'?

Interlinear Text

Jarmuth	and Adullam	Socoh	and Azekah	יבָּצָה: שׁׁוֹכֵן אֶלְעָלָה יְרֻמּוֹת
H3412	H5725	H7755	H5825	

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 17:1 (Parallel theme): Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

1 Samuel 22:1 (Parallel theme): 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.

Joshua 10:3 (Parallel theme): Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

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