

What is the significance of En Gedi in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/En-Gedi.html>

En Gedi (“Spring of a Young Goat”) was a town in the wilderness of Judah, on the west coast of the Dead Sea (Joshua 15:62). Today, En Gedi is a nature preserve known for its waterfalls and a botanical garden. This city in the desert was an oasis during biblical times and is still a destination for visitors to Israel.

Originally called Hazazon Tamar (“Division of the Palms”) because of the surrounding palm trees (2 Chronicles 20:2), the area of En Gedi was once inhabited by the Amorites (Genesis 14:7). Once the Israelites entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, En Gedi was allotted to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:1, 61-62).

When David fled from Saul, he hid in En Gedi among the rocks there (1 Samuel 23:29). The specific location where Saul searched for David was called “The Crags of the Wild Goats,” because of the rocky terrain of En Gedi (1 Samuel 24:2). Saul followed David to En Gedi and, while in a cave, David had the opportunity to kill his pursuer (1 Samuel 24:2-4). Instead of killing Saul, he cut off a piece of Saul’s robe, but even that act struck his conscience (1 Samuel 24:4-7). When David confronted Saul outside of the caves of En Gedi, he stated, “See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life” (1 Samuel 24:11).

Not only was En Gedi known for rocky terrain and waterfalls, but it was also renowned for its aromatic plants and vineyards. The Song of Solomon mentions vineyards and the henna plant in En Gedi: “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the

vineyards of Engedi” (Song of Solomon 1:14, ESV). Although the exact identification of “henna blossoms” is unknown, they are probably part of an aromatic blooming plant used to make perfume and dye.

In the millennial kingdom, En Gedi will be transformed into a place that will have access to fish—a big change, given the fact that the Dead Sea is currently devoid of fish. Ezekiel prophesied that the Dead Sea will become a freshwater body, teeming with life (Ezekiel 47:8-9). In fact, “fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea. All the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim, the shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean” (verse 10, NLT). As part of Christ’s reign on earth, the oasis of En Gedi will be expanded to the point of even turning the Dead Sea into living waters.

En Gedi was a place in the Bible known for beauty and refuge amid the surrounding wilderness. As an oasis in the land of Israel, En Gedi served to protect David as he fled from Saul and was referenced in a beautiful poem about love. In the future, En Gedi will witness the miracle of the renewal of the Dead Sea. God’s provision is amply displayed in the beauty and natural resources of En Gedi.