

HOLY LAND STUDY GUIDE



HOLY LAND STUDY GUIDE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
LAND OF THE BIBLE

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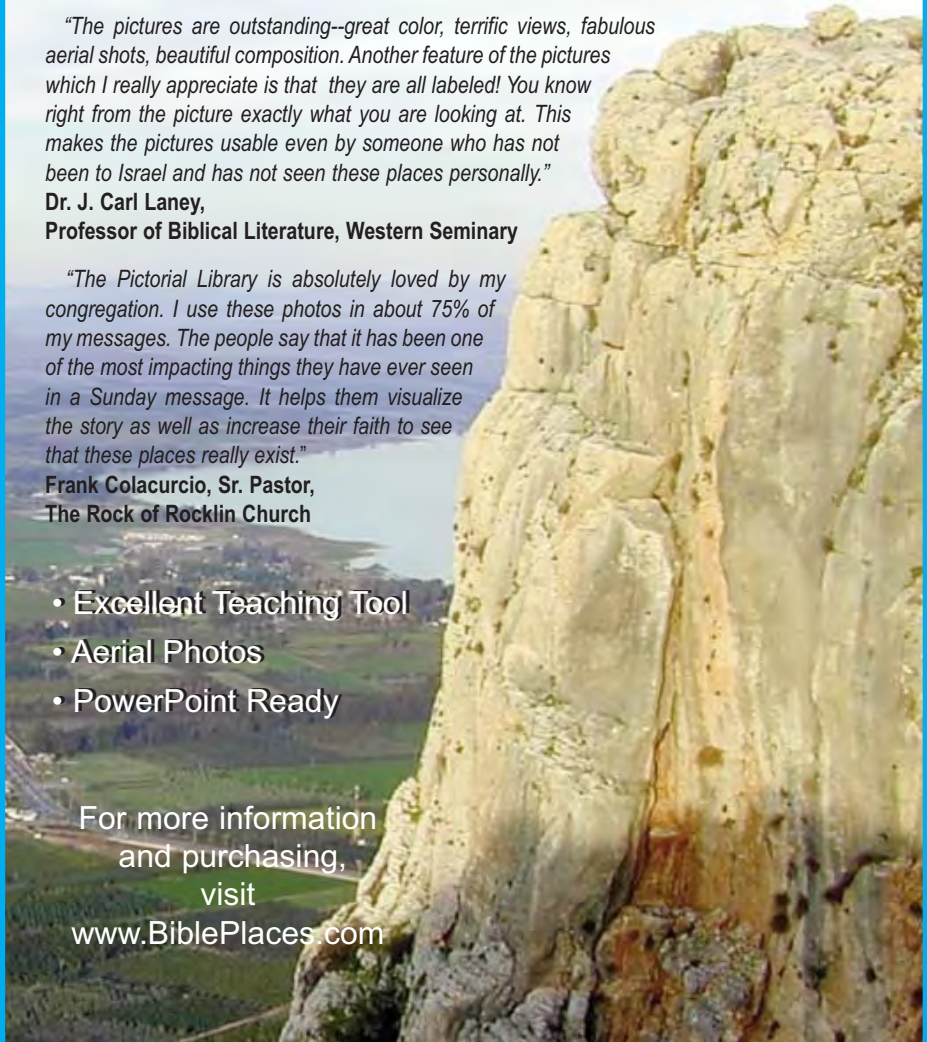
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HOLY LAND MAP



LAND OF THE BIBLE

Introduction

Yohanan Aharoni began his book, *The Land of the Bible*, with the following: “The history of any land and people is influenced to a considerable degree by their geographical environment. This includes not only the natural features such as climate, soil, topography, etc., but also the geopolitical relationships with neighboring areas. This is especially true for Palestine, a small and relatively poor country, which derives its main importance from its unique centralized location at the juncture of continents and a crossroads for the nations” (Aharoni, p. 3).^{*} These issues and their impact on the history of Israel are discussed below.

A Land of Milk and Honey

When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, he said, “I have come down to deliver [Israel] out of the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a *good* and broad land, a land *flowing* with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8; italics added). “Flowing with milk and honey” was a proverbial expression meaning that Canaan was fruitful and productive. It was “a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which [Israel was promised] you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of

whose hills you can dig copper” (Deut. 8:7-9). These promises of fruitfulness and prosperity, however, were conditional on Israel’s continuing devotion to God and keeping the commandments (Deut. 7:11-14).

The Rain Of Heaven

Canaan was not like Egypt, which had its flat lands watered by the Nile River. Canaan was “a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven” (Deut. 11:11). The children of Israel were told that if they would hearken unto the commandments of God, “to love the Lord. . . and to serve him” with all their heart and soul, then God would give to Israel “the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.” But if Israel served other gods, then the heavens would be “shut up So that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit” (Deut. 11:9-17; Isa. 5:6).

A Land Divided

Two challenges effected Israel’s ability to prosper in the land. First, Canaan was a land occupied by another people: “seven nations greater and mightier than [the children of Israel].” When Moses said in his heart, “how can I dispossess them?” God answered, “you

^{*} References for notes should be looked up in the Suggested Reading List at the back of the guide. Scripture quotations from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt” (Deut. 7:1, 17-18). The fact that so many nations could exist side by side in Canaan suggests the second problem: the natural features of this land worked against unification. The “hills and valleys” tended to separate the land into independent districts, each with its own ruler. A strong, well organized government was required to unify a land with such a diverse topography.



Caesarea: Roman Theatre – Caesarea was built by Herod the Great between 22 and 10 B.C. He made it an important seaport, with excellent connections to all parts of the Mediterranean world. An inscription with the name Pontius Pilate was found in the excavation of Caesarea. Archaeologists also have uncovered public buildings, a theater, an amphitheater, a hippodrome, two aqueducts, a colonnaded street, and a temple dedicated to Caesar. Peter preached here to Cornelius (see Acts 10), and Paul spent two years in prison here (see Acts 26).

The Land Between

Palestine was the land bridge between the continents of Asia and Africa. The rulers of these lands always wanted to possess the Holy Land for its trade routes and because they needed it as a bridgehead. Palestine, therefore, was frequently invaded and became subject to foreign rulers who wanted to control, more than anything else, the lines of communication and transportation. As George Adam Smith explained, the land now called Israel was “between two of the oldest homes of the human race [which] made her a passage for the earliest intercourse and exchanges of civilization. There is probably no older road in all the world than that which can still be used by caravans from the Euphrates to the Nile, through Damascus, Galilee, Esdraelon

[Jezreel], the Maritime Plain, and Gaza” (Smith, p. 32).

Testing Ground Of Obedience

Canaan was a land of many challenges, which allowed the people of Israel to prove their loyalty to God. For that purpose God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, to keep “the oath which he swore to [the] fathers”; to show that he “is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Deut. 7:8-9). This land was the testing ground of God’s people, whom God promised “peace in the land” if they would keep his commandments.

JEZREEL VALLEY

“The Rich Valley” (Isa. 28:1)

George Adam Smith (1894) called the Jezreel Valley the “battle-field of empires,” and “the prey and pasture of Arabs” who each spring invaded the valley from the east (Smith. P. 249). The central role of the Jezreel Valley is the result of its unique position across the mountains of Palestine. The Holy Land is sectioned into four parallel zones comprising the coastal plain, the central hill country, the Jordan Valley, and the eastern hill country (Transjordan). Thus the main lines of communication run in a north-south direction, except in Galilee where a series of five east-west valleys break through the central Galilean mountain range. The first is the Jezreel Valley, which marks the southern limit of Lower Galilee. These valleys carried the main lines of east-west communication and were the focus of both local and international concern.

The rich alluvial soil of the Jezreel Valley has always produced fine crops of wheat and barley. Even so, the valley is remembered more for the roads that crossed it in every direction: west from the Plain of Acco, northeast from the Sea of Galilee, east from the Jordan Valley, south from the Dothan Valley, and southwest from the coast through the Carmel passes. At the entrance to the middle Carmel pass stood the ancient site of Megiddo, which was the focus of many battles in antiquity (see **Selected Views**, p.4).

Before 1930, the Kishon River flowed through a deep bed in marshy ground that became dangerous to those who tried to cross it. When Edward Robinson described the Jezreel Valley early in the 19th century, he said that the channel of the Kishon River had in some places sunk 15 or 20 feet below the level of the plain. Another early explorer to Palestine, John Newman (1876), put the depth of the Kishon during the rainy season from 4 to 8 feet and said that it was from 10 to 40 feet wide. These descriptions remind us of the War of Deborah, when the “torrent Kishon swept them away, the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon” (Judg. 5:21; see **Selected Views**, p.4).

Jesus must have passed through the Jezreel Valley many times as his family traveled between Nazareth and Jerusalem and as he traveled from city to city during the years of his formal ministry. The day after Jesus healed a centurion’s servant in Capernaum, he came to a village in the Jezreel Valley called Nain. Approaching the city’s gates, he came upon the funeral procession of the only son of a widow of Nain. And Jesus had “compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ ” After Jesus raised the boy from the dead, “Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’ ” (Luke 7:11-17).

Selected Views of the Jezreel Valley

Since ancient times, Mount Carmel has been considered a holy mountain. In Egyptian documents dating from the 18th and 19th dynasties (ca. 1567-1200 B.C.), Mt. Carmel is called *Rosh Kadesh*, or the “Holy Cape.” The Bible describes the beauty and fertility of Mount Carmel as the “majesty of Carmel” and compares its fertility to Lebanon, Bashan, Gilead, and the Plain of Sharon (Isa. 35:2; Jer. 50:19). The monastery of Elijah overlooks the western section of the **Jezreel Valley** (upper left). Mt. Carmel is the traditional site of Elijah’s contest with the priests of Baal, where “the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering,” and the people cried, “The Lord, he is God.” After the contest, Elijah brought the priests of Baal “down to the brook Kishon [in the valley], and killed them there” (1 Kgs. 18:38-40).



Mount Carmel and Jezreel Valley

The **Jezreel Valley** has been the focus of many conflicts. It has been called the battlefield of nations, and prophets predicted that it would be the place where nations would assemble for the final conflict taking place at the coming of the Messiah, “at the place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon” (Rev. 16:14-21). **Megiddo** is first mentioned in the annals of Thutmose III, king of Egypt, who defeated a Canaanite coalition here in 1468 B.C. According to Thutmose, “capturing Megiddo is as good as capturing a thousand cities.” The reason was Megiddo’s strategic location at one of the key entrances to the Jezreel Valley. Megiddo was fortified by King Solomon in the 10th century B.C. (1 Kgs. 9:15), and was the site of a battle in which King Josiah was killed by the army of Pharaoh Necho in 609 B.C.



Megiddo and Jezreel Valley

Mount Tabor rises 1,843 feet above sea level and is the highest mountain in Lower Galilee. Because of its height and isolation in the valley, the biblical writers compared Mount Tabor to Mount Carmel (Jer. 46:18) and to Mount Hermon (Ps. 89:12), the two most prominent peaks in the Holy Land. Mount Tabor was the meeting place of the men of Naphtali and Zebulun before their battle with the Canaanites in the valley below. At the start of the battle, “Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army” (Judg. 4:6-14). By capturing the Jezreel Valley, Barak succeeded in uniting the northern and southern tribes of Israel. Mount Tabor is also one of the traditional sites for a “high mountain apart” where Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. On that occasion they heard a voice declare, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matt. 17:5).



Mount Tabor

The Hill of Moreh is where Gideon and 300 men defeated the Midianites. As Gideon’s men descended the hill they cried, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” (Judg. 7:1, 20). They chased the Midianites east toward the Jordan Valley and Gilead (Transjordan). South of the Hill of Moreh was the biblical city of Shunem where the Philistines gathered to fight King Saul whose army was at Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 28:4; 31). Shunem was also the town in which Elisha raised the widow’s son from the dead (2 Kgs. 4:8-37).

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Hill of Moreh

Bible Study - Jezreel Valley

The Jezreel Valley presented a special problem for Israel. Not only was it extremely fertile and important for agriculture, it was also the crossroads of Canaan. When the children of Joseph complained that the hill country was not big enough for them, Joshua responded by suggesting they clear the forest lands of Mount Ephraim. The children of Joseph then revealed what they really wanted, which were the lands of the plain where the Canaanites dwelt with their chariots of iron, “both those in Beit-Shean and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezreel.” Joshua repeated that the children of Joseph would still have to cut down the forests. He also said that after clearing the forests, they

would possess the hill country “to its farthest borders.” This included the valleys, for the Israelites were to “drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong” (Josh. 17:13-18). This incident was only the beginning of problems, as the Jezreel Valley seems to have been in the hands of the Canaanites until the War of Deborah (Judg. 4-5). After that time the tribes of Israel still had to contend with raiding Bedouins such as the Midianites, the Amalekites, and other “people of the east” (Judg. 6:3). Thus the Jezreel Valley was both a blessing and a curse to the children of Israel, depending on their faithfulness to God.

- **Judg. 4-15.** Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites in the Jezreel Valley.
- **Judg. 6.** Gideon and his small army delivered Israel from the Midianites: “For whenever the Israelites put in seed the Midianites and Amalekites and the people of the East would come up and attack them.”
- **1 Sam. 31.** The Philistines gathered in the Jezreel Valley before the battle with King Saul, in which he and his son Jonathan were killed and their bodies hung on the walls of Beit-Shean (see Lower Jordan Valley).
- **1 Kgs. 18:42,46.** Elijah ran through the Jezreel Valley from Mount Carmel to the city of Jezreel.
- **1 Kgs. 21:1-14.** King Ahab had his winter palace in the Jezreel Valley, near the vineyard of “Naboth the Jezreelite.”
- **2 Kgs. 4:8-37.** Elisha often stayed at Shunem, for “whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat.” Here he raised the son of a wealthy woman to life.
- **2 Kgs. 23:29-30; 2 Chron. 35:20-24.** King Josiah of Judah was killed at Megiddo in a battle with the Egyptian army.

LOWER GALILEE

“Galilee of the nations” (Isa. 9:1)

Galilee was a region in northern Palestine that was controlled at different times by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, and Roman Empires. Under the Romans it became a fixed administrative area (ca. 57 B.C.). Herod Antipas, for example, was tetrarch of Galilee after the death of his father, Herod the Great (4 B.C.; see Luke 3:1). Because the Israelites never succeeded in driving out the Canaanites who “dwelt among them” (Judg. 1:30-33), and since Galilee was surrounded by foreign nations whose populations mixed freely with the Jews, this region was called by Isaiah, “Galilee of the nations” (Isa. 9:1). The name “Galilee” comes from the Hebrew *galil* which means a circle. The word “nations” is from the Hebrew *goim*, which can also be translated “in the district (or region) of the gentiles,” reflecting the fact that Galilee often comprised a mixed population of Jews and gentiles.

Galilee is composed of several sub-regions, including Upper Galilee (most of which is in Lebanon today), Lower Galilee, and the Sea of Galilee (see **Sea of Galilee**, p. 11). Upper and Lower Galilee are distinguished by differences in altitude, climate, and vegetation. The mountains of Lower Galilee are less than 2,000 feet high; whereas those of Upper Galilee attain almost twice that height.

Upper Galilee is fragmented into isolated hills and deep valleys. Lower Galilee is more open: the valleys run between and parallel to the mountains, connecting the coast with the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee. Those valley roads carried the commerce and military might of the ancient world, making Lower Galilee a focus of international concern.

According to Josephus (1st century A.D.), “the cities [of Galilee] lie here very thick; and the very many villages ... are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants” (II *Wars* iii.2). The figures provided by Josephus seem high (elsewhere he mentions some 200 towns and villages, making a total of more than 3,000,000 inhabitants in Galilee!), but his description of a highly populated region accords with what is known about Galilee in that period. What was true of Galilee, in general, applied more specifically to Lower Galilee because of its rich soils and abundant rainfall and because there was more level ground. Lower Galilee was one of the favored regions for settlement. Here, also, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity” (Matt. 9:35).

Selected Views of Lower Galilee

The view in this picture looks across an extinct volcano called the “**Horns of Hattin**” where, in 1187 A.D., Saladin handed the Crusaders their final defeat. The narrow valley leading to the **Plain of Gennesaret** (northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee), was also called the “Valley of the Robbers.” Bandits used to plunder caravans as they traveled up and down this strategic pass. Herod the Great (38 B.C.), for example, gathered a force at the village of Arbela to purge Galilee of the “robbers that were in the caves” above the pass (I *Wars* xvi.2-5). This was also the way of the



Horns of Hattin: Descent to Gennesaret

international highway called the *Via Maris*, and the road used by Jesus when he traveled from Nazareth to Capernaum (see **Sea of Galilee**). The Plain of Gennesaret was the place where Jesus and his disciples landed after a severe storm on the lake. As they traveled through the plain on their way to Capernaum, many sick were brought to Jesus, “and as many as touched [his garment] were made well” (Mark 6:53-56).

The **Turan Valley** is just north of the mountains of Nazareth. The valley carried the most important highway through Lower Galilee, connecting the port city of Acco/Ptolemais with the Sea of Galilee and Jordan Valley. According to tradition, the incident of Jesus’ disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath took place in this valley (see Matt. 12:1-8). In the foreground are the ruins of **Sepphoris**, an important city of Lower Galilee. It was located 5 miles northwest of Nazareth. Herod Antipas “built a wall about Sepphoris” and made it the capital of Galilee before he moved the capital to Tiberias (XVIII *Ant.* ii.1). The mostly Jewish population of Sepphoris supported the Romans in the First Jewish Revolt (66-73 A.D.).



Turan Valley: Sepphoris

Cana of Galilee was the home of Nathanael, the same who inquired of Philip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to meet him, he said; “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (John 1:47; 21:2). In this same Cana of Galilee, Jesus performed his first public miracle by changing water into wine at the wedding feast: “And [Jesus] manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him” (John 2:1-11). Later from Cana, Jesus healed the nobleman’s son, who was sick in Capernaum (John 4:46-54). **Kefar Kana**, pictured here,



Cana of Galilee (Kefar Kana)

is 4 miles northeast of Nazareth. A FRANCISCAN CHURCH is built over the spot where it is believed Jesus turned the water into wine. The SAINT NATHANAEEL CHURCH is built where, according to tradition, Nathanael was born. Archaeologists, however, identify Cana of Galilee with Khirbet Qana (not pictured), which is in the Netofa Valley, about 9 miles north of Nazareth (see Holy Land map, p iv).

Nazareth was the home of Joseph and Mary, as well as the town in which Jesus grew up. In his day, it was a small agricultural village with about 2,000 inhabitants. When Philip said to Nathanael, “We have found him, of whom ... the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth,” Nathanael promptly asked of Philip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:45-56). Nazareth itself was small, but its position between two international highways gave it a good view of the ancient world. To the south was the Jezreel Valley where many events from Israelite history took place. Through this valley passed the merchants, as well as the armies of Rome (see p. 10, **Bible Study - Lower Galilee**).



Nazareth and Hill of Moreh

Bible Study - Lower Galilee

Nazareth was the village of Jesus' youth, where "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:51-52). It is significant to note that Nazareth was only 5 miles southeast of the Roman capital of Galilee, Sepphoris, and that Nazareth overlooked the Jezreel Valley. George Adam Smith, in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1894), described Nazareth and its relationship to the valleys around it: "The village lies in the most southern of the ranges of Lower Galilee, and on the edge of this just above the Plain of Esdraelon [Jezreel Valley]. You cannot see the surrounding country, for Nazareth rests in a basin; but the moment you climb to the edge of this,

which is everywhere within the limit of the village boys' playground, what a view you have! ... The pressure and problems of the world outside must have been felt by the youth of Nazareth as by few others; yet the scenes of prophetic missions to it, Elijah's and Elisha's, were also within sight. A vision of the kingdoms of the world was as possible from this village as from the mount of temptation. But the chief lesson which Nazareth teaches is the possibility of a pure home and a spotless youth in [the] face of [an] evil world" (Smith, pp. 282-283). The following passages from the New Testament reflect only a few of the events that took place in Lower Galilee.

- **Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:26-38; Matt. 1:18-25.** Gabriel announced the coming of Christ, who was to be named Jesus.
- **Matt. 2:21-23; Luke 2:1-7.** Mary and Joseph left Nazareth to go to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. After returning from Egypt, Mary and Joseph made Nazareth their home.
- **Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39, 51-52.** Jesus grew up in Nazareth.
- **John 2:1-11.** Jesus' first miracle was performed in Cana of Galilee.
- **Luke 4:16-30.** Jesus gave his first recorded sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth. Not only was he rejected, but the people threatened to take his life by throwing him from the mountain known today as the Mount of Precipitation.
- **John 4:46-54.** From Cana, Jesus healed the nobleman's son, who was in Capernaum.
- **Matt. 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6.** Jesus was rejected a second time in Nazareth, "and he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them."

SEA OF GALILEE

“And great crowds followed him” (Matt. 4:25)

Writing in 1894, George Adam Smith identified seven dominant features of Galilee: (1) a close dependence on Lebanon; (2) an abundance of water; (3) great fertility; (4) volcanic elements such as extinct craters, dikes of basalt, hot springs, and earthquakes; (5) great roads and highways; (6) a large population with busy industries and commerce; and (7) neighboring provinces “pouring upon Galilee the full influence of their Greek life.” Smith concluded: “These seven features of Galilee in general were concentrated upon her Lake and its coasts. The Lake of Galilee was the focus of the whole province” (Smith, p. 284).

Throughout history different names have been used for the Sea of Galilee: The “Sea of Chinneroth” and “Chinnereth” are used in the Old Testament (Josh. 12:3; 13:27); “Water of Gennesar” in the accounts of the Hasmonean revolt (I Macc. 11:67); the “Sea of Galilee,” the “Sea,” the “lake of Gennesaret,” and the “Sea of Tiberias” in the New Testament (see John 6:1; 17:27; Luke 5:1; John 21:1); and the “Lake of Gennesareth” in Josephus’ commentary on the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (III *Wars* x.7). Today in Israel the lake is known as Lake Kinneret. Most of the Christian world, however, still uses the name Sea of Galilee because of its association with the ministry of Jesus.

The warm climate and fertile soil of the plains around the Sea of Galilee nourished a variety of extended-season crops, including tropical varieties such as dates and bananas. Josephus’ description of the plain of Gennesaret included walnuts, fig trees, olives, and grapes. He called the plain “the ambition of nature” (III *Wars* x.8; see Mark 6:53-56).

Domestic and foreign trade were also important to the economy of the lake region. Merchant caravans from all directions passed along the shores of the lake, including some loaded with grain from the Golan region. Thus market day brought villagers from round about to sell their produce in the cities by the lake, all of which contributed to the busy life and economy of the Sea of Galilee. This was the world in which Jesus labored, where “a *great crowd* followed him and *thronged* about him” (Mark 5:24; italics added). In his sermons, Jesus told of the lake, the land around it, the roads, and the people who lived and worked in the area. He used images that the people could relate to, so that the people could more easily understand his message. In this setting Jesus told many of the parables, including the parables of the sower, the wheat and the tares, the grain of mustard seed, the leaven, the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea (see Matt. 13).

Selected Views of the Sea of Galilee Region

The first picture on this page shows the ancient synagogue at **Capernaum**. This particular synagogue was built in the 3rd to 4th century A.D. but reminds us of the synagogue in Capernaum built by the Roman officer for the Jews in Jesus' day (see Luke 7:1-5). Capernaum is located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, about 2.5 miles from the mouth of the Jordan River. It was one of the busiest towns in Galilee and the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Mark 1:21; 3:1; Luke 4:31-38; John 2:11-12). In the Gospels, Capernaum is called "his own city" after Jesus withdrew from Nazareth (Matt. 4:12-17; 9:1). Here in the synagogue of Capernaum, Jesus taught: "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).



Synagogue in Capernaum

Jesus summarized the basic gospel themes in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). The memory of the sermon is preserved in the Church of the Beatitudes, which was built by the Italian architect Antonio Barluzzi on a hill (**Mount of Beatitudes**) overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Church's octagonal shape is symbolic of the eight beatitudes. (The fifth-century pilgrim Aetheria identified a hill near the sea as the traditional place where Jesus did much of his preaching.) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught many lessons, including the one to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). A small cove at the water's edge (not visible) reminds pilgrims of a time when "great crowds gathered around [Jesus], so that he got into a boat" and taught the people who were on the shore (Matt. 13:1-2).



Mount of Beatitudes

Early Christian tradition places the **Multiplication of “loaves and fishes”** near the sea on a spot known in Greek as Heptapegon, “Seven Wells,” which has been shortened to **Tabgha**. When Jesus saw the great multitude that had “followed him on foot out of the towns, he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.” There is an altar inside the CHURCH OF THE MULTIPLICATION OF BREAD, on which Jesus is said to have placed five loaves and two fishes. From these he fed “about five thousand men, beside women and children” (Matt. 14:13-21). Behind the altar of the church is a beautiful mosaic which shows a basket containing four loaves of bread, and two lake fish, one on either side of the basket. A short distance away, by the shore, is the CHURCH OF THE PRIMACY, where, by tradition, Peter received the commission from Jesus; “Feed my lambs ... Feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17).



Tabgha: Multiplication of “loaves and fishes”

The view in the next picture shows the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. In the center of the picture is an isolated hill which slopes toward the lake. This is the site of ancient **Hippus**. In 63 B.C., the Roman general Pompey made Hippus a member of the Decapolis, a district with a mixed population dominated by Greeks. The mountains in this picture marked the start of the Golan Region. The village of **Kursi** was at the point where the road leading up to Golan meets the shore road. According to an early Christian tradition, this was the place where Jesus caused certain demons to enter the bodies of pigs grazing on a nearby hill (see Matt. 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39). A short distance south of Kursi is the only spot along the eastern shore where the mountains reach to the lake. A Byzantine church was built at Kursi in the middle of the 5th century A.D. to identify this spot as the place of the miracle.



Hippus, Kursi: Country of the Gergesenes

Bible Study - Sea of Galilee

The number of towns that flourished around the Sea of Galilee during the 1st century A.D., indicates that this was an important center of the religious, social, political, and commercial life of all Galilee. The names

of the towns include Ammathus, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazim, Gennessaret, Gergesa, Hippus, Magdala, Philoteria, Sennabris, and Tiberias. The excavation of these towns has revealed the prosperity of the region in all periods.

- **Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 2:13-14.** Peter, Andrew, James, and other apostles were called as Jesus walked by the sea: “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”
- **Mark 3:7-12; Luke 5:1-3.** Jesus spoke to the multitudes from a boat, “lest they should crush him; for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him.”
- **Luke 5:4-11; John 21:6-8.** The sea yielded a “great shoal of fish” when Jesus told the disciples to cast their nets into the lake.
- **Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.** Jesus stilled a storm on the Sea of Galilee, showing that he was also master of the elements.
- **Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21.** Jesus walked on the water to his disciples whose “boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the wave; for the wind was against them.”
- **Matt. 13:1-52; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18.** Jesus taught a number of parables from a boat as the people sat on the shore.
- **Matt. 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56.** Many people were healed as Jesus walked along the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, through the Plain of Gennesaret.
- **Mark 14:28; 16:7; John 21:1-23.** After his resurrection, “Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias.”
- **Matt. 8:5-17; 9:1-18, 18-26; 12:9-14; Mark 1:21-34; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5:22-43; Luke 4:31-41; 6:6-11; 5:17-26; 7:1-10; 8:40-56; John 4:46-54.** Jesus healed many people during the years of his Galilean ministry.
- **Matt. 15:1-20; 18:15-35; Mark 2:23-28; 7:1-23; 9:33-50; Luke 6:1-5; John 6:22-71.** Jesus gave many sermons in the synagogue of Capernaum, including one on the “bread of life.”

UPPER JORDAN VALLEY

“A viper by the path” (Gen. 49:17)

The Upper Jordan Valley is approximately 14 miles long and varies in width from 4 to 6 miles. Until the 1950's it contained marsh land and a small lake, created by a dam of natural rock that impeded the flow of the Jordan River. Today, after being drained, the valley is rich in agriculture and very important to the economy of Israel. In ancient times, the Upper Jordan Valley was Israel's northern frontier. It was also a major avenue of communication between Damascus, only 50 miles away, and the region around the Sea of Galilee. From the sea the roads branched south down the Jordan Valley to Jericho or west through Lower Galilee to the coast of Palestine (Acco/Ptolemais). Because of their strategic importance, the cities of the Upper Jordan Valley were the first to be conquered by invading armies who dared not leave “[J]on, Dan, [and] Abel-beth-maachah” to threaten their supply lines (see 1 Kgs. 14:20; 2 Kgs. 15:29; Gen. 49:17).

The sources of the Jordan River spring from the base of Mount Hermon. They include the spring at Caesarea Philippi, where nearby Peter declared to Jesus: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), and the river Dan, which springs from the ground at the ancient site of Dan. These two tributaries join with another stream to form the Jordan River.

East of the Upper Jordan Valley is the Golan region, which was an important granary of the Roman Empire. It was also important because of the highways that crossed it, connecting Damascus with Hazor and the Sea of Galilee, as well as Damascus with Bethshan and the Jezreel Valley. The region surrounding Damascus was known as Aram in the Old Testament. It varied in size according to the strength of the kings who ruled over it. Both in the Septuagint and in many English translations of the Old Testament, Aram is rendered Syria. Syria, however, was also a geographical term which sometimes referred to all the lands of the eastern Mediterranean shore, or the Levant. This entire area was regarded as one geographical unit over which Egypt, the kingdoms of Mesopotamia, and finally Rome sought to impose their authority.

West of the Upper Jordan Valley are the mountains of Upper Galilee, called the “land of Naphtali” in the Bible. Tyre was the main objective of the roads through Upper Galilee, but the main port of Damascus was Acco. The shortest routes to Acco crossed the Upper Jordan Valley before reaching the valleys of Lower Galilee. The Upper Jordan Valley was strategically important to ancient Israel as the meeting place of Phoenicia, Aram, and Israel (see p. 18, **Bible Study**).

Selected Views of the Upper Jordan Valley

Mount Hermon comes into view as you leave the region around the Sea of Galilee and head north. Mount Hermon rises approximately 9,230 feet above sea level. Its majestic, often snow-capped peaks can be seen from many parts of Palestine. During the hot summer months the farmers of Palestine must look longingly toward Mount Hermon. The mountain looks down upon the Old Testament region of Bashan to the south and east, the **Upper Jordan Valley** to the south, and the “valley of Lebanon” (the Beq’a of modern Lebanon) to the west (Josh. 11:17). The water that falls on Mount Hermon in the form of dew, rain, and snow feeds the springs that form the headwaters of the Jordan River. The dew of Mount Hermon was a sign of blessing, even “life for evermore” (Ps. 133:3). In biblical times, Mount Hermon was thickly forested and was the home of lions and leopards (Song. 4:8). The region of Bashan south of Mount Hermon was well-known for its rich pasture lands that supported the “fatlings of Bashan” (Ezek. 39:18).



Mount Hermon and Upper Jordan Valley

Chorazim is located 2 miles north of Capernaum. It was one of the cities reproached by Jesus for its disbelief (Matt. 11:20-24). The excavation of Chorazim uncovered a synagogue of the Galilean type, located in the center of town. It was built of the local black basalt, common to the Galilee and Golan regions, and measures about 70 feet by 50 feet. The entrance to the synagogue faces south towards Jerusalem. The Bible records that “[Jesus] went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people” (Matt. 4:23).



Chorazim (Kh. Kerraza)

Hazor was a large Canaanite and Israelite city. The site consists of the mound (center) and the lower part of the city just north of the mound (upper left). Together they cover about 200 acres. Hazor is mentioned in the Execration Texts and in other early Egyptian documents. The Execration Texts date to the 20th and 19th centuries B.C. and provide the most important information about Palestine from that period. Hazor is also mentioned in the Mari archives, where it appears as a major trade center for merchant caravans traveling to and from Babylon. In the Bible, Hazor is mentioned in connection with the Israelite conquest of northern Canaan and in the story of Deborah and Barak (Josh. 11:10-13; Judg. 4:2). Hazor was also a fortified city of King Solomon (1 Kgs. 9:15). One of the important discoveries at Hazor was its water supply system, which dates to the period of Ahab, king of Israel, or the 9th century B.C.



Hazor (Tell el-Qidah)

Ancient **Caesarea Philippi** was located near one of the main sources of the Jordan River at the foot of Mount Hermon. The original name was Panias, after the Greek god Pan (the modern name Banias is an Arabic corruption of Panias). In 20 B.C., the city was granted to Herod the Great by the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus. Herod built a magnificent temple to Augustus near the grotto of Pan. He also changed the name of the city to Caesarea in honor of Augustus (see Luke 1:1). Herod's son, Philip, enlarged the city and changed the name to Caesarea Philippi, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Peter answered for the disciples, declaring, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:13-20).



Caesarea Philippi: Grotto of Pan

Bible Study - Upper Jordan Valley

The expansionist policies of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria, between 745 and 727 B.C., led to the downfall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He conquered Gilead, the Upper Jordan Valley, and Galilee (see 2 Kgs. 15:29). Not content with taking tribute, the Assyrians absorbed conquered areas by making them provinces of the Assyrian

Empire. This meant the deportation of the upper strata of the population to other areas in the empire. The story of Tiglath-pileser is significant because it points out the strategic importance of the Upper Jordan Valley, which the Assyrians had to conquer before moving against Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom. (See Aharoni, pp. 368-386).

- **Deut. 3:7-9.** Before the Israelite conquest of Canaan, Israel conquered the Amorite territory of Transjordan to Mount Hermon.
- **Deut. 4:47-48; Josh 11:1-3; 12:1-5; 13:5.** Mount Hermon was the northern limit of the territory of Israel.
- **Josh. 11:1-15.** Joshua defeated Jabin, king of Hazor, who came with many kings: “And they came out, with all their troops, a great host, in number like the sand that is upon the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.”
- **Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-31.** The Danites moved into the Upper Jordan Valley and captured Laish, an ancient city less than 3 miles west of Caesarea Philippi. The name was later changed to Dan “after the name of Dan their ancestor.”
- **1 Kgs. 9:15.** Solomon rebuilt the strategically important cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. He also fortified the walls of Jerusalem.
- **2 Kgs. 15:29.** Tiglath-pileser III captured the main cities of both the Upper Jordan Valley and Upper Galilee in 732 B.C. The list of cities includes Ijon, Abel-beth-maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, and “all the land of Naphtali.”
- **Ps. 133:3.** The dew that fell on Mount Hermon was considered a symbol of the Lord’s blessings.
- **Matt. 11:21-22; Luke 10:13-14.** Jesus pronounced a curse upon Chorazin.
- **Matt. 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36.** Mount Hermon is considered one of the traditional sites for the transfiguration of Jesus, which took place on a “high mountain apart.”
- **Matt. 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-9:10; Luke 9:18-36.** Peter confessed that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

LOWER JORDAN VALLEY

“Joshua ... came to the Jordan” (Josh. 3:1)

The Lower Jordan Valley is divided into two zones by a narrowing of the valley approximately 25 miles south of the Sea of Galilee. Here, for nearly 13 miles, the valley is only 2 miles wide. Just north of the narrowing, the Jordan widens to 7 miles where it joins the Beit-Shean Valley (see **Selected Views**, p. 20), but narrows again to 4 miles near the Sea of Galilee. The northern zone receives the most rainfall, and there are many streams and rivers. The most important of these (besides the Jordan itself) are the Yarmuk River and the Harod River, which runs near Beit-Shean.

The valley consists of three types of landscape. First is the valley floor, called the *Ghor* in Arabic. It is bound by the mountains of Gilead and Moab on the east and by those of Samaria and Judah on the west. The fertile land and warm climate make the Ghor a good spot for agriculture. Abraham's nephew Lot looked upon the Jordan Valley and saw that it “was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt” (Gen. 13:10). Egypt depends on the Nile for lucrative irrigative farming. The Jordan, however, runs in too deep a channel to have been exploited by primitive methods of irrigation. Water from the streams and tributaries of the Jordan had to be caught on higher ground and brought to the fields by canals or aqueducts. A desolate slope of eroded ridges and peaks separates the Ghor from

the “jungle of the Jordan,” usually rendered the “Swelling of the Jordan” in the King James Bible. Called the *Zor* in Arabic, the area is about 150 feet below the Ghor and from 200 yards to a mile wide. The Zor contains the Jordan, which meanders for nearly 200 miles between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The direct distance is only 65 miles. In ancient times, the Zor was covered with luxuriant thickets and cane-brakes, and was the home of lions and other wild animals. It was used by the prophets as a symbol of trouble and danger for the children of Israel: “If in a safe land you fall down, how will you do in the jungle of the Jordan?” (see Jer. 12:5; 50:44;

Selected Views, p. 21).

The Lower Jordan Valley was close to the frontier and difficult to defend against desert marauders. These “people of the east” invaded the settled communities when the local authority was not strong enough to control their movement, as did the Midianites in the days of Gideon (see Judg. 6:33). Since there were no bridges in antiquity, only natural fords linked the regions on either side of the valley, which made the valley both a border and a barrier. The valley is also remembered because of its association with four of Israel's greatest prophets: Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ. (See Smith, pp. 315-320).

Selected Views of the Lower Jordan Valley

Twenty miles south of the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordan Valley widens to approximately 7 miles. Here is the Beit-Shean Valley, a well-watered, fertile region of immense strategic importance.

The site of **Beit-Shean** lies in the middle of the valley, approximately 400 feet below sea level. It guarded the eastern entrance to the Jezreel Valley and the main highway that crossed the Jordan at the fords south of the Sea of Galilee. Six Egyptian temples have been discovered at Beit-Shean, ranging from the 14th to the 11th centuries B.C. Beit-Shean is also mentioned in Egyptian



Beit-Shean (Tell el-Husn)

documents from the time of Thutmose III (15th century B.C.) to that of Rameses III (12th century B.C.), which proves that Beit-Shean was an important center of trade and Egyptian rule. During the New Testament period, Beit-Shean (now called **Scythopolis**) was the chief city of the Decapolis, and the only city of the Decapolis west of the Jordan River. The Gospels record that Jesus went through the Decapolis region after he left Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:31) and also that “great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond Jordan”(Matt. 4:25). About 250 yards south of Beit-Shean

is one of the best preserved Roman theaters in Palestine. Elaborately decorated, it had a seating capacity of some 8,000. It is similar to one built by Herod the Great at Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. Much excavation is going on at Beit-Shean today. Several teams are working year round to uncover and then restore significant parts of the ancient site. Today the visitor to Beit-Shean can see public buildings, columns, streets and other ruins from the Roman and Byzantine periods.



Beit-Shean (Scythopolis): Roman Theater

This picture was taken south of Beit-Shean, and just south of the “narrowing” described in the introduction to this region. It shows all the major features of the **Jordan Valley**: the valley floor which is called the *Ghor* in Arabic, the winding Jordan River that flows through the “jungle” or “Swelling of the Jordan” called the *Zor* in Arabic, and the desolate area of eroded ridges and peaks that separates the Ghor from the Zor. The high mountain in the background is the Dome of Gilead, which is divided into halves by the Jabbok River (“half of Gilead” and the “river Jabbok” are mentioned in Josh. 12:2; the river valley of the Jabbok is just outside the upper left hand corner of this picture).



Lower Jordan Valley

The Jabbok was crossed by Jacob and his family on their way to Canaan from Haran (see Gen. 32:22). At this point, the family would have traveled in the valley nearer the foothills of Gilead. They were traveling towards the fords opposite Shechem, which is in the hill country of Samaria (see Gen. 33:17-20).

Old Testament Jericho guarded the back door to the Judaeen Hill Country. It played that role in the Israelite conquest of Canaan and the battle of Jericho (Josh. 2-7). What appears to be the effects of erosion in this picture is the result of three major excavations that began in 1907.

Joshua’s Jericho was probably a small city, with mud brick walls that have long since disintegrated by both wind and rain. The site is 6 miles north of the Dead Sea and 2 miles north of the site of New Testament Jericho. The later city was built up by Herod the Great and was the city Jesus passed through while traveling to and from Jerusalem. The spring of Jericho is in the stand of trees across the road from the mound. These were the waters purified by the prophet Elisha, “so the water has been wholesome to this day” (2 Kgs. 2:13, 19-22).



Old Testament Jericho (Tell es-Sultan)

Bible Study - Lower Jordan Valley

As you travel the Jordan Valley, remember that it was similarly traveled by some of the Bible's leading personalities. These include Abraham and Jacob as they entered Canaan from the east, Joshua and the children of Israel as they crossed the

Jordan, and Jesus with his disciples on their way to Jerusalem. Notice the high range of mountains across the Jordan to the east. These are the regions of Gilead, Ammon, and Moab, which were important in the history of Israel.

- **Josh. 17:11; Judg. 1:27.** Manasseh failed to drive out the inhabitants of Beit-Shean.
- **Josh. 3.** Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.
- **Josh. 5:13-15.** Before the battle of Jericho, the “commander of the army of the Lord” came to Joshua and said: “Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy. And Joshua did so.”
- **Josh. 6.** The Lord was with Joshua in the battle of Jericho, as the city was taken and destroyed by the Israelites.
- **1 Sam. 31:8-13; 2 Sam. 21:12-14.** The bodies of Jonathan and Saul were fastened to the wall of Beit-Shean after they were killed by the Philistines at the foot of Mount Gilboa.
- **2 Kgs. 2:4-20.** After he “took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him,” Elisha purified the waters of Jericho.
- **Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43.** Multitudes followed Jesus as he passed through Jericho on his way to and from Jerusalem.
- **Luke 19:1-9.** Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus as he passed through Jericho. Jesus then said to him: “Today salvation has come to this house.”
- **Gilead, Ammon, and Moab (selected passages)**
- **Deut. 32:48-52; 34:1-8.** Moses saw the promised land from Mount Nebo in Moab.
- **Ruth 1:4.** Ruth came from Moab.
- **1 Sam. 11; 2 Sam. 12:26-31.** The Ammonites were defeated by Saul at Jabesh-gilead, and then by David at Rabbah (modern Amman).
- **1 Kgs. 22:29-40.** The prophet Micaiah foretold the defeat and death of Ahab, king of Israel, in Gilead.
- **2 Kgs. 3.** The kings of Israel and Judah joined forces to defeat the Moabites.

JUDAEAN WILDERNESS

“Who is my neighbor” (Luke 10:29)

West of the Dead Sea is the Judean Wilderness. Not considered a “true desert,” its barren appearance is mainly due to the fact that it is on the lee side of the Judean Mountains, where it receives very little rainfall.* Throughout history the Judean Wilderness has been used by rebels and fugitives as a place of refuge and by others who have retired from the world for religious reasons. After David smote the Philistines and saved the city of Keilah, he “remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand” (1 Sam. 23:14). Ziph was a village south-east of Hebron that gave its name to this section of the Judean Wilderness. Jesus returned to the wilderness for other reasons. At the start of his formal ministry, he came here to fast and pray for “forty days and forty nights.” At the end of the forty days, “the tempter came ... to him” (see Matt. 4:1-11).

The wilderness was a zone of rugged hills and sharp descents that protected the eastern approaches to the Judean Hill Country. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, led an army against the children of Ammon and the children of Moab as

well as others who made a rare attempt to invade the hill country from the east. They came from the Dead Sea region via the pass at Ein-Gedi. Before the battle, Jehoshaphat encouraged his troops with this call: “Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed” (2 Chron. 20:20). The battle ended in a complete victory for the army of Jehoshaphat.

Dead Sea

The Dead Sea is approximately 1300 feet below sea level and is the lowest spot on the earth (above water). The northern bay of the Dead Sea is nearly 1300 feet deep, but the southern end is very shallow. Today the Dead Sea is valued for its potash, which is used in fertilizers and soaps. In ancient times, however, it was valued for its salt and bitumen, which sometimes floated to the surface. The average salt concentration of the Dead Sea is 28-31 percent, or eight times greater than that of the oceans. The biblical name for the Dead Sea was “Salt Sea” (Gen. 14:3). It was also called the “sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea” (Josh. 3:16). The Romans called it *Lacus Asphaltitis* because of its bitumen or asphalt.

* The “lee” side is the side away from the wind. As the moist air coming off the Mediterranean Sea rises against the western side of the central mountain range, it expands and cools, forming droplets of water that fall as rain. As the air descends the eastern side of the central mountain range, the air condenses and warms. Thus, the Judean Wilderness is said to be in the rain-shadow.

Selected Views of the Judean Wilderness and Dead Sea

In 1894, George Adam Smith wrote that “there are few places in the world where the sun beats with so fierce a heat” as in the Dead Sea region (Smith, p. 324). And yet, because of the climate, manuscripts written on parchment and papyrus survived the centuries to be discovered in 1947. They are the Dead Sea Scrolls, on which all but one (Esther) of the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible are represented. **Khirbet Qumran** (center) is 9 miles south of Jericho and less than a mile west of the Dead Sea. The site, also identified with the biblical “City of Salt” (Josh. 15:62), was mainly occupied during the Greco-Roman period (ca. 130 B.C. - 68 A.D.). A number of scrolls were found in caves (lower left) south of Khirbet Qumran. The most important of these was the *complete* scroll of Isaiah, now displayed in the SHRINE OF THE BOOK museum in Jerusalem.



Khirbet Qumran

Across the Jordan from Jericho are the mountains of Moab and the “plains of Moab” (north of the Dead Sea), where the children of Israel pitched their tents “beyond the Jordan at Jericho” (Numb. 22:1). The next picture overlooks the oasis of Jericho and was taken from the **Mount of Temptation**, the traditional “high mountain” from which Satan showed Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them” (Matt. 4:8). These mountain cliffs mark the beginning of the Judean Wilderness, the eastern frontier of Judah. The oasis of Jericho is the green area in the center of the picture. The men of ancient Jericho searched for Joshua’s spies along the road that led from Jericho to “the fords” of the Jordan River (Josh. 2:1-7).



Mount of Temptation and Jericho

The **Monastery of Mar Saba** (bottom center) overlooks the canyon of Hanal Kidron (right center; see John 18:1), approximately 7 miles east of Bethlehem. The Kidron begins a mile north of Jerusalem's Temple Mount and descends through the wilderness over 20 miles to the Dead Sea. Mar Saba was founded by Saint Saba in 483 A.D. and was the center of Palestinian monasticism. The mountain-like appearance of the **Judean Wilderness** is due to the steep descent from the top of the hill country to the Jordan Valley, the low resistance of the chalky soil to erosion, and the relative imperviousness of the bedrock, which turns rainfall into a sudden rush of highly erosive runoff ("Terrors overtake him like a flood; in the night a whirlwind carries him off"; Job 27:20). At the end of the Bar Kochba revolt (131-135 A.D.), the supporters of Bar Kochba hid in caves in the cliffs of the canyons that descend to the **Dead Sea**. Unable to assault the caves directly, the Romans set up camps to prevent the rebels from escaping. Except for a few small settlements and forts, the Judean Wilderness did not have any permanent settlements.



Monastery of Mar Saba, Judean Wilderness, Dead Sea

The **Herodium** was built by Herod the Great on the spot where he overcame his Jewish pursuers, while escaping to Masada at the time of the Parthian invasion in 40 B.C. (I *Wars* xiii.8). By Herod's own order, he was finally buried here amidst great pomp and ceremony (I *Wars* xxxiii.9). The Herodium was one of only three strongholds, including Masada, that remained in Jewish hands just before the siege of Jerusalem in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (70 A.D.). The fortress is 7 miles south of Jerusalem and 2.5 miles southeast of Bethlehem. Its proximity to the birthplace of Jesus reminds us that Herod slew the children in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16).



Herodium Fortress

Bible Study - Judaeen Wilderness

John the Baptist grew up in Judaea, and “was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel” (Luke 1:39, 80). He preached baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John was the one “spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Matt. 3:2). To the Pharisees and Sadducees, John said: “Bear fruit that befits repentance,” reminding them that “God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Matt. 2:8). Later, when Jesus came from Galilee and was baptized by John, they heard “a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matt. 3:17).

The pilgrims who traveled up to Jerusalem from Galilee and Peraea

(“beyond Jordan”) must have been prey for bandits hiding out in the wilderness. The parable of the good Samaritan reflects the kind of calamity that could have happened to anyone of the time. First, a certain man “was going *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers” (emphasis added). Others came that way, including a Priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. Only the Samaritan had compassion on the injured man and took care of him. After all the Samaritan could do, he took the man to an inn and paid for his continued care. After telling this parable, Jesus asked a certain lawyer which “proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” The lawyer answered: “The one who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus admonished the lawyer: “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:25-37).

- **1 Chron. 18:12.** David smote 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt at the southern end of the Dead Sea.
- **2 Kgs. 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:11.** Amaziah, king of Judah, destroyed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.
- **1 Sam. 23:14, 24-25; 25:2-6; 26:2.** David hid from King Saul in the wilderness, in different sections called the wilderness of Ziph and the wilderness of Maon.
- **1 Sam. 23:29; 24.** David found Saul asleep in a cave at Ein-Gedi but spared his life. Saul confessed that David was more righteous than he.
- **2 Chron. 20:1-25.** Jehoshaphat defeated the children of Ammon and Moab.
- **Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.** Jesus fasted and prayed in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights.
- **Luke 10:25-37.** The parable of the good Samaritan.

JERUSALEM (PART 1)

“In Jerusalem will I put my name” (2 Kgs. 21:4)

Jerusalem is located in the Judean Mountains about 2,500 feet above sea level. It is 16 miles due west of the northern end of the Dead Sea and 38 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea. It was formerly called Salem, the city in which Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20). In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul identifies Melchizedek as the “king of Salem, that is, king of peace” (Heb. 7:2). Although Jerusalem is sometimes called the “City of Peace,” more wars probably have been fought at its gates than at those of any other city in the world. Jerusalem has been attacked many times, by Egypt (1 Kgs. 14:25), by Israel after the division of the kingdom (2 Kgs. 14:13), by Syria (2 Kgs. 16:5), by Assyria (2 Kgs. 18-19), and by Babylon (2 Kgs. 24:10; 25). After David captured it from the Jebusites in about 1000 B.C., Jerusalem was also called the “stronghold of Zion” and the “city of David” (2 Sam. 5:6-7). At that time the area of Jerusalem was relatively small. It extended over the eastern hill (south of the Temple Mount), which was between the Kidron Valley on the east and the Tyropoeon Valley on the west. The Kidron divides the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount. The city’s principal water source was the Gihon spring, which was in the Kidron Valley, below and outside the city walls. Solomon expanded the city to the north, constructing a large

platform on which he built “his own house and the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem” (1 Kgs. 3:1). After Solomon, the limits of Jerusalem expanded further to the north and to the west (see the next section on p. 31, which talks about Jerusalem in later periods). King Hezekiah was responsible for bringing the waters of the Gihon spring inside the walls of Jerusalem to the pool of Siloam. (From the New Testament, Siloam is mentioned in the story of the healing of the blind man by Jesus; see John 9:7). He did this to prepare against an attack by the Assyrian army in 701 B.C. (see 2 Kgs. 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:4, 30). After the division of the United Monarchy in the 10th century B.C., Jerusalem remained the capital of the Kingdom of Judah until the city was conquered by the Babylonians in 598 B.C.

Throughout history, Jerusalem has been regarded by all Jews as holy. It was the site of three temples and the place from which the “word of the Lord” would go forth (see Isa. 2:3). The intense feelings that go with the special status of Jerusalem are reflected in this Psalm: “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! ... if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!” (Ps. 137:5-6). Also, this injunction: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!” (Ps. 122:6). Today, Jerusalem is a holy city to the people of three faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Selected Views of Jerusalem and Bethlehem

The pictures on this page show some key sites in and around Jerusalem representing various periods of history. First is the **City of David**, which was located on the hill (center) below the Temple Mount, opposite the village of Silwan (middle right). The end of Hezekiah's tunnel (2 Chron. 32:2-4, 30) and the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7-11) are located at the southern end of the City of David, where the Tyropoeon and Kidron Valleys meet to form a "V" (bottom right). The present day wall of Jerusalem's Old City was built in 1542 A.D., during the reign of Sultan Suleiman. Inside the southern gate, called Dung Gate, is the Western Wall of the Temple Mount built by Herod the Great. The Western Wall is sacred to Jews, because, as part of the original wall surrounding the Temple Mount, it is the closest place to their ancient temple. East of the Temple Mount is the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives (see the next section on Jerusalem, p. 31).



Jerusalem: City of David

The **Temple Mount**, called Mount Moriah in the Bible (2 Chron. 3:1), was the site of the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. It is also a holy place to Moslems, who believe that Mohammed went to heaven from this spot. The Dome of the Rock was built between 687 and 691 A.D. and is decorated with beautiful Persian tiles. To Moslems the world over, it is next to Mecca and Medina in importance. The silver-domed Al-Aqsa mosque was built between 709 and 715 A.D. and can hold about 5,000 worshippers. North of the Temple Mount was Pilate's Judgment Hall where Jesus was condemned (Matt. 27:2-31). This place marks the beginning of the *Via Dolorosa*, the traditional path Jesus took to Calvary.



Temple Mount: Dome of the Rock

The original structure of the **Citadel** (or fortress) in the center of the next picture was built by Herod the Great. It had three towers, which Herod named after his brother, Phasael; his friend, Hippicus; and his wife, Mariamne (Herod had Mariamne executed after he suspected that she was involved in some treachery against him). Some of the original stones used to build the tower named after Phasael can still be seen in the Citadel today. (The walls of the present Citadel were built by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1540 A.D.) Today, there is a magnificent museum inside the Citadel that depicts Jerusalem through the ages. To the left (north) of the Citadel is **Jaffa Gate**, where the road from Jerusalem to the port of Jaffa on the Mediterranean Sea begins.



Citadel and Jaffa Gate

It has been said that the name **“Bethlehem”** stirs the heart of every Christian throughout the world. Micah prophesied that it would be the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth: “But you, O Beth-lehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel” (Micah 5:2). We also remember the stories of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 2-4) and of David protecting his father’s flocks from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:34-35). But it is the image of “shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock” that at Christmas time works its magic, and of an angel standing above the shepherds saying: “For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:8-12). The site of the manger is said to be in a cave below the **Church of the Nativity**, which dates to the 6th century A.D. The original church was constructed by Constantine (ca. 326 A.D.) after the site was identified by his mother Helena.



Bethlehem: Church of the Nativity

Bible Study - Jerusalem (Old Testament Period)

Higher ground surrounded David's City on every side. This fact was used by the Psalmist to show how God will sustain his people when they follow him: "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,

so the Lord is round about his people, from this time forth and for evermore" (Ps. 125:1-2).

The following biblical passages outline some of the highlights in the history of Jerusalem during the period of the Old Testament.

- **Gen. 22:1-2.** Abraham was commanded by God to bring his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice.
- **2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Chron. 21:15, 18, 28; 22:1; 2 Chron. 3:1.** The location of Mount Moriah was identified with the area of the Temple Mount.
- **Josh. 10:1-7.** Joshua defeated Jerusalem's king, along with the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Debir.
- **2 Sam. 5:6-16; 1 Chron. 11:4-7.** David captured the Jebusite city, called Jebus, and made it his capital.
- **2 Sam. 6:1-2; 1 Chron. 13-16.** David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.
- **1 Kgs. 6-9.** A description of Solomon's building projects in Jerusalem, including the temple and his own palace.
- **1 Kgs. 14:25-28.** Shishak, king of Egypt, invaded the Holy City.
- **2 Chron. 26:9-15.** Uzziah, king of Judah, strengthened Jerusalem.
- **2 Kgs. 18:13-37; Isa. 36-39; 2 Kgs. 25; 2 Chron. 12, 25, 36; Jer. 39, 52.** Although Jerusalem was saved from Assyria, it suffered through many wars.
- **2 Kgs. 24:25; 2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 39:9-14.** Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, captured Jerusalem in 598 B.C. and took many of its inhabitants to Babylon.
- **2 Kgs. 25:8-9.** Nebuchadnezzar burned the Temple of Solomon.
- **Isa. 35; 40; 43:1-21; 52.** Isaiah foretold the return of the Jews to Jerusalem.
- **Neh. 2:4-20; 6:15-16.** Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem after the Jews returned from Babylonia.
- **Ezra 3:8-13; 4:23-24; 5:15; 6:15-18; Haggai.** Jews built the temple of Zerubbabel after the Babylonian captivity.

JERUSALEM (PART 2)

“Let us go to the house of the Lord” (Ps. 122:1)

In 538 B.C., after the fall of Babylon, Cyrus, king of Persia, allowed the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1). About a century later, Nehemiah, a Jew who held the office of “cupbearer” at the court of Artaxerxes, received a royal commission authorizing him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2-6). From that time throughout the Hellenistic period (333-63 B.C.), Jerusalem grew in importance as the political and religious center of the Jews. As the population grew, the city began spreading over the western hill (area between the Tyropoeon and Hinnom Valleys). Eventually, a wall was built that encircled the entire area call the upper city. In the years after the Romans conquered Jerusalem (63 B.C.), the city was completely transformed. This was mostly the result of the building program of Herod the Great, who was appointed king of Judaea in 40 B.C. Herod strengthened the existing walls and built a second wall to include more of the area west of the Temple Mount. Herod also fortified the citadel north of the Temple Mount that he renamed Antonia after Mark Antony. Flagstones dating to the time of the Roman emperor Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) can still be seen in the area of

the Antonia, as well as the symbols of a game that were scratched in the surface of some of the flagstones. It has been suggested that this same game may have been played in an earlier period, with Jesus as the object of the game (see Matt. 27:27-30). Herod also built a beautiful palace in Jerusalem. Attached to this palace in the north was a citadel with three large towers (see **Selected Views**, p. 29). Herod’s greatest project, however, was the rebuilding of the temple. Certain Jews hinted at the splendor of the temple when they said to Jesus: “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But, referring to his own resurrection, Jesus “spoke of the temple of his body” (John 2:20-21).

After Herod’s death in 4 B.C., his kingdom was divided among three of his sons: Archaelaus, Herod Philip, and Herod Antipas. Judaea (including Jerusalem) was given to Archaelaus, who was deposed by Augustus after a reign of only 9 years (see Matt. 2:22-23). From then on, Judaea was attached to the Roman province of Syria and became subject to a Roman governor. The corrupt Pontius Pilate was governor at the time of Jesus’ trial and crucifixion (Matt. 27).*

* During Pilate’s harsh administration (26-36 A.D.), “relations between the Romans and the Jews deteriorated considerably . . . We are told that Pilate was widely disliked, that he was influenced by bribery, and that he angered the Jews by his extortions and frequent executions without trial.” M. Stern, in *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 7, p. 128.

Sacred sites around Jerusalem: The “Passion Week” of Christ

The last week of Jesus’ life is called the “Passion Week” or “Week of Atonement.” It began Sunday with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On Monday, Jesus entered the temple and cleared it of “all who sold and bought in the temple” (Matt. 21:12). The best record of what Jesus said and taught that week, including many parables, is from Tuesday. There is no record of



Mount Zion

what took place on Wednesday. Thursday began with preparations for the Passover; it ended with Jesus’ prayer and his agony in Gethsemane. On Friday Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and led to Golgotha where he was crucified and then buried in the tomb of “a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus” (Matt. 27:57). Below are some of the sacred sites around Jerusalem that had a part in the “Passion Week” of Christ.

Bethany

Bethany was about 2 miles east of Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29; John 11:18). Bethany seems to have been a favorite place of Jesus where he visited his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8). Here, Jesus taught Martha the better way and raised Lazarus from the dead (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-44). Visiting in the home of Simon the Leper, Mary anointed

Jesus with oil for his “burial” (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Jesus also began his triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Bethany (Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-38).

Lazarus’ Tomb

The present-day village of Bethany is called El-Eizariya, which is the Arabic form of *Lazarion*, the 4th century A.D. name of Bethany as well as the name of the church that was built here. A new church was built in the 1950s. There are numerous rock-cut tombs in the area, but one impressive tomb with a vestibule and vaulted inner chamber is thought to be the tomb of Lazarus.

Mount Zion

Many Christians believe that the upper room of the Last Supper was located on the traditional site of Mount Zion, located outside the southwest corner of the present “old city” wall. In the upper room, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and commanded that they

love one another. He also spoke of many mansions, and said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father, but by me" (John 13: 14:2-6). After Jesus and the disciples had sung a hymn, they "went out to the Mount of Olives ... to a place called Gethsemane" (Matt. 26:30, 36).



Mount of Olives

Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives was the place of many biblical events and has a prominent place in the prophesied events of the last days. Here, the Messiah will return, and "on that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14:4-5). On the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, where the road from Jericho ended, lay Bethphage, the traditional starting point of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40), and Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1). On the western side of the Mount of Olives was the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed before he was taken to Pilate (Matt. 26:39). The domed Chapel of Ascension on top of the Mount of Olives is the traditional spot from which Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-12).

Palm Sunday, or the Sunday before Easter, marks the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when "most of the crowd spread their garments on the road," saying, "Hosanna to the Son of

David! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:8-9). As Jesus walked between Jerusalem and Bethany during the last week of his life, he instructed the disciples. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus discoursed on the signs of the second coming (Matt. 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 12:37-48; 17:20-37; 21:5-38) and gave the parable of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:1-46).

Garden of Gethsemane

On the night that Judas betrayed Jesus, the Master "went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered ... for Jesus often met there with his disciples" (John 18:1-2). The garden, called Gethsemane, was opposite the city on the Mount of Olives (the traditional spot is in the compound of the CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS today). The name Gethsemane means "oil press" and suggests that Gethsemane was in or near a grove of olive trees (Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39). "It was a small

property enclosed, ‘a garden’ in the Eastern sense ... amidst a variety of fruit trees and flowering shrubs” (Edersheim, p. 533). Botanists claim that some of the olive trees in the traditional site of the Garden of Gethsemane, pictured here, are actually 3,000 years old. Somewhere near this spot Jesus prayed for all mankind, subjecting his will to the will of his Father: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” After this, Jesus returned to his disciples, saying, “Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” After Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, Jesus was taken to “Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered” (Matt. 26:36-57).



Garden of Gethsemane

Palace of Caiaphas

South of the Old City wall, on the eastern slope of a hill that overlooks the area of Old Testament Jerusalem, is the **Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu**. The church was built in 1931 and is the traditional site of the Palace of Caiaphas, who was the high priest in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. Under the church is a cave thought to be where Jesus was detained by the chief priests. Here they “struck him; and some slapped him, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?’” In this setting outside the palace, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times: “And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, ‘Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly” (Matt. 26:57-75).



St. Peter's Church (Palace of Caiaphas)

Calvary and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea

Jesus was next taken before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Here, Jesus was accused by the priests of “forbidding [the people] to give tribute to Caesar.” He was

condemned, scourged, had a crown of thorns placed on his head, and delivered into the hands of the chief priests “to be crucified” (Luke 23:2; John 19:1-16). North of Damascus gate is a hill and a rock-cut Jewish tomb called the **Garden Tomb**. The tomb was made with two chambers: a vestibule for relatives who came to mourn for the dead, and a second chamber where the corpse was laid. The tomb is thought to have



Garden Tomb

belonged to Joseph of Arimathaea, who “wrapped [the body of Jesus] in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb.” The next day the tomb was sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees, fearing that Jesus’ disciples would steal the body “and tell the people, He has risen from the dead” (Matt. 27:58-66). On the first day of the week “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre ... [and an] angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said’” (Matt. 28:1-6).

Via Dolorosa means “way of sorrow.” It is the traditional pathway Jesus took from the “hall of judgment” to Calvary. In Catholic tradition, there are 14 stations of the cross that indicate where something happened to Jesus on the **Via Dolorosa**, or “way of the cross.” The last stations are in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, marking the place where many Christians believe Jesus was crucified and died on



Church of the Holy Sepulchre

the cross, and where he was laid in a tomb and then resurrected (Matt. 27:57-61; 28:1-10; John 19:38-20:31).

Bible Study - Jerusalem (New Testament Period)

Looking out over Jerusalem from the heights of the temple, Jesus was overcome with emotion knowing that the city would soon be destroyed: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under

her wings, and you would not!” (Matt. 23:37). Then as Jesus withdrew from the temple area for the last time, the disciples called his attention to the magnificent buildings. Jesus’ response was to foretell the doom of Jerusalem, prophesying “there will not be left here one stone upon another” (Matt. 24:1-2).

- **Luke 2:22-39.** Jesus came to Jerusalem as a baby, to be circumcised and to receive his name.
- **Luke 2:41-50.** Mary and Joseph “went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.” At age 12, Jesus was found “in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”
- **Matt. 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-25.** On two occasions, Jesus drove the money changers away from the temple grounds.
- **Mark 12; Luke 19:47; John 7:14-53; 8.** Jesus performed miracles and taught the people of Jerusalem.
- **Matt. 21.** Jesus rode in triumph into Jerusalem and gave the parable of the two sons and the wicked husbandmen.
- **Matt. 22:1-14.** Jesus gave the parable of the marriage of the king’s son.
- **Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-38.** Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple.
- **Matt. 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-49; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:1-13.** Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, was betrayed, and arrested.
- **Matt. 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-37.** Jesus was crucified to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).
- **Matt. 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:41-42.** Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
- **Matt. 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18.** Jesus was resurrected.
- **Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18.** The resurrected Christ was seen by Mary Magdalene.
- **Luke 24:12; John 20:4.** Peter and John raced to the garden to discover the empty tomb.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

The following chart provides a brief outline of the major periods of occupation of the Land of the Bible. It is included for orientation purposes only and is not meant to be an exact statement on the dates of the various periods in the history of the land.

Old Testament Period

- 2,000 B.C. - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
- 1,650 B.C. - Israel in Egypt
- 1,280 B.C. - Exodus from Egypt
 - Israel enters Promised Land
- 1,200 B.C. - Period of the Judges
- 1,020 B.C. - Saul, David, Solomon
- 950 B.C. - Divided Monarchy
- 721 B.C. - Exile Northern Kingdom
- 586 B.C. - Exile Southern Kingdom
- 539 B.C. - Return of the Jews

Inter-Testamental Period

- 330 B.C. - Alexander the Great
- 301-200 B.C. - Ptolemaic Era
- 200-135 B.C. - Seleucid Era
 - (164 B.C. - Hasmonaean Revolt)
- 135-63 B.C. - Jewish independence
- 63 B.C. - Romans conquer Palestine

New Testament to Modern Period

- 37-4 B.C. - Herod the Great
 - 4 B.C. - Birth of Christ
- 4 B.C.-6 A.D. - Archelaus (Matt. 2:22)
- 4 B.C.-34 A.D. - Herod Philip (Mark 6:17)
- 4 B.C.-37 A.D. - Herod Antipas (Luke 13:32)
 - 6-41 A.D. - Roman governors
 - (26-36 A.D. - Pontias Pilate)
 - 41-44 A.D. - King Agrippa I
 - 44-66 A.D. - Roman procurators
 - 66-74 A.D. - First Jewish Revolt
 - (70 A.D. - Jerusalem Falls to Romans)
 - 325 A.D. - Christianity proclaimed the Religion of the Empire
- 325-638 A.D. - Byzantine Period
- 638-1099 A.D. - Muslim Period
- 1099-1250 A.D. - Crusader Period
- 1250-1517 A.D. - Mameluke Period
- 1517-1917 A.D. - Ottoman Turkish Period
- 1917-1947 A.D. - British Mandate Period
- 1948 A.D. - Israel Independence

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