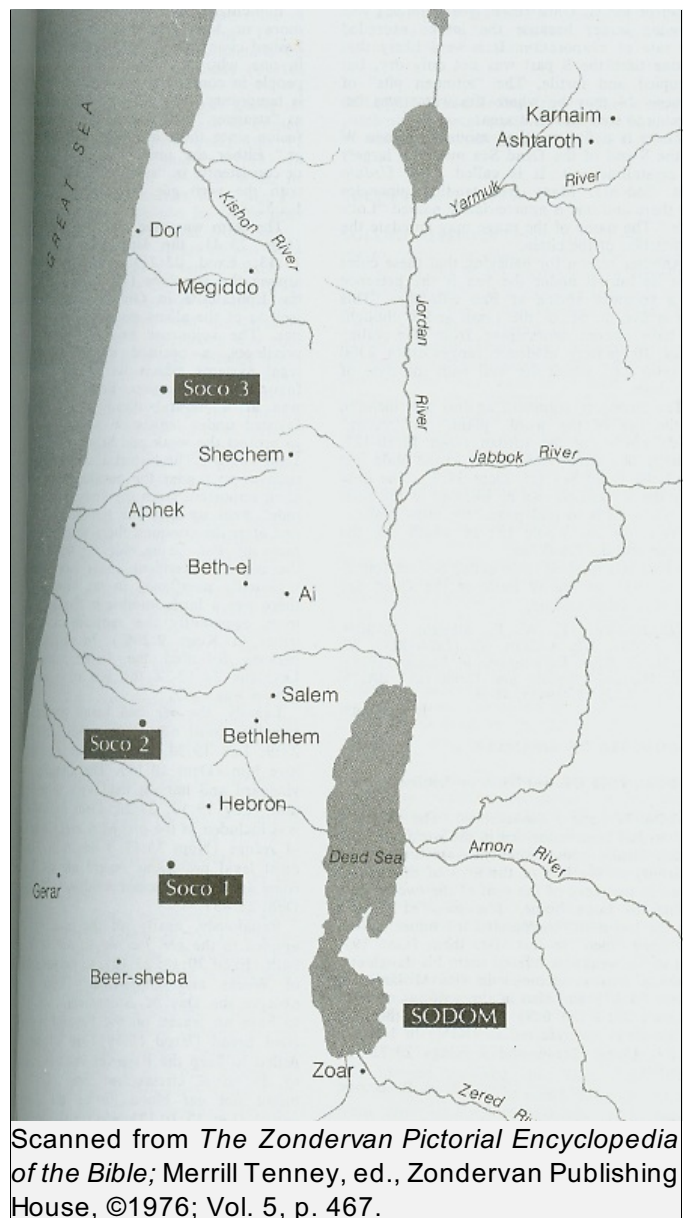


The Three Socoh's

Topics		
The Hebrew	Passages	Socoh 1
Socoh 2		Socoh 3
Charts and Maps		
	A Map of the Three Socoh's	

Preface: in Scripture, we find three or four cities named Socoh, which need to be distinguished from one another.

1. In the Hebrew, there are two basic ways to spell Socoh (Soco): sôkôh (שׁוֹכֹה) [pronounced soh-KOH]; and sôwkôw (שׁוֹכוֹ) [pronounced soh-KOH]. The word probably means *branch*, *brushwood*, as it appears to come from the feminine noun sôwkâh (שׁוֹכָה) [pronounced soh-KAW], found only in Judges 9:45 (Strong's #7754 BDB #962). There are, however, three cognates which, although used sparingly in Scripture, reasonably fix the meaning (Strong's #7753, #4881 and the masculine form of #7754 BDB #962). Strong's #7755 BDB #962.
2. The name is found in the following passages: Socoh, Shochoh, Sochoh: Joshua 15:35, 48 I Sam. 17:1 I Kings 4:19. Soco, Shocho: I Chron. 4:18 II Chron. 11:7 28:18.
3. First of all, given the name and its meaning, that there should be more than one Socoh is not difficult to believe. Furthermore, given that there are two Socoh's named in Joshua 15 gives this position even more credence. There are three, possibly four different cities with this name, which we will cover below. However, given that a picture is worth a thousand words, let me give you what ZPEB has:
4. The southernmost Socoh is mentioned only in Joshua 15:48. This is the southernmost hill country of Judah, also called the Eshtemoh. It is located about 10 miles southwest of Hebron. This is probably the site of the modern day Khirbet Shuweikeh, east of Dahariyeh. ISBE tells us *This is doubtless Kh. Shuweikeh, a large ruin occupying a low hill, 10 miles SW of Hebron; there are many*



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*caves and rock-cut cisterns as well as drafted stones.*¹

5. The second Socoh is the one found in our passage, I Sam. 17:1. It is mentioned in Joshua 15:35 and is found in the Shephelah near Azekah (as per both passages named), between Bethlehem and the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines camped between Socoh and Azekah. Rehoboam, the first king of Judah following the separated kingdoms, rebuilt and fortified the city of Socoh (along with several others) in II Chron. 11:7. The Philistines will take this city from Judah under the reign of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:18). Like many other early cities, The modern-day equivalent to Socoh 2 is probably Khirbet ʿAbbad (which is probably slightly to the west of Socoh), although the name is preserved by Khirbet Shuweikeh (during the Roman and Byzantine times?). ISBE tells us *The site is, without doubt, Kh. Esh Shuweikeh...a rounded, elongated hilltop, showing clear traces of ancient city walls. The situation is one of considerable natural strength on the south side of the Vale of Elah just where the Wâdy eṣ Şûr makes a sweep to the west and becomes the Wâdy es Sunṭ. Like so many such ancient sites, the hill has very steep slopes on 3 sides (south, west and north), and is isolated from the ridge of higher ground to the east by a narrow neck of lower ground. In the valley to the southwest is a plentiful spring. The site was known to Jerome in the 4th century. He described it as 8 or 9 Rom miles from Elueutheropolis (Beit Jibrîn) (PEF, III, 53, 125, Sh XVII, BR, II, 22).*² ISBE adds that the Sucathites of I Chron. 2:55 were probably inhabitants of Socoh. Keil and Delitzsch also identify this Socoh as the present day Shuweikeh along the Wady Sumt, 3½ hours southwest of Jerusalem.³
6. The third Socoh is the most northern of the three, found in the Sharon Plain, and mentioned in I Kings 4:10, where Ben-hesed is said to be the city's administrator under Solomon. ZPEB identifies this third city again with the modern Khirbet Shuweikeh, which is slightly north of the modern Tul-Karem.⁴ ISBE does not present a third Socoh, but identifies this one with the Socoh of I Sam. 17:1.
7. The final mention of Socoh is in I Chron. 4:18, where Heber is said to be the founder of Socoh (see my exegesis of this passage). We do not know which Socoh, or whether this is a fourth location. However, one can be considered a founder even if he resettles a city which was formerly deserted or destroyed.

The Doctrine is summarized on the next page:

¹ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 2821.

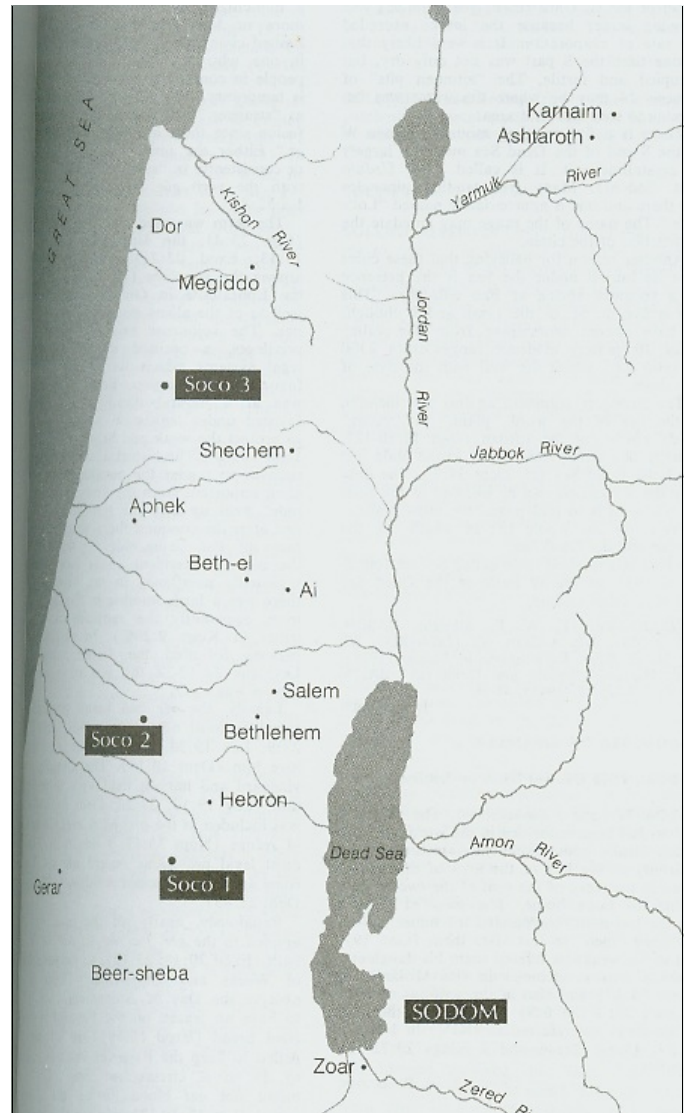
² *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 2821. Several abbreviations were spelled out.

³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 480. I assume that the 3½ hours refers to that time a walk would take.

⁴ These modern-day equivalents, along with most of the other information found here, came from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 5, pp. 465–466. ZPEB identified the first and third Socoh's with the modern-day Khirbet Shuweikeh. Similar information was found in *The New Bible Dictionary*; ed. J. D. Douglas; ©Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962; ©by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; p. 1201. Douglas only identifies the first Socoh with Khirbet Shuweikeh.

Summarizing the Doctrine of the Three Socoh's

1. In the Hebrew, Socoh (Soco) probably means *branch, brushwood*.
2. Given the name and its meaning, that there is more than one Socoh is not difficult to believe. given that there are two Socoh's named in Joshua 15 gives this position even more credence. There are three, possibly four different cities with this name, which we will cover below. However, given that a picture is worth a thousand words, let me give you what ZPEB has:
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4. The second Socoh is the one found in our passage, I Sam. 17:1. It is mentioned in Joshua 15:35 and is found in the Shephelah near Azekah, between Bethlehem and the Mediterranean Sea.
5. The third Socoh is the most northern of the three, found in the Sharon Plain, and mentioned in I Kings 4:10. ISBE does not present a third Socoh, but identifies this one with the Socoh of I Sam. 17:1.
6. The final mention of Socoh is in I Chron. 4:18, where Heber is said to be the founder of Socoh (see my exegesis of this passage). We do not know which Socoh, or whether this is a fourth location. However, one can be considered a founder even if he resettles a city which was formerly deserted or destroyed.



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