

**LOD** (לוד, *lod*) (Greek, Λύδδα, *Lydda*). A Benjamite town in the Plain of Sharon, between Jaffa and Jerusalem. The modern city of Lod is about 14 miles southeast of Tel Aviv, near Ben Gurion International Airport.

### **Biblical Relevance**

The Old Testament's only references to Lod occur in postexilic books dating to the Persian period. First Chronicles attributes Lod's founding to one or all of the sons of Elpaal the Benjaminite: Eber, Misham, and Shemed (1 Chr 8:12). Ezra notes that 725 inhabitants of Lod, Hadid, and Ono survived the Babylonian exile and returned to their home cities (Ezra 2:33); in a parallel passage, Nehemiah puts the number at 721 (Neh 7:37). Nehemiah also indicates that Lod received surviving members of the tribe of Benjamin (Neh 11:35).

In the New Testament, Peter spreads the gospel in Lydda, the Greek name for Lod. After Peter heals a paralytic there, all the town's residents become believers (Acts 9:32–35).

### **Geographical Significance**

The ancient city of Lod was located at a major crossroads in the Shephelah, the low foothills of Israel and Judah between Mount Hebron and the western Mediterranean coast. The Shephelah was a source of cedar (1 Kgs 10:27), and the lowland valleys were logical locations for trade routes. Numerous walled towns dotted the landscape. The towns held military significance as defensive outposts for Jerusalem, and any army wishing to reach the coastal plain had to pass through them. Lod's location was especially important, lying near the intersection of the main north-south and east-west roads. People crossing from Egypt to Mesopotamia or Syria, or from Jaffa to Jerusalem, would have passed through Lod.

## History

The earliest mention of Lod in the historical record dates to the time of Thutmose III, who reigned as pharaoh in the mid-1400s BC. Lod is included in a list of cities he had conquered or that had submitted to his dominion (Prichard, *ANET*, 242).

In the Hellenistic era, the Seleucid king Demetrius II (r. 145–40 and 129–25 BC; 1 Macc 10:67) affirmed that the districts of Aphairema, Lydda, and Rathamin were to be transferred from Samaria to Judaea (1 Macc 11:34; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 13.4.9). The Jews of Lydda were allowed to retain their priests, laws, and customs (*Ant.* 14.10.6), and Lydda was declared the capital of one of Judaea's 11 districts (*J.W.* 3.3.5). After the assassination of Julius Caesar, the Roman general Cassius sold the inhabitants of Lydda into slavery for failure to pay taxes (*Ant.* 14.11.2), and Mark Antony subsequently freed them (*Ant.* 14.12.2).

During the First Jewish War (AD 66–73), the Romans burned Lydda while almost all of its inhabitants were away in Jerusalem and killed 50 people who did show themselves (*J.W.* 2.19.1). Vespasian resettled Lydda with Jews loyal to Rome (*J.W.* 4.8.1).

In modern times, Lydda played a critical role in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War of Independence (Shavit, *My Promised Land*, 71–132).

Archeological excavations have shed little light on Lod's history, as the ancient site lies under the modern city.

## Bibliography

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<sup>1</sup> Jason M. H. Gaines, “Lod,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).