

What is the significance of Gibeah in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Gibeah-in-the-Bible.html>

Several places in the Bible are named Gibeah, which simply means “a hill.”

The most prominent Gibeah was a central city in the territory assigned to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:28) located about five miles north of Jerusalem. Gibeah of Benjamin was the hometown of Saul (1 Samuel 10:26) and sometimes referred to in the Bible as “Gibeah of Saul” (1 Samuel 11:4; 15:34; Isaiah 10:29). Its inhabitants were called the Gibeathites (1 Chronicles 12:3). After Saul was anointed king over Israel, he returned to live in Gibeah and made it the royal capital during his reign (1 Samuel 10:26; 22:6; 23:19).

Earlier, in the book of Judges, chapters 19–21, Gibeah of Saul was the scene of a horrific rape and murder that resulted in an intertribal war against the tribe of Benjamin. A Levite and his concubine were traveling from Bethlehem to Ephraim and stopped for lodging in Gibeah. Since Israelites lived in Gibeah, they expected to be warmly received. But no one offered them hospitality except an old man originally from Ephraim.

During the night, some wicked men of Gibeah went to the old man’s house and demanded to have sex with the Levite visitor. The old man was so ashamed of their outrageous conduct that he offered the men his virgin daughter and the Levite’s concubine. The townsmen refused, so the Levite sent his concubine outside. Through the night, the men of Gibeah raped and abused the woman and then left her for dead. To bring attention to this outrage, the Levite chopped up the concubine’s body into twelve parts and sent one to each of the tribes of Israel. The other tribes took vengeance by killing the inhabitants

of Gibeah and devastating the tribe of Benjamin. So horrendous was this brutal crime that it became a lingering symbol of Israel's wickedness and sin (Hosea 9:9; 10:9).

Another tragic event that occurred in Gibeah of Saul is recorded in 2 Samuel 21. When David was king, a famine plagued Israel for three years. The Lord told David the reason for the scarcity: "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death" (2 Samuel 21:1). David then asked the Gibeonites (to be distinguished from the Gibeathites) what he could do to repay them, and they asked for seven of Saul's sons to be put to death. King David gave them two of Saul's sons and five of his grandsons, and they were hanged in Gibeah (2 Samuel 21:8-9).

The Bible identifies another city named Gibeah in the hill country of the tribe of Judah, southwest of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:57). Scholars believe this Gibeah may have been the home of King Abijah's wife Maakah (2 Chronicles 13:2) and possibly a place named after one of Caleb's descendants (1 Chronicles 2:49). The exact location of this Gibeah is unknown.

A town in the hill country of the tribe of Ephraim was also called Gibeah. Aaron's son Eleazar was buried there, and his son Phineas inherited the land (Joshua 24:33). The precise location of this Gibeah remains uncertain as well.

Gibeah of God, Gibeath-elohim, meaning "hill of God," was the site where the prophet Samuel predicted that the recently anointed King Saul would meet a company of prophets and prophesy together with them there (1 Samuel 10:5-6).

Another Gibeah, Gibeath-haaraloth, meaning "hill of the foreskins," was the spot between

the Jordan River and Jericho, near Gilgal, where Joshua used flint knives to circumcise the sons of Israel that had been born during the 40 years of wandering the wilderness (Joshua 5:3).

In the KJV, Gibeah, a hill near Kiriath-jearim, was where Abinadab housed the ark of the covenant after its return from the Philistines until David transported it to the house of Obed-edom (1 Samuel 7:1; 2 Samuel 6:1-4;). Most other translations simply say that Abinadab lived “on the hill,” but the Hebrew word used is a form of Gibeah.