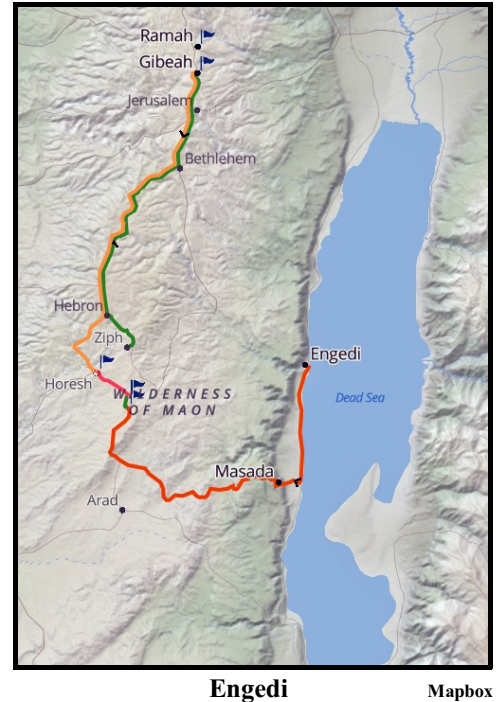


EN GEDI

En Gedi

- It may also be spelled as *En Gedi*, *En-Gedi* or *Ein Gedi* and means *spring of the wild goats*. Also, it was known as *Hazazon Tamar*, 2 Chronicles 20:2, *Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi).*
- It is on the west side of the Dead Sea, 35 miles southeast of Jerusalem. The area has a number of waterfalls that are extremely refreshing in the intense heat of this part of the Wilderness of Judah. There are springs with streams that flow out of limestone cliffs producing semitropical vegetation.
- At the En Gedi Nature Reserve, there are a variety of animals, including hyrax (rock badger - small furry animal), the ibex (mountain goat) and the deadliest snake in Israel, the Engedi black viper. At one time, En Gedi was known for aromatic plants, including balsam. Note Song of Solomon 1:14, *My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi*, and the finest palm trees according to the 1st c. AD historian Josephus.
- A number of Old Testament events took place in or around En Gedi. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, conquered the Amorites, Genesis 14:7, *7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.* Ezekiel had a vision of Israel's restoration where fishermen would catch fish from the Dead Sea, Ezekiel 47:10, *Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea.* Three key biblical events follow.



Entrance to En Gedi Nature Reserve



An ibex

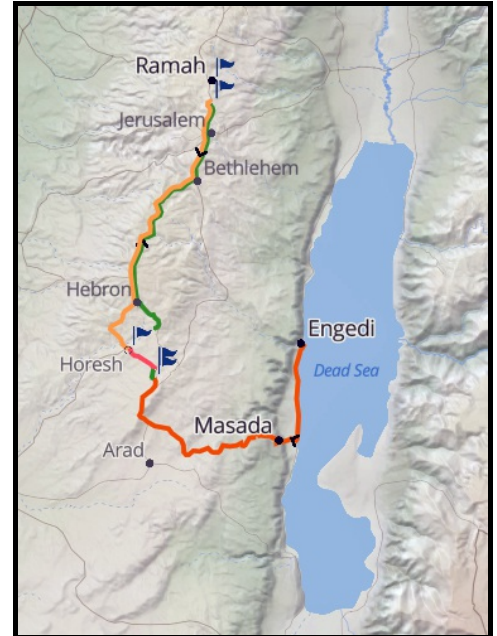
The story of Ruth and Naomi

- ▶ The Book of Ruth details the events of Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Naomi and her family moved to Moab during a time of extreme famine. Ruth married one of her sons. Eventually, Naomi's husband and two sons died and Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem. Ruth chose to leave Moab with her mother-in-law. One of the most beautiful pictures of commitment is found in Ruth 1:16-17, *But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."*

- ▶ Her commitment to Naomi led to marriage to Boaz and their commitment led to a son who became the grandfather of King David (Ruth 4:18-22). Ruth and Boaz were in the line of Jesus, the Messiah (Matthew 1:1-16).
- ▶ This story of Ruth's commitment and God's faithfulness included travel through En Gedi. Their journey began east of the Dead Sea in the land of Moab. They crossed into Israel at the southern end of the Dead Sea and up to En Gedi. They followed the difficult passage over the mountainous pass that led to Bethlehem.
- ▶ Charles Dyer, ... *God is still looking for men and women willing to put the needs of others ahead of themselves.*

The struggles between Saul and David

- ▶ Saul feared David and wanted him dead. He was pleased when he heard that David had gone to En Gedi and hoped to kill him there.
- ▶ Charles Dyer, *Why was Saul so obsessed with David? It was because David, even as a young man, was everything Saul could never be. David had courage. He boldly fought Goliath while Saul was "terrified and deeply shaken" as everyone else (1 Samuel 17:11). David trusted in the Lord while Saul could never rise to that level of faith. David demonstrated faithfulness to Saul, but Saul was treacherous in his dealings with David. And all that made David a threat, at least in Saul's eyes.*
- ▶ Howard Hendricks, *Once the saying went out, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands," David had his first critic.*
- ▶ The story of Saul's jealousy and David's faithfulness is found in 1 Samuel 24:1-7. David confronted Saul after the incident with Saul in a cave in En Gedi. From a distance, David declared that he would never harm the LORD's anointed, 1 Samuel 24:8-15. They made an agreement not to harm one another. Saul went home but David wisely took his men 11 miles south to Masada, the stronghold, 1 Samuel 24:22. David's promise was certain, based on his commitment to the Lord but he did not take for granted Saul's willingness to keep his word.



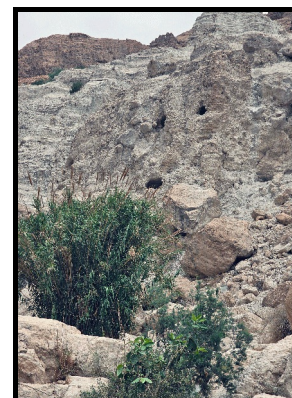
David's departure from En Gedi Mapbox



Caves above a waterfall



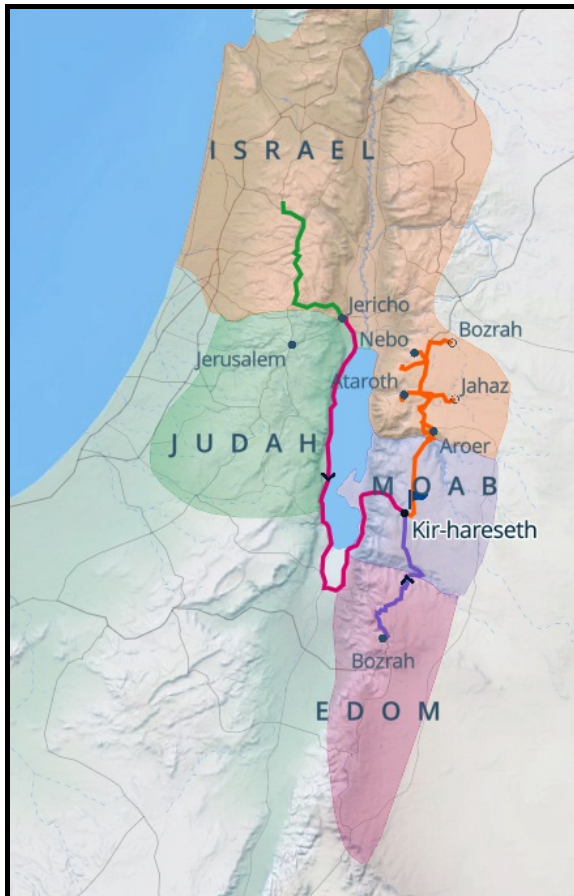
One of the ridges at En Gedi



Numerous caves where David could have hid

The victory of Jehoshaphat

- ▶ Ruth was the great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother of King Jehoshaphat (Matthew 1:5-8).
- ▶ He was the fourth king of Judah (872-848 BC) and had a successful rule due to his faithfulness to the God of Israel (2 Chronicles 17:1-5).
- ▶ He had a relatively peaceful reign but became part of the history of En Gedi when news came to him that a huge army from Edom was preparing to attack Judah and they were in En Gedi, 2 Chronicles 20:2, *Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi).* The forces included not only Edomites but also Moabites and Ammonites.
- ▶ They were less than a two day march from Jerusalem and they had no time to prepare their defenses. Jehoshaphat led his people in prayer for God's deliverance, 2 Chronicles 20:12, *O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."*



Countries aligned against Judah Mapbox

- ▶ Jahaziel, a Levite encouraged the people to trust God for deliverance, 2 Chronicles 20:15-17, *And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."*
- ▶ Jehoshaphat, directing singers led the army of Judah to En Gedi, 2 Chronicles 20:21, *And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."*
- ▶ When they reached En Gedi, God's deliverance was evident. The armies had turned against each other and there were no survivors, 2 Chronicles, 20:24, *When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped.*
- ▶ Their march to battle had centered on praise to God for Who He is. God took care of the results. May that be our daily plan, as well.