

Upper Gilead

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Gilead Mountains

In contrast to the plateau regions to the north and south of it, Gilead is a mountainous, hilly region. The highest peak reaches 4,090 feet (1,250 m). The region is well watered by rain (24–32 inches [60–80 cm] per year), heavy dew in the summer and springs. Terracing was required for productive farming. [Olive trees](#) and [vineyards](#) are ideally suited to terraces because they require less space. [Wheat](#) could be grown on the lower foothill regions of Gilead. Gilead was rich in balms (Jer 8:22, 46:11) because of the trees ([2 Sam 18:8](#); Jer 8:22).

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Goats of Gilead

Gilead was heavily forested, and this was an ideal area for grazing animals.

Song of Solomon 6:5 (NIV): "Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead."



Tishbe, Home of Elijah

The only background given in the Bible of Elijah's life is that he was from Tishbe in Gilead. The three candidates for Elijah's hometown are all in the vicinity of Mar Elias, the Byzantine church that commemorates Elijah's life. The three candidates are Listib (pictured left), Umm el-Hedamus, and Abu Hummus.

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Elijah Inscription

Mar Elias does not preserve the location of Elijah's hometown itself, but it is the site of a Byzantine monastery remembering the prophet Elijah. The Jordanians have recently excavated this site and found two Byzantine churches. The larger one is from the 6th century AD. The smaller one dates to the 4th–5th centuries AD. This inscription in the Byzantine church mentions Elijah (third line from bottom, right side).



Ajlun Castle

Built by Saladin's cousin Izz ad-Din Usama a few years before the defeat of the Crusaders in 1187, this castle never faced battle. Unlike many other castles in Jordan and Israel, this castle was built by the Muslims and not the Crusaders. Its situation positioned it opposite the Crusader castle at Belvoir.

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Jabesh Gilead

Tell Maqlub is best identified with Jabesh Gilead. Eusebius in his *Onomasticon* locates Jabesh Gilead in the mountains near the 6th milestone from Pella on the road to [Gerasa](#). This description fits with Tell Maqlub. A surface survey of the site has found Iron Age pottery. In biblical history, Jabesh Gilead is the city where wives were found for the Benjamites (Judg 21:8-12). King Saul's first military effort was at Jabesh Gilead where he defeated the Ammonites and saved the city (1 Sam 11:1-11). After Saul's body was hung on the walls of [Beth Shean](#), the men of Jabesh Gilead retrieved and buried it here ([1 Sam 31](#):8-13).