

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CENTERS OF ISRAEL

1 Samuel 10:3, 17, 26

During the period of the judges, Israel may have had more than one capital. This may explain why the Scriptures overlap with reference to some cities.

Gilgal	Joshua 4:19; Judges 2:1; Hosea 4:15; Micah 6:5
Shiloh.	Joshua 18:1-10; 19:51; Judges 18:31; 1 Samuel 1:3; Jeremiah 7:12-14
Shechem	Joshua 24:1
Ramah	1 Samuel 7:17; 8:4
Mizpah	Judges 11:11; 20:1; 1 Samuel 10:17
Bethel.	Judges 20:18, 26; 1 Samuel 10:3
Gibeah (political center only)	1 Samuel 10:26
Gibeon (religious center only)	1 Kings 3:4; 2 Chronicles 1:2-3
Jerusalem	1 Kings 8:1ff; Psalm 51:16-19

Samuel called the Israelites together at Mizpah, where he would anoint Saul as their first king. Up to this point, the political seat of the nation seems to have been the religious center of the nation as well. Above are the cities that probably served as both the religious and political centers of Israel since the days of Joshua. Saul may have been the first Israelite leader to separate the nation's religious center (probably Mizpah at this time) from its political center (Gibeah—1 Samuel 11:4; 26:1). Politically, the nation grew strong for a while. But when Saul and his officials stopped seeking God's will, internal jealousies and strife soon began to decay the nation from within. When David became king, he brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, his capital. King Solomon then completely united the religious and political centers at Jerusalem.