

Among the Jewish people, it was customary to name places where God revealed Himself in a unique or powerful way. These names served not only as geographical markers but as spiritual reminders of God's faithfulness and intervention.

For instance, Jacob's encounter with God at Luz is deeply significant. After seeing the vision of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending, Jacob recognized this as a holy place where heaven and earth intersected. He named it Bethel, meaning "House of God" (Genesis 28:10-22, NIV). This name reflected Jacob's acknowledgment of God's presence and covenant.

Another example is found in 1 Samuel 7:12, where the prophet Samuel commemorated God's deliverance of Israel from the Philistines by setting up a stone called Ebenezer, meaning "Thus far the Lord has helped us." This was a tangible reminder of God's faithfulness and a call to remember His ongoing help.

In the story of King Saul and David, we see a vivid portrayal of God's providence and protection. David, though pursued

relentlessly by Saul, repeatedly escapes death, illustrating God's sovereign hand over his life. However, in 1 Samuel 23:26-28 (NIV), David finds himself trapped, with Saul closing in and no obvious escape. At this critical moment, a messenger interrupts Saul with news of a Philistine invasion, forcing him to abandon the chase to defend Israel.

David names this place Selahamalekothi, a Hebrew term meaning "The Rock of Escape" or "The Place of Escape." This name acknowledges God as the ultimate refuge and deliverer one who provides escape from seemingly impossible situations.

1 Samuel 23:26-28 (NIV):

*26 Saul was on one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other, hurrying to get away from Saul. Saul and his men were closing in to capture David and his men, 27 when a messenger came to Saul and said, "Hurry! The Philistines are raiding the land."*  
*28 So Saul stopped pursuing David and went to fight the Philistines. That's why the place is called Selahamalekothi.*

Theological Reflections

The act of naming places like Bethel, Ebenezer, and Selahamalekothi is deeply theological. It reflects a people who live in continual remembrance of God's intervention in history. Naming these sites is an act of worship, testimony, and teaching for future generations a way to anchor faith in concrete experience.

For David, Selahamalekothi symbolizes more than physical escape; it reveals a profound trust in God as a refuge and stronghold (Psalm 18:2). This aligns with the biblical theme of God as a "rock" and "deliverer" throughout Scripture, echoing the assurance found in Psalms and other Old Testament books.

Why Should We Remember?

Remembering God's works is a vital spiritual discipline. Just as the Israelites set up stones and named places to recall God's faithfulness, we too should mark the moments where God moves powerfully in our lives. Writing down testimonies or otherwise recording these events helps us cultivate gratitude, trust, and hope.

Though God works miracles every day, we often take them for granted or forget them quickly. Like the ancestors of faith, we must intentionally preserve these memories to strengthen our walk with God.

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