

The Land and the Bible

A Historical Geographical Companion to the
Satellite Bible Atlas

Version 5, September 2013

by
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שְׁמַעוּ אֵלַי יְדַעֵי צְדָק עִם תּוֹרָתִי בְּלִבָּם
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ישעיה נ"א: 7-8

Unless indicated as the author's translation –

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References appear as in-text parenthesis, e.g. (Merrill 25), indicating the name of the author (or title) and page number of the work cited. In-text references appearing in *The Land and the Bible* are as follows:

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Note to Students:

The *The Land and the Bible* and its companion, the *Satellite Bible Atlas* are works in progress. Students using these versions should be aware of the following:

Fuller Commentary

The Land and the Bible is a more in depth commentary compared to the shorter, edited commentary that appears opposite each map in the *Satellite Bible Atlas*. Students preparing for the semester program in Israel must read the *The Land and the Bible* commentary.

Bible Reading

As you read through the *The Land and the Bible* you will be instructed to READ biblical passages. The importance of this Bible reading cannot be over-emphasized. *The Land and the Bible* commentary and *Satellite Bible Atlas* are only tools to enable one to know the Bible better. Take advantage of this opportunity of seeing the biblical events marked out on the map to read the description of the event from the Bible. Biblical references for each mapped event are also found in *Satellite Bible Atlas*.

Mistakes

There are mistakes of omission and commission in both *The Land and the Bible* and the *Satellite Bible Atlas*. The hope is to reduce these mistakes in future versions.

Chronology

The *Satellite Bible Atlas* takes a conservative view of biblical chronology, accepting chronological numbers given in the Bible at face value. Various other methodologies and dates have been proposed in association with biblical chronology, including the view that Abraham, Moses, Joshua or David never existed. For more detailed discussion of biblical chronology as presented in the *Satellite Bible Atlas*, see Eugene Merrill's *Kingdom of Priests* (Baker Books, 2008). Dates for Egyptian pharaohs follow the "high chronology" of the *Cambridge Ancient History*.

Orientation

Maps are north oriented; however, several of the maps are positioned so that viewing with north orientation requires rotating the book 90 degrees clockwise (e.g., Map 2-1).

Section 1 Regional Maps

The *SBA* has no written commentary for the Regional Geographical Maps, Section 1. Instead, there is video commentary for these maps on YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/user/SatelliteBibleAtlas>. These Regional Maps can be referred to for more detailed geographical views. For instance, Map 5-3 marks out the battle between David and Goliath, but does not give an up-close geographical view of the location. For an up-close view, consult Regional Map 1-11. These Regional Maps will be used extensively in Israel study programs. There is also no commentary for Sections 11 & 12, Jerusalem and Modern History.

Numbering System

Boxed numbers on the maps are keyed to paragraph numbers in the commentary.

Where to Begin?

After viewing YouTube commentaries on the website above, begin reading the commentary in the *Satellite Bible Atlas* for Map 1-17, Archaeology. Then come back to *The Land and the Bible* and begin reading the commentary for Map 2-1, Origin of the Patriarchs.

"Go and walk through the land and describe it."

Joshua 18:8

Date: c. 2100-1950 BC

The Bible is a record of the Divine touching the mundane, of the transcendent God's involvement with man's world. The Bible is a record of events that happened to real people at real places on our real earth. Unlike other religious writings which focus on theological platitudes and instructions, the Bible is in the main a record of historical events that can be marked on a map. The Bible makes hundreds, even thousands of references to geographical locations. The geographical *detail* in Scripture is itself evidence that the recorded event involved real people at real places. The biblical narrative is insistent that the events described happened on our real earth – the very earth that today NASA can take photos of from outer space.

The God of the Bible is known by His association with a particular real people (Jews) and real geographical places. Ultimately it is through this real people (Jesus was a Jew) and at a real place (Jerusalem) where God broke the power of sin and death for mankind – the definitive involvement of the Divine with the mundane.

The FERTILE CRESCENT: MESOPOTAMIA and the LEVANT

The Fertile Crescent, where civilization began, is the crescent-shaped area bound on the north by the Taurus, Kurdistan and Zagros Mountains, on the south by the Arabian/Syrian Desert, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. The Fertile Crescent is made up of two parts: Mesopotamia and the Levant. Mesopotamia is a Greek word meaning "between the rivers" Euphrates and Tigris. Mesopotamia extends from the Persian Gulf to the Taurus Mountains. Levant, a French word derived from *lever* ("to raise"), refers to the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, including the modern countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. The Levant features mountain ranges that run north-south, parallel to the Mediterranean coast. In Lebanon, some of the mountains are over 10,000 feet. Find Mesopotamia and the Levant on the map. Also note the Sinai Peninsula and Nile River in Egypt on the lower left.

CANAAN-ISRAEL: A LAND BETWEEN CONTINENTS

God said by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel "This is Jerusalem, I have placed her in the center of the nations, with countries round about her" (Ezek. 5:5). Although Canaan-Israel is a narrow strip of land - from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River is 45 miles - it sits at the center of three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. Canaan-Israel has great importance as a land-bridge between these three continents, particularly between the two most ancient cradles of civilization – the Mesopotamia and Nile River basins. The deserts to the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, force travel between Mesopotamia and Egypt through Canaan-Israel. Because of its geo-political importance as a commercial and military hub connecting continents, Canaan-Israel has historically been coveted by empires in Asia, Africa and Europe. The Sovereign God has chosen this land at the "center of the nations" to work His purposes for mankind.

ABRAHAM'S FAMILY HISTORY – BIBLICAL, REDEMPTIVE HISTORY

"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods' (Joshua 24:2).

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you...'" (Genesis 12:1).

From the Book of Genesis chapter 12 to the Book of Acts in the New Testament, the Bible traces the history of one family – the patriarch of that family is Abraham, the Hebrew, whose physical

descendants became known as the nation of Israel. As God prepared a land, so He also chose a people, Abraham's descendants, through which He would work to all of mankind's benefit. Abraham's family story, biblical history, is a "theological treatise whose purpose is to show that God the Creator will, through an elect nation Israel, sovereignly achieve his creative and redemptive purposes for all humankind" (Merrill 25, Gen. 22:18, John 4:22-26, Gal. 3:16). God's plan of blessing for mankind through Abraham and his descendants culminates in the descendant of Abraham, Jesus the Messiah.

According to the New Testament, Gentiles can be adopted into the family of Abraham (Rom. 4:16). Through Abraham "*all the nations* are blessed" (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, Gal. 3:6-9). Thus for a Gentile who is a child of Abraham by faith, Abraham's family history becomes "my family history". Like the Jew, the Gentile finds his roots and identity in Abraham's family story, i.e., biblical history.

TERAH and ABRAM MOVE from UR to HARAN, Genesis 11:24-32

Two locations, one southern and one northern, have been suggested for the city "Ur of the Chaldeans" from which Terah and his son Abram migrated. Since the late 1800s, the Ur of Abram's migration has been identified with the famous Sumerian capital of Ur (Mugayir), situated near the Euphrates River about halfway (150 miles) between the city of Babylon and the Persian Gulf. The other possibility is that Ur of the Chaldeans was much further north in the Fertile Crescent at Urhai (Edessa) near the city of Haran.

In favor of a northern Ur, the appellation "**of the Chaldeans**" in the biblical description suggests an effort to differentiate between biblical Ur and the famous Ur southeast of Babylon. Also, Terah had two other sons besides Abram: Nahor and Haran. Haran died in Ur of the Chaldees and Nahor apparently remained in Ur when Terah and Abram departed for Haran (Gen. 11:29-32). If Nahor stayed in Ur, then Ur should be sought in a northern location since the area where Nahor lived is a northern region called Aram Naharaim ("Aram of the Rivers"; Gen. 24:4, 10; 25:20). Linguistic parallels between Hebrew and the languages of other northwestern Mesopotamia sites (Mari, Ebla, Ugarit) may favor a northern Ur.

In any case, both the "southern (Sumerian) Ur" and the "northern Ur" region near Haran were developed civilizations in Abram's days, and both were centers of the worship of the mood-god, Sin. Terah and his family were involved with this idolatrous worship (Josh. 24:2). Terah took his son Abram and grandson Lot and left Ur of the Chaldeans. They came as far as the city of **Haran** and settled there.

ABRAM MOVES from HARAN to CANAAN, Genesis 12:1-6

God intervened in man's affairs by choosing one man, Abram. While Abram was in Haran, Yahweh told him to leave his country and relatives, and go to another land. Yahweh would bless Abram and all the families of the earth through him. Abram's obedience is evidence of his abandonment of idolatrous worship for belief in the One God, Yahweh. Abram left Haran and moved to the Land of Canaan when he was 75 years old. When he arrived at **Shechem** in the Hill Country of Canaan, the Lord promised Abram that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan. The relationship of the *people* of Israel (Abraham's descendants) with the *land* of Israel would demonstrate to the world the transcendent sovereignty of the one true God.

Review Questions

1. What is a major difference between the Bible and other religious writings?
2. What three continents intersect at the Promised Land?

Map 2-2 The Patriarchs: Abraham and Isaac

Date: c. 2100-1950 BC

"Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him. And I blessed him and multiplied him" (Isaiah 51:2, author's translation).

Correlation of Biblical History to Geography

The biblical record insists that God has worked in the lives of real people and that these people lived in the same realm of *time and space* that we do. The close relationship of biblical *history* (time) to physical *geography* (space) is evidence that biblical faith is founded not on myth but on historical reality. Biblical events from Abraham to Jesus can be marked out on a map, often in fine detail. This is evidence that the events actually happened. Map 2-2 marks out some events of the life of Abraham and his son Isaac in the land of Canaan.

Hill Country Geography

Much of the lives of the patriarchs in the Promised Land were lived out in the **Hill Country**, and in the **Negev**, the dry plains south of the Hill Country. The Hill Country is the mountainous range that extends from the Jezreel Valley in the north to the Negev in the south, a distance of some 75 miles. It rises up to heights of 2400-3300 feet, separating the Coastal Plain from the Rift Valley. Hill Country elevation and difficult terrain add to a sense of isolation and protection from surrounding regions.

While shepherding exists on the eastern and southern sides of the Hill Country, the backbone of Hill Country economy is agriculture. Trees are especially important: vines, figs, olives, and many other fruits. Most of the terrain is too steep or rocky for grains.

The Watershed Route – The Way of the Patriarchs

Travel in the Hill Country is on ridges – i.e., not in the deep canyons that drain to the east and west. There is only one north-south route in the Hill Country. It ran along the watershed on the top of the ridge. Note the main cities in patriarchal narratives along the watershed route: **Shechem, Bethel, Luz, Ai, Salem, Mamre, Kiriath-Arba, and Beersheba**. All of these cities, except Beersheba, are along the hill country watershed or ridge route. Because of the frequent travels of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph on this route, the road is called the **Way of the Patriarchs**. Find this route on the map, already highlighted in yellow.

1. ABRAM: Genesis 12:1-7

Follow the *blue arrow* from the Jordan Valley via Wadi Far'a to **Shechem**. "**Wadi**" in Arabic, "**Nahal**" in Hebrew, means a canyon or narrow valley. These words are used frequently in this historical-geographical study. We do not know exactly how Abram came into the Land of **Canaan** from Haran, but we suggest he came from Gilead via the Wadi Far'a. The first time God promised the Land of Canaan to Abram's offspring (Hebrew "seed") was at **Shechem**.

And Abram passed through the land as far as the site of **Shechem**, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him (Genesis 12:6-7).

With this promise, God put His name on the line in a practical, observable, facts-on-the-ground way. Have Abraham's descendants inherited the land? Has God shown himself to be God? Considering the relationship of Abraham's descendants with the Promised Land at various times in history (e.g., the Conquest under Joshua), the biblical answer to the question is a resounding Yes!

ABRAM TO AND FROM EGYPT, READ: GENESIS 12:1-20

Abram's journey south from **Shechem** took him along the Hill Country watershed route, the **Way of the Patriarchs**. Abram pitched his tent on a hill between **Bethel** and **Ai**, built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. Then he moved further south along the watershed route, past Hebron, into the region called the **NEGEV**, which means south and dry. Because of a famine he moved to **Egypt** and there gained wealth (12:16).

Abram's deception in Egypt involving Sarah was a mistake, a lack of faith. The lesson was a hard one to learn, as Abram and his son Isaac found themselves again in similar circumstances later (Gen. 20 & 26). Immediately following God's promise concerning his descendants, Abram should have trusted that God would protect him and his wife without the human manipulations or scheming. His scheming only put him into a situation that he couldn't get himself out of. As Israel would later learn, God would not relinquish the promise because of their failure. Divine protection is further evidence that Abram's (Israel's) God is God.

2. **LOT**: Note the *orange arrow* from Ai toward **Jericho** and the **Dead Sea**.
READ: GENESIS 13:1-18

Abram came out of Egypt to the **Negev**, and then returned into the Hill Country near **Bethel-Ai**, where he and Lot separated. Lot went to the **Jordan Valley** as far as **Sodom**, probably located on the south side of the Dead Sea (see #5 below). Following Lot's separation, God reiterated and expanded on His promise to Abram,

... for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you. Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD. (Genesis 13:14-18).

The relationship between God, Abraham and Abraham's descendants involves an association to the land of Canaan. Abram's altar building, at Shechem, Bethel-Ai, and now here in Hebron, confirm his faith in God's promise and anticipate the inheritance of the land in Joshua's day.

3. **CONQUEST BY MESOPOTAMIAN KINGS, READ: GENESIS 14**

A powerful coalition of Mesopotamian kings conquered the Transjordan tribes of the **REPHAIM**, **ZUZIM**, **EMIM**, and **HORITES**, and southwestern Canaan (*black arrows* and *red confrontation markers*, cf. Deuteronomy 2:9-12). This conquest led to a revolt, but eventual subjugation of local kings on the south side of the Dead Sea (the Valley of Siddim), including **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**. Abram was in a tent in **Hebron** when he learned that along with the spoils of **Sodom**, his nephew **Lot** had been captured. With only 318 men, Abram pursued and defeated the Mesopotamian armies north of Damascus. Abram knew, like his descendants Gideon (Judges 7:7) and Jonathan, that "the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6). God gave Abram (and would give Israel) victory over enemies who plundered the Promised Land.

After he returned from defeating the Mesopotamian kings, Abram met Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness". Melchizedek was king of **Salem** (probably Jerusalem, but some suggest Shechem, cf. Genesis 33:18), and priest of God Most High. Abram new his enrichment would not be by the spoils of Sodom but from God. He refused even a shoelace from Sodom's material wealth. Abram did give Melchizedek a tenth of what he had.

4. **SODOM & GOMORRAH:** The *orange arrow* from **Mamre** toward **Zoar**.

You may want to read the intervening events in the life of Abraham which occurred between his battle with the Mesopotamian kings and the destruction of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**. These events include:

- Genesis 15 – The ceremony confirming God’s promise to Abram of a physical heir and a multitude of descendants to inherit the Land. Yet, Abram's descendants were to be sojourners in a foreign land for 400 years, and experience affliction. It would take faith to wait for God promises; but faith was what God was looking for, and faith made Abram acceptable to God.
- Genesis 16 – Sarai and Abram’s faith faltered, and tried to help God. Their efforts only complicated matters. Faith should have made them call out to God. The boy Ishmael (“God hears”) would be a continual reminder of their failure. God heard the cry of the cast-away Hagar/Ishmael.
- Genesis 17 – When Abram was 99 years old, God promised that he would be **the father of a multitude of nations**. Abraham worshiped in laughter/joy, a play on the name Isaac. Kings would descend from him and Sarah, a promise fulfilled in David and ultimately in Jesus the Messiah (Genesis 17:6, 16; Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:32-33). Abram's name was changed to Abraham; Sarai's name was changed to Sarah.

READ: GENESIS 18 and 19 - Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

Abraham was visited by three men at **Hebron** (Alonei Mamre). These "men" reiterated to the 99-year-old Abraham and 90-year-old Sarah that they would have a son. Sarah “laughed” in disbelief, but learned that nothing is impossible with God. On the heels of this promise to the righteous comes an account of the destruction of the wicked. **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** were somewhere in the **Dead Sea** region. There are at least two problems with locating these cities: 1) there appears to have been significant geological/geographical changes to the region associated with the divine destruction (Gen. 13:10); and, 2) the divine destruction probably didn’t leave much of the cities to be found. Those who posit a northern location place Sodom and Gomorrah in the region of the “Plain (*kikkar*, כִּכְרָר) of the Jordan” (Gen 13:10). However, Genesis 13:11-12 implies passage of time in which Lot moved around. That Lot “pitched his tent *as far as* Sodom” suggests a geographical separation from the “*Kikkar* of the Jordan”. The same verb is used in the passage to describe the movement of Abram of some 30 miles (Gen. 13:18). Abram was in the Bethel area but then “pitched his tent” in Hebron. Likewise Lot went first into the “*Kikkar* of the Jordan” but moved (pitched his tent) as far as Sodom.

Also, the word *kikkar* may be used to refer to other parts of the Rift Valley in general, especially when not accompanied by the appellation “of the Jordan” (Gen. 19:17, 28; 2 Sam. 18:23). That is, *kikkar* is not used exclusively to refer to the plain on the northeast side of the Dead Sea. Even the “*Kikkar* of the Jordan” extends as far north as Sukkoth (1 Kings 7:46).

A recent suggestion places Sodom north of the Dead Sea at Tel el-Hammam. In addition to the textual considerations outlined above, there are severe chronological and archaeological problems with this suggestion. Also, Tel el-Hammam is most likely biblical Abel-shittim (cf. Maps 1-14 and 3-5) where Israel camped before crossing the Jordan to conquer Canaan (Num. 25:1, Josh. 2:1). It is very unlikely that what was once Sodom would become the Israelite Abel-shittim.

Locating Sodom and Gomorrah in the southern region of the Dead Sea fits better the post-destruction environment and geographical location described by the prophets (Deut. 29:23, Isa. 13:19-20, 15:5, Jer. 48:34, 49:18, 50:40; Zeph. 2:9) and a later battle between Judah and Edom at the site of Zair (from the same Hebrew word as Zoar to which lot fled, cf. Map 6-4, 2 Kings 8:21).

The cities of the plain were destroyed with fire and brimstone from above, apparently in combination with geological cataclysms from below. The Hebrew text describes the cities as being "turned upside down" (Genesis 19:25). Recent excavations in the region have revealed Canaanite urban sites (e.g., Tel el-Hammam in the north, Bab edh-Dhra in the south), which some have identified with Sodom or one of the five cities of the plain (Genesis 14:2); however, it is unlikely that any of these ruins are **Sodom** or **Gomorrah**. More likely is that these ruins represent peripheral cities, perhaps one was **Zoar**, which were spared the divine judgment. Their abandonment may well be connected to **Sodom** and **Gomorrah's** destruction (Merrill 56).

It wasn't easy separating Lot, his wife and two daughters from the world of Sodom. The angels had to take them by the hand and drag them out. Lot and his family fled to **Zoar**, a small city in the plain spared destruction. Zoar, which Lot apparently named (formerly called Bela, Gen. 14:2), must have been on the east side of the Rift Valley since this is where his descendants, the **Moabites** and the **Ammonites**, settled (the origin of these nations shows that Sodom still clung to Lot and his daughters). Lot's wife hesitated, and was probably covered with brackish material coming from either above or below. Jesus admonished his followers to "remember Lot's wife" and not cling to the luxuries or enticements of this world (Luke 17:32).

The New Testament book of Jude (6-7) relates that **Sodom** and **Gomorrah's** destruction is an example for "the judgment of the great day." Jesus said that because of unbelief some await a punishment worse than that of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** (Matthew 10:14-15; 11:24).

5. **SOJOURN AT GERAR, and HAGAR**

READ: GENESIS 20-21

Abraham sojourned in Gerar. Abraham failed again to trust God. God intervened again to preserve the purity of marriage and the purity of His promise. God providentially protects His people and His promise. Isaac may have been born here - it happened as God had said.

The **orange arrow** from **Gerar** toward Egypt marks the expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar into the **Wilderness of Beersheba**. Ishmael, the son of flesh, of man's efforts, mocked and persecuted Isaac, the son of the promise (Gal. 4:23-26). Separation was necessary to protect the son of promise. Abraham can make a treaty and live in peace with those who acknowledge God's blessing, shown by the treaty with the King of Gerar at **Beersheba** (The Well of Seven/Oath).

6. **OFFERING OF ISAAC: the red arrow from Beersheba to Jerusalem.**

READ: GENESIS 22

God told Abraham to go to the land of **Moriah** and offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham set out from **Beersheba**, and after three days came to **Moriah** (**red arrow** from **Beersheba** to **Jerusalem**). **Moriah** is the mountain in Jerusalem where eventually the temple was built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 3:1).

This was the greatest trial that Abraham had to endure: God demanded that he sacrifice his son. According to the author of the Book of Hebrews, the difficulty for Abraham was in reconciling the apparently contradictory revelations made to him by God:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19).

God had promised numerous descendants through Isaac; yet now God called on Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. How then could the promise be fulfilled? Abraham figured that God would keep his promise through resurrection. He considered that God would raise the dead.

Abraham's faith in God's promise and power *looked beyond death*. Death would not frustrate God's promises or plans. In fact, Abraham knew that God's promises were to find their completion beyond death, in the next age:

For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God... All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth (Hebrews 11:10, 13).

READ: GENESIS 25:9-10

Abraham died and was buried in the tomb at **Machpelah**, a cave at **Mamre-Hebron** which he had purchased to bury his wife Sarah. Although God promised all the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, it appears that Abraham in this life owned only a plot of ground for burial. Abraham believed that God would fulfill His promises to him through resurrection from the dead. Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were all eventually buried in this same tomb (Genesis 23:19; 49:29-31; 50:13).

READ: GENESIS 26, concerning the famine in the land in the days of Isaac, his plan to go to Egypt, his sojourn in **Gerar**, reaping 100 fold, and the reconfirmation of the treaty at **Beersheba**.

Isaac's experience illustrates the uncertain nature of the region called the **Negev** in which the patriarchs spent much of their lives. Life in the **Negev** was precarious because of the uncertain nature of its climate and politics.

Climate in the Negev:

The **Negev**, which means south and dry, is a flat basin made up of wind-blown soil, called loess. It stretches from **Gerar** in the west to beyond **Beersheba** and **Arad** in the east. Yearly rainfall fluctuates but an average of only 10-14 inches falls annually. While some years produce an abundant crop, other years can produce little to nothing. All the patriarchs experienced famine and had to move because of famine.

Politics in the Negev:

Since it is relatively flat and lower in elevation than the **Hill Country** to its north and the rocky **Wilderness Highlands** to its south, the **Negev** is a convenient route. The route runs east-west from **Gaza** on the **Mediterranean Sea** to the southern part of the Dead Sea and beyond to **Transjordan**. Historically the region suffered from raiders who coveted control of these routes (2 Chronicles 28:18; Obadiah 19) or the booty of the **Negev** cities (1 Samuel 30:1).

The climatic and political uncertainties in the **Biblical Negev** combine to make it a region where "maybe you can make it and maybe you cannot". It was a place where one learned to depend on God. In his book *The Land Between*, Jim Monson calls the Land of Israel a *testing ground of faith* (Monson 14). The **Negev** especially was a testing ground, where one had to learn that neither famine nor sword separates from the love of God (Romans 8:35).

READ: ROMANS 4, essential commentary on Abraham and his relationship to God.

REVIEW, Map 2-2

1. Be aware of events associated with the following site locations in the lives of Abraham, Lot and Isaac:
 - **Shechem**

- **Bethel-Ai**
- **Moriah**
- **Machpelah**

2. Be familiar with and able to locate the following geographical features and regions:
 - **The Hill Country**
 - **The Way of the Patriarchs**
 - **Negev**
 - **Transjordan**
3. Be familiar with how the conquest of Transjordan and southeastern Canaan by a coalition of **Mesopotamian kings** relates to Lot and Abraham.
4. Be familiar with the lessons of faith learned by and from the patriarchs, including trusting God in this life but looking beyond death for the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises.

Map 2-3 Jacob and Joseph

Date: c. 1930-1876 BC

1. **JACOB DEPARTS TO ARAM. Genesis 27-28.** The *orange arrow* from **Beersheba** to **Bethel**, and from **Bethel** past **Shechem** northward marks Jacob's flight to Paddan-Aram. The ruse of Jacob and his mother Rebekah, and Isaac's blessing of Jacob, occurred in the **Beersheba** region (Genesis 28:10). In fear for his life and in search of a wife, Jacob departed on the **Road of the Patriarchs** toward Paddan-Aram. Traveling along the central mountain ridge road, he stopped for the night and in a dream saw a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending on it. Then the Lord made a promise to Jacob of descendants, a territory, and blessings upon nations through him, like the promises the Lord had made to Abraham and Isaac before (Genesis 28:13-14; 22:17-18; 26:3-4). Jacob called the place **Bethel**, "House of God." Jacob's grandfather Abram had called on the Lord in the same location (Genesis 12:8).

In Paddan-Aram (in modern Syria), Jacob served his uncle Laban for 20 years (Genesis 29-30). He was fooled by a sibling switch just like he had fooled his father. Eventually his family and possessions multiplied, as he returned to the Promised Land with two wives, two concubines, twelve children and a host of livestock.

2. **JACOB RETURNS. Genesis 31:17 - 33:19.** Note the *blue arrow* through **Gilead** to **Mahanaim-Penuel**. Note the **Jabbok River**, which splits the Hills of **Gilead** in two. The *blue arrow* continues from **Penuel** to **Succoth**, via Wadi Far'a to **Shechem**, and from **Shechem** to **Bethlehem** Ephrata and **Hebron**.

Jacob fled from Laban, through **Gilead**. Laban caught up with him, and they formed a treaty which related to both the regional name **Gilead** (Gal-ed, heap of witness) and the site name **Mizpeh** (watch post) (Genesis 31:46-50). It is our persuasion that Jacob swung south along the **Jabbok River** and forded the river at the twin hills/ruins of Tulul Dahab (Hills of Gold). The **Jabbok River** runs between these two ruins. Jacob saw angels of God at **Mahanaim** (Camps) on the south of the Jabbok. Here he got word that his brother Esau was coming with four hundred men (*red arrow* from Dead Sea to **Succoth**). Jacob thought Esau was coming to oppose his return to the Promised Land, so he sent out gifts in droves in an effort to appease Esau.

That night Jacob forded the **Jabbok River**, sending his family ahead (Genesis 32:22-23). Jacob remained alone, and a "man" met him and wrestled with him until daybreak. Earlier Jacob had lied to his father Isaac about his identity but here there is no deceit. Jacob was blessed with a new name, Israel. The event appears to be a type of conversion experience for Jacob, as he who had been called Jacob (supplanter) is now called Israel (rule with God, or God rules). His descendants will be known by this name. Jacob named the place where this all happened **Peniel/Penuel**, the face of God (Genesis 32:31).

By the time Israel/Jacob met his brother Esau, something had changed in both of the brothers' hearts. They had been at odds but were now at peace, and Esau as well benefited from God's blessing on Jacob (Genesis 33:11). Esau returned to **Mt. Seir**, where his descendants would eventually establish the kingdom of **Edom**. Jacob stayed at **Succoth**, where he built a house for himself and booths for his livestock. Jacob's sojourn here gave the name to the site, as **Succoth** means "booths" (Genesis 33:17).

Jacob moved from **Succoth** to **Shechem** in the Hill Country of the Promised Land. We can be quite certain of the route Jacob used. A side fault of the Jordan Rift called **Wadi Far'a** reaches

from the Jordan Rift into the hills near **Tirzah** and **Shechem**. Much of the fault is a wide, fertile valley, and provides a convenient route into the Canaanite Hill Country eventually known as Samaria. However, at one spot the valley is pinched by hills to its north and south, making the valley not more than 50 yards wide. Those who travel the route in the valley here can be confident that they have walked where Jacob walked. This important route was also used in later periods of biblical history (1 Kings 12:25).

Jacob stayed in Shechem for an uncertain length of time. He purchased land here (Gen. 33:19; Josh. 24:32; John 4:5-6) but eventually moved because of an incident involving his daughter Dinah and sons Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34). He returned to **Bethel**, where God reconfirmed His covenant with him (Gen. 35:9-15). On the way to Ephrath/**Bethlehem**, Rachel died giving birth to her son Benjamin. The traditional location of Rachel's burial is near Bethlehem of Judah. However, the biblical record indicates that Rachel was buried in the territory of Benjamin, north of Jerusalem (1 Sam. 10:2, Jer. 31:15). The Ephrath/Bethlehem associated with Rachel's burial must be the Bethlehem of Benjamin, not Judah (Gen 35:21; Ezra 2:21). Linguistically, the name Ephrath is preserved at the Parat/Pharathon spring, which Jacob may have been heading toward to avoid Canaanite cities and to water his flocks. A black point on the map suggests a location of Rachel's burial. Tombs from the Canaanite period were found here, still known as "the tombs of the sons of Israel."

After burying Rachel, Jacob continued on his north to south journey along the watershed in the Hill Country. He passed by **Migdal Eder** (Jerusalem; Gen. 35:21; cf. Mic. 4:8) which is additional confirmation that Rachel was buried in territory that eventually was allotted to Benjamin. Jacob returned to his father Isaac at **Mamre-Hebron** where Isaac died and was buried (Gen. 35:27-29).

3. **JOSEPH TO EGYPT:** the *green arrow* from **Beth Shan** to **Dothan** and from **Dothan** along coast toward Egypt.

READ: GENESIS 37, Joseph sold as a slave into Egypt.

Jacob's sons were shepherding near **Shechem**. From **Hebron**, Jacob sent Joseph to bring news of his brothers and the flocks (Genesis 37:14). Joseph would have traveled from **Hebron** to **Shechem** on the Central Ridge Route (the Road of the Patriarchs). From **Shechem** Joseph was directed north to **Dothan**, where his brothers saw him coming and carried out their scheme to get rid of him. The city of **Dothan** is situated in the Hill Country of Samaria, near a fertile plain. Joseph was sold to Ishmaelite traders who would have descended to the coastal plain and traveled to Egypt on the coastal road past the cities of **Aphék** and **Gaza**. This road is called the **International Coastal Highway** and also the **Way of the Sea**.

4. **ISRAEL & FAMILY TO EGYPT:** The *brown arrow* from **Hebron** to **Beersheba**, toward Egypt off the map.

READ: GENESIS 45:25 - 46:7

In Egypt, Joseph went from being a slave to vice-premier (Genesis 39-45). Because of famine in Canaan, Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt seeking food. Jacob/Israel heard that his son Joseph was not only still alive, but ruled over all the land of Egypt. On his journey to Egypt, Israel stopped at **Beersheba**, where God reaffirmed promises to Israel. The year that Israel went down to Egypt was 1876 BC (Merrill 31, 49-55). Israel and his descendants settled in the Land of Goshen in the eastern Nile Delta. During the next 430 years in Goshen, the tribe of Israel became a nation (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:40-41).

Note the parallel between Joseph and Jesus the Messiah. Both were mistreated by their brethren but God worked good from the situation: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).

REVIEW, Map 2-3

1. Be familiar with these site locations and events associated with each location in the lives of Jacob and Joseph:
 - a. **Beersheba** – site of Jacob's ruse and Isaac's blessings.
 - b. **Bethel** – where Jacob saw in a dream a ladder with angels ascending and descending.
 - c. **Paddan Aram** – Jacob served his uncle Laban for twenty years, and married Leah and Rachel.
 - d. **Mizpeh** – in Gilead where Laban and Jacob made a treaty.
 - e. **Mahanaim, Penuel** – the ford of the Jabbok River where Jacob/Israel wrestled with a "man."
 - f. **Shechem** – Jacob purchased land but moved after the incident involving his daughter Dinah.
 - g. **Mamre-Hebron** – Isaac was buried. Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers.
 - h. **Dothan** – Joseph's brothers threw him into a cistern and sold him to Ishmaelite traders.
 - i. **Beersheba** – God reaffirmed His promises to Israel as Israel made his way to Egypt.

2. Be familiar with the following geographical and regional names:
 - a. **The Road of the Patriarchs**
 - b. **Gilead**
 - c. **Jabbok River**
 - d. **Wadi Far'a route**
 - e. **Mt. Seir-Edom**
 - f. **The Way of the Sea – International Coastal Highway**

2-4 Thutmose III: Egyptian 18th Dynasty in Canaan

Date: c. 1480 BC

Note the dating terminology which parallels these early periods of biblical history:

2200-1550 BC: *The Middle Bronze (Canaanite) Age*: the Age of the Patriarchs and sojourn in Egypt. The Middle Kingdom and Hyksos Periods in Egypt.

1550-1200 BC: *The Late Bronze (Canaanite) Age*: The New Kingdom in Egypt (18th and 19th Dynasties). The age of the Exodus from Egypt, Conquest of Canaan, and early Judges.

It appears that Joseph served in the court of a Pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom (Merrill: 49-55). The Bible is silent from the death of Joseph until the birth of Moses, a time span of nearly 300 years (1806-1526 BC). During this period Egypt was conquered and dominated by the Hyksos, a foreign (non-Egyptian), Asiatic-West Semitic people. It was not until the rise of the New Kingdom in Egypt, the 18th and 19th Dynasties, that Egypt successfully evicted the Semitic Hyksos around 1560 BC.

1. **HYKSOS BATTLE, c. 1560 BC** – The *orange arrow* on SW corner of map pointing at **Sharuhén**. Amosis I, the founder of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt, is credited with expelling the Hyksos from Egypt. Amosis completed a three year stand-off siege at Sharuhén, and then apparently turned his forces southward to secure Lower Nubia (ANET 233-234). There is no evidence that Amosis' Egyptian forces continued further north into Canaan, which some claim would make him responsible for the destruction of significant Middle Bronze (MB) Age cities in Canaan around 1550 BC – a sort of reprisal raid against the Hyksos. On the contrary, many MB fortifications must have persisted into the Late Bronze Age; therefore, where evidence of destruction of any MB city exists, historical reasons for the destruction should be sought elsewhere in the LB Age (Bimson 1981, 124-126). The issue becomes important when considering what types of city fortifications the Israelites encountered in Canaan (Numbers 13:28).
2. **THUTMOSE III, c. 1480 BC.**

The Great International Highway

The campaign of Pharaoh Thutmose III in c. 1480 BC is a good illustration of the Great International Highway that connects Egypt to Mesopotamia. The importance of this highway can not be overemphasized, as it is *the land bridge* between the continents of Europe and Asia to Africa. We can understand key features and points along this Great International Highway by following the *black arrows* of Thutmose III's campaign (ANET 234-244).

Coastal Plain

The Great International Route avoids the difficult terrain of the Hill Country and travels along the Coastal Plain. The Coastal Plain, with few barriers, offers freewheeling travel. Thutmose took the coastal city **Gaza**, and moved north to consolidate a strategic triangle of cities: **Lod**, **Joppa** and **Aphek**. Joppa is an important port along an otherwise razor's edge coastline not conducive for ports or seafaring. The Yarkon River, which flows from Aphek to the Mediterranean Sea near Joppa, creates a barrier to travel. All traffic is forced inland, and is absorbed by Aphek, situated along a seam between the Coast and Hill Country. Aphek functions as a strategic choke-point along the International Route. Thutmose also sieged **Gezer and Rabbah**, sites which guarded the main route from the Coastal Plain into the Hill Country toward Jerusalem.

Mount Carmel Passes

From Aphek the Great International Route continues north along the **Sharon Plain** to **Socoh**, **Yaham** and **Gath**, all situated near the base of **Mt. Carmel**. Mt. Carmel (elevation 1400-1800 feet) is a formidable barrier for travel on the Great International Route, blocking passage to the hub of all international routes in the region, the **Jezeel Valley**. However, three passes through Mt. Carmel link the Sharon Plain to the Jezreel Valley. These are 1) the **Jokneam** Pass, 2) the **Megiddo-Aruna** Pass, and 3) the **Dothan** Pass. These valley passes will be studied in detail on Map 2-5. Note how Megiddo sits as a sentinel guarding the central pass through the Mt. Carmel range.

The Jezreel Valley, Hub of International Routes

The **Jezeel Valley** is a wide, flat, triangular-shaped plain. Each of its sides is about 20 miles long. It is only 200 feet above sea level and is one of the region's agricultural breadbaskets. The low, flat Jezreel Valley divides the central mountains of the Promised Land, separating mountainous Judea-Samaria on the south from Galilee to the north. As such the Jezreel Valley is a hub of routes, where, as we will see, much biblical history took place. Events unfold here in the lives of Joshua, Deborah, Barak, Saul, Elisha, Ahab, Josiah, Jesus, and others. So much history occurred here since the international routes, avoiding the higher mountainous terrain, run in and out of the Jezreel Valley. George Adam Smith, a 19th century Scottish theologian and geographer whose book *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* went through numerous printings, described how the routes in and out of the Jezreel Valley are

passes to the sea and to the desert – gates on the great road between the empires of Euphrates and Nile, between continents of Asia and Africa... a vast theater with its clearly-defined stage, with its proper exits and entrances...(Smith 1894, 254)

The **black arrows** of Thutmose III's campaign illustrate these entrances and exits to the Jezreel Valley. From near Megiddo, one route travels along the foot of Mt. Carmel to the northwest, reaching to **Acco** and beyond on the Mediterranean coast. Another route travels in a southeast extension of the Jezreel Valley, called the Harod Valley, toward **Beth-shan** and beyond to Gilead in Transjordan. A third, and perhaps most important branch of the Great International Highway travels northeast toward the **Sea of Galilee**, then north past **Hazor** and **Laish**, off the map into **Lebanon**, **Syria**, and beyond. Thutmose traveled on this route to reach his main competitor at the time, the kingdom of Mitanni, off our map in northern Mesopotamia.

We return to the Jezreel Valley to emphasize the importance of the site of **Megiddo**. The strategic position of Megiddo stems from the land's geography. Megiddo guards the Great International route, astride a pass through Mt. Carmel that connects the Jezreel Valley to the Sharon Plain. Archaeological evidence at Megiddo attests to its importance from the earliest Canaanite periods through to the Roman period. The site's military significance is reflected by reference to it as a gathering point of armies in the Book of Revelation, as Armageddon means "Hill of Megiddo" (Revelation 16:16).

Pharaoh Amenhotep II

Pharaoh Amenhotep II, son of Thutmose III, recorded two campaigns into Canaan. Sites he mentioned are shown ***underlined in yellow***.

The two Pharaohs shown on this map, **Thutmose III and Amenhotep II**, although not mentioned by name in the Bible, **may be the pharaohs associated with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt**. If one combines the chronological data as presented in the Bible with secular Egyptian history, Thutmose III was the Pharaoh from whom Moses, when he was 40 years old,

fled into the wilderness of Midian (Exodus 2:15, 23). Pharaoh Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh at the time of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt (Merrill 57-64).

REVIEW, Map 2-4.

1. The Late Bronze Period (1550-1200 BC) parallels the New Kingdom in Egypt (18th-19th dynasties). New Kingdom pharaohs were successful in expelling the Hyksos rulers from Egypt.
2. The path of the Great International Highway through the Land of Canaan (Israel) is illustrated by the campaigns of Pharaoh Thutmose III.
3. The city of Megiddo sits as a sentinel along the Great International Route, guarding a valley pass that connects the Sharon Plain to the Jezreel Valley.
4. The Jezreel Valley is an important hub for routes in and out of the Land of Israel.
5. A conservative calculation of biblical and Egyptian chronology suggests Pharaoh Thutmose III was the pharaoh from whom Moses fled, and that Thutmose's son, Amenhotep II, was the pharaoh at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 2:15, 23).

2-5 Thutmose's III Conquest of Megiddo (detail)

Date: c. 1480 BC

1. This map is a detail of Thutmose III's conquest of Megiddo, an event which illustrates well the interrelationship between geography and history. The geographical layout of the land was instrumental in forming the historical event. There were geographical reasons for how, why and where things happened. In this case we are dealing with an event not related in the Bible; however, the same will hold true for biblical events. The biblical historical events are intimately associated with their geographical context – and, further, the geographical context – still available to us today – is evidence that the biblical event occurred.
2. Find the **Mt. Carmel Range** on Map 2-5. Mt. Carmel is not just one peak, but is a range of mountains which extends some 30 miles from near **Dothan** in Samaria to the **Mediterranean Sea** (almost the entire area from the upper right to the lower left corner of this map). The modern city of Haifa clings to the slopes of Mt. Carmel where it juts down into the Mediterranean.
3. We have labeled the three Carmel Passes of the Great International Route from the right edge of page near Yaham to 1) **Dothan and Gina**, 2) **Aruna and Megiddo**, and 3) **Jokneam**.
 - a. As noted on Map 2-4, the elevation of the **Mt. Carmel Range** (1400-1800 feet) is a barrier to travel along the **Great International Route** between the **Jezreel Valley** and the **Sharon Plain**. The routes maneuver through the Mt. Carmel range via three passes, formed by valleys which are lower in elevation than the surrounding hills.
 - b. The first of the Carmel Passes is geographically different from the other two. It goes from near **Yaham** in the **Sharon Plain**, climbs a ridge until it comes to a broad valley near **Dothan**, and then descends into the **Jezreel Valley** near **Ibleam-Gina**. We call this the **Dothan Pass**. Probably the Ishmaelite traders who bought Joseph traveled on this route as they headed for Egypt (see Map 2-3).
 - c. The other two Carmel Passes, 1) the **Aruna-Megiddo Pass**, and 2) the **Jokneam Pass**, are relatively narrow valleys created in the faulting and folding of the Carmel Range. While harder limestone was pushed up, softer chalk was exposed and eroded away, creating these valley-lanes through the mountains. The geological formation has created the historical significance of a site like Megiddo. Find and follow both the **Aruna-Megiddo Pass** and the **Jokneam Pass** on Map 2-5.
4. On Map 2-4 we noted the geo-political significance of **Megiddo** – how the city sits as a sentinel on the Great International route, guarding the pass between the **Jezreel Valley** and the **Coastal Plain**. For good reason the Canaanites opposing Thutmose III had gathered their forces at Megiddo. They knew if they could stop Thutmose here, he would not be able to continue his expedition any further north.
5. **WAR COUNCIL TO DECIDE ATTACK ROUTE**, the *green arrow* from the right edge of page to **Yaham** and *green box* around Yaham.

Thutmose effectively fought along the Coast and then paused to gather his advisors at **Yaham**. Here he needed to decide which of the three Carmel Passes to use to reach the Jezreel Valley. Scouts reported that the **Aruna-Megiddo Pass** was much too narrow, that Egyptian forces could only pass through single file and therefore would be picked off one by one. Pharaoh's advisors advocated taking either the Dothan Pass or the Jokneam Pass:

...two other roads are here. One of the roads is to the east of us, so that it comes out by Taanach. The other - behold is to the north side...and we will come out to the north side of Megiddo. Let our victorious lord proceed on whichever of these you desire, but do not make us go on that difficult road!
(ANET 235)

However, Thutmose disregarded his advisors and sent only decoy troops on the Dothan and Jokneam Passes to occupy the Canaanite forces (*orange underline* at **Taanach** and **Jokneam**). Then Thutmose boasts that he himself went at the head of his army through the narrow Megiddo-Aruna Pass into the Jezreel Valley, successfully attacking the Canaanite forces in the valley (*orange arrows* from **Jokneam** and **Taanach**) and then arraying his forces against **Megiddo**. In preparation for the assault on the fortified city of Megiddo, Thutmose gave a pep talk to his army:

...the capturing of Megiddo is the capturing of a thousand towns! Capture it! Capture it!

A *thousand towns* may be an exaggeration. But Thutmose III knew Megiddo's importance astride the Mt. Carmel Pass of the Great International Route. After a description of his army's encirclement and siege of Megiddo, Thutmose gives a long list of booty and prisoners he took from the captured city (ANET 236-237).

REVIEW, Map 2-5:

1. The Carmel Passes are links on the Great International Highway between the Jezreel Valley and the Coastal (Sharon) Plain.
2. Thutmose III's campaign against Megiddo is a good illustration of the association of geography to history.
3. Recall that Thutmose III may be the pharaoh from whom Moses fled to Midian (see Map 2-4, Exodus 2:15, 23).
4. Consider why the Hill of Megiddo (Armageddon) would be a reasonable place for armies to gather (Revelation 16:16)?

Introduction to Section 3

by Todd Bolen

One of the most debated issues in biblical studies today is the origin of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. The biblical account is straightforward, describing a series of military campaigns led by Joshua over a period of about seven years. Several passages in Scripture indicate that this invasion took place around 1400 BC (1 Kings 6:1; Judges 11:26; 1 Chronicles 6:33-36).

Scholars in the 20th century proposed a number of alternate theories to explain Israel's presence in the land. Because the archaeological evidence from this period is very limited, the major proposals differ even with each other on the most central questions. For example, the two predominant liberal theories disagree on whether the Israelites were outsiders or indigenous. In addition, these theories are at odds as to whether this event was primarily peaceful or violent.

The “peaceful immigration” theory emphasizes the elements in the biblical narrative that suggest that the Israelites came to Canaan from outside the land, but in contrast to the biblical stories, it supposes that Israel's entrance was without major military offensives. The “peasant revolt” theory takes the opposite approach, suggesting that the takeover was violent, but that it was done by a people group already living in Canaan. These people were allegedly oppressed by the Canaanite rulers and upon their successful rebellion, they organized themselves into a tribal alliance that worshipped a single deity.

Besides the debate over the nature of Israel's entrance into Canaan, questions have been raised about the date of this event. Since little archaeological evidence exists that confirms the presence of the Israelites in 1400 BC, scholars have suggested that Israel appeared only in the 1200s or 1100s BC. The discovery of hundreds of small agricultural villages throughout the hill country is generally regarded to be connected to the Israelites and dated to about 1200 BC. Destruction levels found in tells throughout Canaan during the centuries before and after 1200 BC are often tied to the Israelite entrance. The biblical record, however, stresses the lack of destruction of the Canaanite cities during Joshua's invasion, and the archaeological evidence around 1200 BC is best understood as reflecting the period of the Judges and not the arrival of Israel.

The fact that these contradictory theories continue to gain adherents indicates the ambiguous nature of the evidence. The markings of the maps in this section reflect the historical record concerning Israel's entrance into the land given in the book of Joshua. While various points in this record have been challenged, there is no compelling textual or archaeological evidence to deny its essential historicity.

Following Israel's exodus from Egypt and covenant ceremony with Yahweh at Mt. Sinai, the twelve tribes journeyed to Kadesh Barnea in preparation for taking the “Promised Land.” The fearsome nature of the inhabitants of Canaan, confirmed by archaeological investigation, terrified the Israelite spies. The Lord, however, regarded their fear as a failure to believe in his ability and condemned the faithless adults to death during forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Map 3-2). At the end of this period, Moses led the new generation around Edom, Moab and Ammon in order to invade Canaan from the east.

The intention of Moses apparently had been to lead the Israelites through Transjordan without conquering any of it. The Amorite king Sihon was unwilling to grant the Israelites passage and instead marched out to battle, resulting in the destruction of his army and the capture of his cities (Map 3-2). The king of the land to the north, Og of Bashan, was similarly defeated, and the land east of the Jordan River was granted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and part of Manasseh (Numbers

21, 32). Shortly after this, Moses delivered the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy and died on Mount Nebo.

The assignment of Moses' successor was to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and against the armies that inhabited the land God had promised to Abraham's descendants. The city of Jericho guarded the passes into central Canaan and was the object of Joshua's first campaign (Map 3-5). The biblical record describes a complete destruction of Jericho enabled by divine intervention (Joshua 6). Archaeologists who suggested that there was no evidence at Jericho for the attack of Joshua contributed to the development of alternate theories described above. More recent study indicates that the archaeology of Jericho bears witness to the story given in the Bible.

The foothold of the Israelites in central Canaan was to be achieved with the securing of Ai, but the sin of Achan resulted in initial defeat for Joshua's men (Joshua 7). Following repentance and development of a new strategy, the Israelites took the city in a plan involving deception and ambush (Joshua 8; Map 3-5). Archaeologists have suggested that the detailed narrative in the Bible was fabricated by a later writer because no evidence for a city has been found at the site believed to be Ai. More recently, some scholars are investigating the possibility that Ai in Joshua's time was located at another nearby location.

The "southern campaign" started as the result of Joshua's defense of a Canaanite people who had tricked the Israelites into making a treaty (Joshua 9). Alarmed at the idea that the Israelites could have a partner in his neighborhood, the king of Jerusalem led a coalition of southern Canaanite armies against Gibeon (Joshua 10). Joshua's men marched all night to defend the Gibeonites, and the Canaanite forces fled before them. Again, the biblical narrative gives detailed geographical information of the battle account, and this is marked out on Map 3-6.

The final all-nation campaign was fought in the north against an army "as numerous as the sands on the seashore" (Joshua 11:4). Jabin, the king of Hazor, gathered the rulers from the entire northern region of Canaan to battle against Israel (Map 3-7). This time Scripture hides any miraculous elements behind the phrase, "the Lord gave them into the hands of Israel." This battle must have exceeded in scope and intensity the conflicts in the south where the miracles were described explicitly. Yet to be accomplished was the allotment of the land to the twelve tribes, and the subjugation of the "land that yet remains." These events are described and marked in Section 4.

Date: 1446 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exod. 20:2-3).

The Significance of Exodus

The Exodus from slavery in Egypt and formation of a covenant with Yahweh on Mt. Sinai are two of the most significant events in the history of Israel. These events defined who the Israelites were, and defined their covenant relationship to Yahweh. The Exodus and Sinai events were to be remembered continually, and recalled especially in the celebration of the festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. These momentous events are referred to over and over again in both the Old and New Testaments, and are a paradigm for the great redemption wrought by God through the Messiah, Jesus (Luke 22:19; Heb. 12:18-24).

Nile Delta

Israel sojourned and multiplied in Goshen in the East Nile Delta (Gen. 47:6, 27). The city of Rameses (Tell ed-Daba, called Avaris in the Hyksos Period) was in this region (Gen. 47:11, Exod. 1:11; 12:37). The city sat along the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, which is now dry.

Sinai Peninsula Geography

The Sinai Peninsula is triangular in shape, about 250 miles long (north-south) and 150 miles wide at the north. Its triangular shape is formed by two long bays of the Red Sea which look like rabbit ears on the map. The **Gulf of Suez** is the bay on the west which separates the Sinai from Egypt. The **Gulf of Aqaba** separates Sinai from the Arabian Peninsula to the east.

The Sinai Peninsula has three main geographical zones:

1. A **sand belt** fifteen miles wide along the Mediterranean coast (light green on map).
2. Central Sinai is a **limestone plateau**. Much of this plateau is drained by the Wadi el-Arish and its tributaries into the Mediterranean. Where the Wadi el-Arish flows into the Mediterranean Sea is called in the Bible **the River of Egypt**. This river formed part of **the southern border of the Promised Land** (Gen. 15:18; Num. 34:5; 1 Kgs. 8:65).
3. The high **granite mountains** (reddish brown on map) are bisected by sand and gravel wadis. The mountains can reach 8000 feet in elevation. The wadis provide routes for travel through the mountains. One of the mountains in the region is the traditional location of Mt. Sinai, called today Jebel Musa (Mt. Moses), which is 7500 feet in elevation.

Routes in Sinai

There are four main routes through the Sinai, each traversing the Sinai in an east-west direction:

1. "**The Way of the Land of the Philistines**" (Exod. 13:17-18) which led most directly from Egypt along the Mediterranean Coast to Canaan. Egyptian forts lined this route. The Bible states that "...**God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines**, even though it was near; for God said, 'Lest the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt.'" So God led the people around by Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea.
2. "**The Way of Shur**" (Gen. 16:17; Exod. 15:22) ran parallel, but about 30 miles south of the "Way of the Land of the Philistines". The Way of Shur passed near Kadesh-barnea and joined to Beersheba in Canaan.

3. The "**Hajj Road**", which runs directly across central Sinai connecting the north end of the Gulf of Suez to the northern bay of the Gulf of Aqaba.
4. "**Mining Route**", which ran along the eastern side of the Gulf of Suez to the high granite mountains of south-central Sinai. The Egyptians used this route for mining turquoise and copper from the Sinai Mountains, and is the traditional route of the journey of Israel to Mt. Sinai.

Route of the Exodus

There is considerable debate as to the route of the Exodus and the location of Mt. Sinai. The Bible says that the Lord led Israel by the "**Way of the Wilderness of the Reed Sea**" (Exod. 13:17-18). This could be either the Hajj Road or the Turquoise Mining route (#3 or #4 above), or perhaps just a route reaching the Gulf of Suez from the north. Likewise, it is impossible to positively identify many of the locations mentioned in the Israelite journey.

Location of Mt. Sinai

As to Mt. Sinai itself, at least a dozen different mountains have been suggested as candidates. Most suggestions are in one of four geographical zones:

1. Northwest Saudi Arabia or southern Jordan, east of the Gulf of Aqaba. Proponents of this theory claim that the miraculous crossing of the Red (Reed) Sea occurred somewhere through the Gulf of Aqaba. However, immediately after Israel miraculously crossed the Red (Reed) Sea, they traveled through the Wilderness of Shur. This negates the Saudi Arabia/Jordan theory since the Wilderness of Shur is known to be in northwest Sinai (Gen. 16:7; 20:1; 25:18; Exod. 15:22; 1 Sam. 27:8), not on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba.
2. The limestone plateau in Northern Sinai (i.e., Mt. Karkom). But Israel's eventual stop at the Reed Sea (Num. 33:10) and arrival at Ezion-geber (Num. 33:35) is inexplicable if Mt. Sinai is to be found in this region.
3. Near the Hajj Road (i.e., Jebel Sin Bisher or Jebel Kashm et Tarif). A mountain along this route seems to fit the biblical description of travel between Egypt and Midian (Exod. 3:12; 4:27; 18:5), the attack of the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8), and accords with the "eleven days" journey required between Horeb (Mt. Sinai) and Kadesh-barnea (Deut. 1:2). This route is marked as an alternate possibility (*dashed blue arrow*).
4. The granite mountains of southern Sinai, where tradition of over 1500 years places the mountain.

Traditional Route of the Exodus

The numbered events along the *blue arrows* mark out proposed locations and important events along the traditional route of Israel's exodus from Egypt and journey through Sinai. The Book of Exodus describes places and events that occurred between Egypt and Mt. Sinai. The Book of Numbers (10-12) describes places and events located between Mt. Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. Numbers 33 reviews the entire itinerary.

1. **Rameses** (Khatana-Qantir, Tell ed-Dab'a) in the eastern Nile Delta. On the 15th day of what was to be for Israel the first month of the year, on the evening after celebrating the Passover, the people of Israel left Rameses (Exod. 12:1, 37-41; Num. 33:3-4).
2. **Succoth** (Tell Maskhuta) (Exod. 12:37; 13:20; Num. 33:5), also located in the East Nile Delta.
3. **Etham, on the edge of the wilderness**, of unknown location, though likely southeast from Succoth. At Etham, the Lord told Moses to tell the Israelites to "turn back", apparently north. This move would cause Pharaoh to think that the Israelites "are bewildered by the land; the

wilderness has closed them in". In fact, the Lord was leading Israel by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13:20-14:3; Num 33:7).

- Pi-hahiroth, near Migdol and Baal-zephon, by the sea.** The sea which the Israelites miraculously crossed is in Hebrew called the "Reed Sea". The name "Red Sea" originated from the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), and unfortunately is preserved in most English translations. Although at other times in the Bible "Reed Sea" can refer to either the Gulf of Suez (Num. 33:10-11) or the Gulf of Aqaba (Num. 14:25, 21:4; 1 Kgs. 9:26), it is best to locate the Israelite crossing in the marshy lakes **somewhere between the Lake Manzeleh and the Bitter Lakes**. Ancient Egyptian documents refer to this area as a land of papyrus, reeds and marshy wetlands. The area has changed since antiquity. The Mediterranean Sea via the Lake Manzeleh reached much further inland. The Ballah Lakes have dried up some even since the Suez Canal was cut in the 1860s. Pi-hahiroth (Hebrew, "mouth of the channels") may refer to ancient channels that Egyptians built connecting the Ballah and Timsah Lakes.

The location of the crossing of the Reed Sea near **Migdol** also places the event in the eastern Nile Delta (Exod. 14:2; Num. 33:7; Jer. 44:1, 44:16; Ezek. 29:10). "Sea" in Hebrew means a large body of water (cf. the "Sea of Galilee", 12 x 7 miles across, which to most westerners would be called a "lake"). The biblical description requires a large enough body of water to make both the Israelites and Egyptians feel that the Israelites were trapped, with sufficient depth to drown the men and horses of the Egyptian army (Exod. 14).

- Wilderness of Etham, Wilderness of Shur, and Marah.** After the miraculous crossing through the Reed Sea, a three day journey through the wildernesses of Shur and Etham brought Israel to a spring they named Marah, because the water was bitter. After the Israelites grumbled, the Lord showed Moses a tree to put in the water, and the water became sweet (Exod. 16:22-27; Num. 33:8)
- Elim**, twelve springs of water and seventy date palm trees (Exod. 15:27; Num. 33:9).
- The Reed Sea**, meaning here the Gulf of Suez (Num. 33:10)?
- The Wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai.** The Israelites arrived here exactly one month after their departure from Egypt. They grumbled about food, and the Lord began to give them **manna**. Some **quail** also fell on the camp in the evening (Exod. 16; Num. 33:11).
- Rephidim** (via Dophkah and Alush). Several important events happened at **Rephidim**. This site is near Mt. Sinai (Horeb). Here the Israelites again complained about the lack of water. God instructed Moses to **strike a rock**, which Moses did, and water came out. The place was named **Massah** (testing) and **Meribah** (quarrel). Then, the **Amalekites attacked Israel**, a deed for which they became the perpetual enemies of Yahweh. Finally, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro came with Moses' sons and wife. Jethro advised that Moses appoint leaders to help judge the people (Exod. 17).
- Mt. Sinai**, also called **Mt. Horeb**. Two months after Israel had left Egypt, they came to Mt. Sinai (Exo. 19, "in the third month"). In a miraculous display of power, the Lord entered into a covenant with the people of Israel. Israel's allegiance was to be only to "Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. 20:2). The covenant was epitomized by the **10 Commandments**, written on two tablets of stone (Exod. 34:1, 28; Deut. 4:13). While on the mountain, Moses also received instructions for proper worship of Yahweh, including the design of the Tabernacle in which the glory of Yahweh would dwell (Exod. 21-31). While Moses was still on the mountain, the people sinned in the incident of the **golden calf**. The people were

saved only through Moses' intercession (Exod. 32). The Lord promised His presence would once again go with the people (Exod. 33), and the covenant was renewed on two new tablets of stone (Exod. 34). **The Tabernacle was constructed** and set up (Exod. 35-40). In the meantime, almost one year had passed since Israel had left Egypt (Exod. 40:2, 17).

11. **Wilderness Camps**, including **Kibroth-Hataavah** and **Hazereth**. Israel camped at Mt. Sinai for just over eleven months. One year, one month and five days after Israel had come out of Egypt, the pillar of cloud/fire began to move from Mt. Sinai toward the **Wilderness of Paran** on the edge of the Promised Land (Num. 10:11). Along the way the Israelites passed nineteen locations listed in Numbers 33:16-35. Most of these locations are unknown, many of them only campsites named by the Israelites. Events are described which occurred only at the first two camps. After a three-day journey from Mt. Sinai, the people complained for lack of meat, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic, which they claimed to have had in Egypt. The Lord sent **quail which covered the ground for a distance of a day's journey all around the camp**. While the meat was still between some of the peoples' teeth, they were struck with a plague and died. The place was called **Kibroth-Hataavah**, "the graves of evil desire" (Num. 11). The next stop was at **Hazereth**, a name preserved northeast of Jebel Musa (Moses' Mountain) in the Sinai. Here Miriam and Aaron complained to Moses about a Cushite woman he had married. **Miriam was struck with leprosy**, and was only restored after the repentance of Aaron and intercession of Moses. It is in the context of this event that the Bible tells us that Moses was more humble than any man on the face of the earth (Num. 12).
12. **Ezion-geber**. This is a known site on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (Num. 33:35; 1 Kgs. 9:26; 22:48). As with Israel's earlier stop at the Reed Sea (Num. 33:10), their arrival at Ezion-geber is quite inexplicable if Mt. Sinai is to be found in the northern Sinai Peninsula.
13. **Kadesh-barnea** is on the border of the Promised Land, in the Wilderness Highlands, in territory which overlaps between the Wilderness of Paran (Num. 13:16, 26) and the Wilderness of Zin (Num. 33:36). From Kadesh-barnea the spies were sent out to explore the land of Canaan.

3-2 Israel in the Wilderness Date: 1445-1406 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

1. The Spies Sent Out from Kadesh-barnea

Find and **yellow highlight** **Kadesh-barnea** (in *blue box*) from where 12 Israelites were sent to spy out the Promised Land. Kadesh-barnea would also become the main camp for the Israelites during their remaining 40 years in the wilderness. **Yellow highlight** **Hebron** in the Hill Country and **Hormah** in the Negev.

READ: Numbers 13 & 14

The Israelites arrived at **Kadesh-barnea** on the border of the Promised Land about 14 months after they had departed from Egypt. Kadesh-barnea sits in the Wilderness Highlands, where the **Wildernesses of Zin and Paran** overlap. The area is a high (some places close to 3000 feet), rocky desert, with little rainfall, vegetation or possibility for settlement. For forty days the spies investigated the length and breadth of the Land of Canaan (13:21, 25) to the north. It was the summer season, and the spies returned with a sample of some of the Promised Land's fruit: pomegranates, figs, and a huge cluster of grapes from the **Valley of Eshcol** ("grape cluster") near Hebron. It does not take much imagination to understand how inviting this fruit looked to a people that spent over a year in a barren desert. Nevertheless the spies were frightened by the size of the peoples and their fortifications in the Land of Canaan (13:28-33). Only Caleb (representing Judah) and Joshua (representing Ephraim) gave a good report, saying, "They will be our bread!" (Numbers 14:9). But the others' bad report caused an unfaithful chain reaction. The people convinced themselves that the Lord had brought them this far only to have them slain by the sword. They even considered stoning Moses and Aaron and appointing a leader who would lead them back to Egypt (14:10). For this "tenth" (14:22) act of unfaithfulness, the adult generation was condemned to die in the wilderness over the next 40 years. When the people heard this news, they changed their minds – but too late. Some tried an attack against the Canaanites in the Hill Country. They went presumptuously without either Moses or the Ark of the Covenant and were soundly beaten back down as far as **Hormah** ("devoted destruction", 14:39-45). Their own strength would not get them into the Promised Land.

2. Wilderness Wanderings

Note the *blue arrows* circling south from **Kadesh-barnea** and back again.

"Wilderness wanderings" is a bit of misnomer. The Israelite base camp for these 38 years was at **Kadesh-barnea** (cf. Deuteronomy 1:46: "You dwelt at Kadesh many days"). Undoubtedly they branched out from Kadesh to find whatever grazing land they could. The Scriptures record few details about what went on during these decades. Two events occurred which dealt with issues of leadership and authority. Korah, a Levite, led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. The ground swallowed him and his family (Numbers 16). When others protested that Moses and Aaron caused the death of those in rebellion, a plague from God killed thousands more (Numbers 16:41-50). As confirmation of God's chosen priest, **the rod of Aaron** miraculously budded and produced ripe almonds in one night (Numbers 17). Toward the end of the 38 years, once again at **Kadesh-barnea**, **Miriam died** (Numbers 20:1). When the people complained about the lack of water, the Lord told Moses to bring forth water from a rock by speaking to it. But Moses struck the rock twice with his staff. For this act of unfaithfulness Moses too was disqualified from entering the Promised Land. The event occurred near Kadesh-barnea, and the place was named **Meribah** (quarrel), the same name given to the place in Sinai where Moses had brought water from a rock nearly 40 years before (Numbers 20:8-14; Exodus 17).

The Journey around Edom

Note the *blue arrows* pointing from **Kadesh-barnea** toward **Hormah** and **Punon** (#3). Then from **Punon** through the **Aravah** (Rift Valley) to **Elath** (#4), and then from **Elath** northeast around **Edom** on the **Way of the Wilderness** (#5).

Historical and Geographical Background

Toward the end of the 40-year desert sojourn, by which time most of the first generation unfaithful had died, Israel prepared to enter the Promised Land. Instead of approaching the Promised Land directly from the south via the relatively short distance from Kadesh-barnea, Moses led the Israelites around to the eastern side of the Promised Land. The journey to the east side of Canaan necessitated passing the territories of Edom and Moab.

There is considerable disagreement as to the precise route that Israel took from Kadesh-barnea to the plains in Transjordan opposite Jericho. Reconstructing the route requires correlating geographical information given in the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Geographically, note the following features on Map 3-2:

1. The **ARAVAH** (Rift Valley) is the 110 x 10 mile plain which runs from the south side of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba (Elath). It is part of the great Syro-African Rift Valley, and separates the high plateau of the ancient territory of Edom from the Negev Highlands in the west. The Aravah is 1350 feet *below* sea level at the Dead Sea, rising to 600 feet above sea level further south before it descends once again to sea level at Aqaba/Elath. Although there is little settlement because of the lack of water in the Aravah (only 2 inches a year), the region was important because of the important trade-route connection to the Gulf of Aqaba.
2. The eastern territories of **EDOM** and **MOAB** are high plateaus. Some areas in Edom, also called **SEIR**, reach 5000 feet. Deep snow falls on the heights in the winter. The plateau drops steeply as cliffs into the Aravah, but changes quickly into desert some 20 miles off to the east. Settlement is mainly on the 20 mile strip along the western rim of the plateau that receives more precipitation. The Moabites and Edomites were related to the Israelites. Moabites, like the Ammonites further to the north, were descendants of Abraham's nephew, **Lot** (Genesis 19:37-38). Edomites were descendants of Jacob's brother **Esau** (Genesis 36:1).
3. There are **two routes** that traverse the Edom-Moab plateau.
 - a. **THE KING'S HIGHWAY** runs along the western rim of the plateau, through arable land and settlements.
 - b. **THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS** runs parallel to the King's Highway but further east. The Way of the Wilderness avoids the deep, difficult canyons, especially the **Zered and Arnon River valleys**. These canyons are over 1500 feet deep and 2 miles across (find them on the map). The Zered Canyon was the border between Edom and Moab. The Arnon Canyon was Moab's northern border. The disadvantages to the Way of the Wilderness was that there was little water, food or civilization to be found along the way. It also tended to be less safe, being exposed to desert marauders from the east.

3. From Kadesh-barnea to Punon

READ: NUMBERS 20:14-29

From Kadesh-barnea, Moses sent a request to the king of Edom to allow the Israelites to pass through Edom's territory. Moses generously told Edom that Kadesh was on the "edge of your territory" (Numbers 20:16). Other biblical references show that Edom was successful in controlling territory on the western side of the Aravah (Numbers 34:3). The backbone of Edomite economy was trade, and connections to the Mediterranean Sea would have been important.

Moses assured that Israel had no designs on Edomite territory. Israel only desired to pass through Edom on the **King's Highway**, and would pay for whatever food and water necessary (Numbers 20:17-19). Edom, however, refused Israel passage.

Apparently Moses was not going to take "no" for an answer so easily. After all, the Wilderness Highlands were not a part of the Edomite heartland. Or perhaps Israel moved out from Kadesh even before the messenger returned back with Edom's negative answer. Soon after Israel set out from Kadesh, **Aaron died at Mt. Hor** (Numbers 20:22-24, location unknown, but to be located northeast of Kadesh-barnea along the Way of Atharim?).

READ: NUMBERS 21:1-3

Israel began their journey toward Edom on the **Way of Atharim**, a route that connects Kadesh-barnea to the Eastern Negev.

When the Canaanite king of **Arad** who dwelt in the **Negev** heard that Israel was coming by the **Way of Atharim**, he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. (Numbers 21:1, author's translation).

This gave Israel reason for what turned out to be a successful attack on the **Negev**. In the very place their fathers had been soundly defeated when attacking on their own strength, the 2nd generation experienced victory with God. In both instances, the place was called **Hormah**, "devoted destruction" (Numbers 14:45; 21:3), showing victory belonged to the Lord. "Hormah" is used in this second instance as an acknowledgement that God is the victor, and to Him belong the spoils.

READ: NUMBERS 33:37-43

Note especially the site name **Punon** in Numbers 33:42, to which Israel arrived not long after the victory at Hormah in the Negev. Apparently still hopeful that Edom would allow them to pass through on the King's Highway, Israel came to the Rift Valley site of Punon. From Punon there is a route via the Wadi Dana that allows access up onto the Mt. Seir plateau. But Edom was adamant, and at this point gave a second "no" answer (Numbers 21:18-21). Edom even came out with a strong force, perhaps positioned on the top of the plateau at Wadi Dana, which allows eye-contact with Punon in the Aravah below.

"Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him" (Numbers 20:21).

4. From Punon to Ezion-geber, Elath

"Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness **by the way of the Reed Sea**, as the Lord said to me, and **we circled around Mt. Seir (Edom) for many days**" (Deuteronomy 2:1, author's translation).

Being denied access to the King's Highway, Israel would have to go around Edom. In antiquity there was not space along the side of the Dead Sea for a route. Neither was the Lord leading Israel in that direction (Deuteronomy 2:1). Israel was to make a long trek south around Edom via the **Aravah** route to Ezion-geber and then back north on the **Way of the Wilderness** (Deuteronomy 2:8).

READ: NUMBERS 21:4-10

When the people heard of the plan for the long trek around Edom, they complained. The Lord sent a plague of **poisonous serpents** among the people. Moses made a serpent of copper which, when lifted up, became the agent of salvation for anyone who looked at it (cf. John 3:14). In antiquity the area around **Punon** was rich in both **copper mining and smelting**. Ir Nahash near Punon means "City of the Snake".

5. From Ezion-geber, Elath to the Way of the Wilderness

READ: DEUTERONOMY 2:1-8

Having traveled south in the Aravah Route from Punon as far as Ezion-geber, the Lord told Israel, "Far enough, now turn north" (Deuteronomy 2:3). "So we passed beyond our brothers, the sons of Esau who dwell in Seir, **away from the Aravah Road, from Elath and from Ezion-geber**, and we turned and passed by on the **Way of the Wilderness** toward Moab" (Deuteronomy 2:8, author's translation).

READ: Deuteronomy 2:9-23

The Lord gave specific instructions that Israel was not to do battle with either Edom, Moab or Ammon (cf. Map 3-3). The former inhabitants in these territories – Horites in Edom and the Anakim/Rephaim (giant peoples) in Moab and Ammon, had been displaced (cf. Genesis 14:5-6, Map 2-2). These territories the Lord had now given as an inheritance to the relatives of Israel. The earth is the Lord's and gives it to man as gift.

As Israel journeyed past Edom on the Way of the Wilderness, they camped in the upper reaches of the **Zered Canyon** at **Ije-avarim**. Moses indicated that it had been **38 years** from the time Israel had first left Kadesh-barnea (after the unfaithful report from the spies), until they crossed over the Zered Canyon. By that time all the first generation had perished (Deut. 2:13-14). The Israelites continued along the Way of the Wilderness past Moab, crossing the upper reaches of the Arnon River and arriving into the Wilderness of Kedemoth. North of the **Arnon River** was another plateau, territory controlled by Amorites (Numbers 21:11-13).

REVIEW, Map 3-2:

1. Israel came to **Kadesh-barnea** approximately 14 months after departing Egypt. From Kadesh the **spies were sent out**, and came back with their report. The **unfaithful reaction** to the report of the spies condemned the **adult generation (20 years old and above) to death in the wilderness**.
2. The **38 year "wanderings"** occurred in the rocky Wilderness Highlands south of Kadesh Barnea, and **Kadesh-barnea** served as the Israelites main camp during this period. Know that the Bible records **very few events during the 38-year wilderness sojourn**. Followers of **Korah's rebellion** were swallowed up by the earth. Thousands of others perished in a plague when they blamed Moses and Aaron for these deaths. Aaron's staff budded and produced ripe almonds in one night as a sign that his family was the divinely chosen priesthood. Toward the end of the 38 year period, **Miriam died** and was buried near Kadesh-barnea. At the peoples' murmuring, **Moses struck a rock twice instead of speaking** to it, and was also disqualified from entering the Promised Land.
3. Know the geographical make-up of the land on Map 3-2, including:
 - a. The **Aravah**, the section of the **Rift Valley** between the Dead Sea and Gulf of Aqaba that separates the **Edom Plateau** from the high wilderness areas west of the Aravah (the **Wilderness of Zin** and the **Wilderness of Paran**)
 - b. Know that **southern Transjordan** is a high **plateau** where the tribes of **Edom and Moab** settled. Know who these tribes descended from, and where settlement is possible on the plateau. Know the two routes that run north-south through the plateau, the **King's Highway** and the **Way of the Wilderness**, and know the advantages and disadvantages for travel on each.
 - c. Know the deep **Zered River canyon**, which separates Edom from Moab, and the **Arnon River canyon**, which is the northern border of Moab.
4. Review the basic stages of Israel's long journey around Edom. Shortly after leaving Kadesh, **Aaron died** on **Mt. Hor**. Between Kadesh and Punon, on the **Way of Atharim**, the **Canaanite king of Arad in the Negev** attacked Israel. Israel successfully retaliated at **Hormah**. Edom refused to allow Israel to travel on the **King's Highway**, and probably above **Punon**, came out with an army to prevent Israel's ascent to the Edomite plateau. When the Israelites realized that they had to go all the way around Edom, they complained and were struck by **poisonous serpents**. Moses made a **copper snake** as part of the cure, a deed most likely done in the vicinity of **Punon** where ancient copper mines exist. Israel left the **Aravah Road** at **Ezion-geber**, turning east and north along the **Way of the Wilderness**. On the **Way of the Wilderness** they passed along Edom's and Moab's eastern side. Israel received specific instruction **not to harass Edom, Moab or Ammon**, since these tribes had received their territorial inheritance from the Lord.

3-3 Transjordan Campaigns Date: 1406 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

Geographical and Historical Overview

The territory of Transjordan that Israel eventually settled is made up of three geographical regions. Two of these regions appear on Map 3-3, and the third region, Bashan, is just off the map to the north. Find the following regions on Map 3-3:

1. The **Plateau** (Hebrew, "Mishor"), sometimes called the **Medeba Plateau** after the city near its center, is the flat limestone plateau north of the **Arnon River**.
2. **Gilead** is the limestone mountainous area north of the Plateau. Gilead is cut by multiple canyons draining toward the Jordan Rift Valley. The largest of these river canyons is the Jabbok River, which cuts Gilead in half. As can be seen on the map, Gilead terrain is similar to the Hill Country terrain in Canaan, which would become the Hill Country of Judah and Hill Country of Ephraim.
3. **Bashan** is off to the north side of this map (cf. Map 4-1). Bashan also is a high plateau, but of volcanic basalt stone. The Bashan sits between the Yarmuk River and Mt. Hermon. The western section of Bashan is today called the Golan Heights.

Map 3-3 marks how Israel under Moses' leadership conquered these three territories in Transjordan, from the Arnon River to Mt. Hermon:

"And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, **from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon...all the cities of the Plateau, and all Gilead, and all Bashan...**" (Deuteronomy 3:8-10).

4. Note the territory of the **Ammonites**, which is tucked off to the east between the Plateau and Gilead. From Ammon's capital city, **Rabbah** (Rabbat-Ammon), most of its territory extended east into the desert. Ammon, like Moab, was a descendant of Abraham's nephew Lot. As with Edom and Moab, the Lord told Israel not to attack or take any territory of the Ammonites (Deuteronomy 2:19).
5. All of Transjordan is separated from Canaan (Israel) by the **Jordan Rift Valley**, part of the great Syro-African Rift. The **Lower Jordan River** runs in the low plain from the Sea of Galilee (just off this map to the north) into the Dead Sea, a distance of about 65 miles as the crow flies. Jordan means "descend". The Sea of Galilee is 700 feet *below* sea level. The **Dead Sea**, where the Jordan River ends, is the lowest spot on the surface of the earth at **1350 feet below sea level**. These low elevations of the **Jordan Rift Valley** (called the "depression" in Arabic) create a formidable border between the east and west sides of the Promised Land. Note: sometimes the Bible calls the Jordan Rift Valley the Aravah.
6. Find the **Plains of Moab**, a wider plain in the Rift Valley north of the Dead Sea on the east side of the Jordan River. The Israelites camped here after their successful conquest of Transjordan and as they were poised to strike west across the Jordan River. Also note where **Mount Nebo/Pisgah** (the **Abarim Mountains**), where **Moses** viewed the Promised Land and was buried.

1. Conquest of the Mishor (Plateau) and Half Gilead, Sihon the Amorite

READ: DEUTERONOMY 2:19-37 (cf. Numbers 21:13-33)

The Israelites passed by Moab and crossed the upper eastern reaches of the Arnon River. From here, in the **Wilderness of Kedemoth** (2:26), they asked to pass peacefully through territory held by **Sihon King of Heshbon**. Sihon was an **Amorite** (not to be confused with Ammonite, see above), a Canaanite people (Genesis 10:15-16). He had taken the Plateau from the first king of Moab (Numbers 21:26). Moses wrote: "But **Sihon** king of **Heshbon** would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day" (Deuteronomy 2:30). Sihon drew up battle forces against Israel at **Jahaz**, but Israel soundly defeated him and captured all the territory between the **Arnon River** and the **Jabbok River** (the Plateau and Half Gilead).

2. Conquest of Bashan, the territory of Og

READ: DEUTERONOMY 3:1-17

From the Plateau the Israelites proceeded north and defeated the Amorites in **Jazer** near the border of Ammon (Numbers 21:32). They continued north along the **Way to Bashan** and won a decisive battle against **Og, King of Bashan**, at **Edrei**. Og, like Sihon, was an Amorite, but he was also the last of the giant Rephaim who had formerly dwelt in the region. Apparently he had lost his 12 x 6 feet iron bedstead in a battle against Ammon, and the Ammonites displayed it as a trophy in their capital city Rabbah (Deuteronomy 3:11). The Israelites took all of Og's territory, including the **northern half of Gilead and all Bashan**, including 60 fortified cities and many un-walled towns (3:5).

The Israelites now held Transjordan from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon. The battles in the Plateau, Gilead, and Bashan were the first territorial conquests that the Israelites had made, and there must have been real excitement in the camp as to how easily it all went (Deuteronomy 3:21-22).

3. Events in the Plains of Moab

Then the children of Israel camped in the **Plains of Moab** on the other side of the Jordan across from Jericho (Numbers 22:1; cf. Numbers 33:48-49). Several important events occurred while Israel was camped in the **Plains of Moab**.

- a. **Balak**, the king of Moab, concerned after Israel's resounding victories in Transjordan (Numbers 22:1-7), hired the corrupt prophet **Balaam** from Aram to come and curse Israel. Arriving safely only with the help of a miracle donkey, Balaam looked down from the slopes of **Pisgah/Nebo**, but **instead of cursing, could only bless Israel**. Israel was a "...people who dwells apart...the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them...a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel" (Numbers 22-24).
- b. Unable to harm Israel through divination, the Moabites teamed up with the Midianites and, with the counsel of Balaam (Numbers 31:16), devised another plan. **Moabite and Midianite women seduced Israelites** into joining the worship festivities for **Baal Peor**. This is the first recorded instance of Israel's worship of Baal, a tendency that eventually doomed him (2 Ki. 17:16-18; 21:3. A plague of judgment upon Israel claimed over 20,000

lives (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:8). The zealous priest Phinehas stopped the plague when he pierced an Israelite man and a Midianite woman through with a spear, apparently in the Tabernacle (Numbers 25).

- c. After the plague, while Israel was still "in the Plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho" (Numbers 26:3), a **tribe-by-tribe census** of the people was taken. The Israelites, apparently just fighting men over age 20, numbered 601,730 (Numbers 26).
- d. The Lord directed Moses to wage a **war of vengeance against Midian** because of the incident at Baal Peor. Israel slaughtered Midian, including five kings and the corrupt prophet Balaam. The booty and captives were brought back to the Israelite camp at the Plains of Moab (Numbers 31).
- e. The tribes of **Reuben, Gad**, and half of **Manasseh** requested of Moses **permission to settle the conquered territories in Transjordan**. After obtaining a promise from these tribes that they would first help the rest of Israel conquer the territory on the west side of the Jordan, Moses granted territory from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River to Reuben and Gad. The north half of Gilead and Bashan was given to half of Manasseh. One result therefore of Israel approaching the Promised Land from the east was that through Amorite opposition and battles, God quickly added these territories to Israel's inheritance (Numbers 32; cf. Deuteronomy 2:30-31).
- f. While Israel was encamped in the Plains of Moab, **Moses gave the words which are recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy**.

READ: DEUTERONOMY 4, being aware especially of the historical-theological theme that Moses developed in this chapter. God had worked in a unique way with Israel. Nothing like this had ever happened on the earth before. But do not allow the uniqueness of Israel's experience with God to be grounds for doubt. Just because something happens only once, does not mean that it is not true. Rather, the very uniqueness of Israel's experience is evidence of God's involvement. "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:39).

- g. **Moses went up to Mount Pisgah/Nebo, viewed the Promised Land, died and was buried.**

READ: DEUTERONOMY 32:44-52; 34:1-12

REVIEW, Map 3-3:

1. Israel conquered and settled three regions in Transjordan: the **Plateau, Gilead, and Bashan**. In addition to these three regions, know the location and features of the following geographical elements: the **Arnon River**, the **Jabbok River**, the **Jordan River**, and the **Plains of Moab**. Know the location of the region of **Ammon**, and who Ammon descended from.
2. Review the geographical places and people associated with Israel's conquest of Transjordan. Israel asked the **Amorite king Sihon** who lived in **Heshbon** for permission to pass through his territory. Sihon refused, and sent his troops out to **Jahaz** to oppose Israel. Israel defeated Sihon, and **the Lord added Sihon's territory – from the Arnon to the Jabbok - to Israel's inheritance**. Israel proceeded north, displacing the Amorites from the site of **Jazer**, on the border with Ammon, but Israel **did not harass the Ammonites**. Instead, they continued north along the Way to Bashan and battled with another Amorite (the last of the giant Rephaim), **Og**

king of Bashan, at Edrei. Israel defeated Og, and the Lord added his territory – **half of Gilead and Bashan – to Israel's inheritance.**

3. A number of events occurred while Israel was camped **in the Plains of Moab** across the Jordan River opposite Jericho, including: **Balaam's attempts to curse Israel**, immorality and idolatry with **Midianite on Moabite women and worship of Baal Peor**, a **census**, the **revenge war against Midian**, the request of the tribes of **Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh** to settle the conquered territory in Transjordan, **Moses' teaching** as recorded in the **Book of Deuteronomy** given, and finally, the **death and burial of Moses on Mt. Nebo.**
4. The conquests in Transjordan were evidence that God was with Israel. The lightning-like victories were recognized even into future generations as God's work (Psalm 105:10-12; 136:18-21). The victories would have given confidence to Israel and their new leader, Joshua, that God was with them. Now they were poised to strike west of the Jordan into the Land of Canaan.

Borders of the Promised Land

The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land” (Gen. 12:7).

The concept of the Promised Land extends to the days of the Patriarchs. God promised to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the Land of Canaan. The promise was reiterated to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:3; 28:13). God’s salvation history involved a chosen *people* and Promised *Land*, facts-on-the-ground reality.

“When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to its borders” (Num. 34:2).

The borders of the Promised Land are described in Numbers 34 (cf. Ezek. 47:13-23; Josh. 15-19). The setting of this chapter has the Israelites camped in the Plains of Moab across the Jordan River opposite Jericho, poised to enter Canaan (Num. 33: 50-51, Map 3-5). They were about to come into the territorial inheritance promised to their forefathers (Gen 15:13-16). Though God’s promise and its fulfillment had spanned centuries, the Israelites in the Plains of Moab could testify that they were the very generation seeing the promise fulfilled. The fact that the promise and its fulfillment spanned centuries was itself evidence of divine involvement. Yahweh, God over time and nations, could be relied upon (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). God’s ability and faithfulness to make good on his promises is highlighted by Moses’ description of the Promised Land’s borders.

The Southern Border, Numbers 34:1-5

The southern border of the Promised Land began at the south side of the **Salt (Dead) Sea**, went along the **Wilderness of Zin** to **Kadesh-barnea**, to the **River of Egypt**, and then ended at the Mediterranean Sea. The River of Egypt is the modern Wadi el-Arish, not the Nile River. Wadi el-Arish is the large system of wadis that drain all of central and northern Sinai. It becomes one channel that drains into the Mediterranean Sea about 40 miles south of Gaza. There are two main reasons for understanding the River of Egypt to be the Wadi-el Arish, and not the Nile. 1) The Hebrew word for River (or Brook) of Egypt in the border descriptions is *nahal*, which denotes a normally dry canyon or riverbed. The word for the flowing Nile (*Yaor*) does not appear in the border descriptions. 2) The list of geographical features and sites (e.g., Zin Wilderness and Kadesh-barnea) given for the southern border align with the Wadi el-Arish.

Note that Ezion-geber (Elath), the important port on the Gulf of Aqaba developed by Solomon and other subsequent Judean kings, is technically outside the borders of the Promised Land.

The Western Border, Numbers 34:6

The western border of the Promised Land is the simplest to define – it is the coast of the Great Sea (the Mediterranean Sea). The Sea Coast of the Land of Israel, particularly from Gaza to Mt. Carmel, is like a straight knife’s edge. It is characterized by sand dunes and limestone cliffs. The Israelite seacoast is not conducive to sea travel since there are no natural breakwaters jutting into the sea. To the ancient Israelites, the sea was a barrier, a border seldom crossed. It was the territory of the Gentiles, distant and foreign (Gen 10:5; Isa. 24:15; 49:1; Jer. 5:22). Even during the heyday of Israelite monarchical expansion under Solomon, the Israelites were dependent on their Phoenician neighbors to the north for merchant trading by sea (1 Kgs. 5:12; 9:26-27). The Phoenician coast is much better for sea faring with its multiple natural jetties and breakwaters. Phoenicia, although included in the border description of the Promised Land, was never successfully settled by Israelites.

The Northern Border, Numbers 34:7-9

The northern border runs from the Mediterranean Sea to Mt. Hor, most likely located on one of northern the peaks of the Lebanon Mountain range (Beitzel 8). The border comes into the valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges, to Levo-Hamath, a site south of Hamath (modern Hama in Syria). The border continues east to Zedad and Hazar-enan. There is evidence that this border was a recognized border in antiquity (Josh. 13:4), and in part follows the modern border between Lebanon and Syria today (Map 12-1). The Israelites never successfully settled these northern regions, which includes all of modern Lebanon, and territory more than 60 miles north of Damascus. Only David, Solomon (2 Sam. 8:5-6; 2 Chr. 7:8) and Jeroboam II (2 Kgs. 14:25) had some success subduing these northern regions. The Promised Land extended “to the great River Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:7; 2 Sam. 8:3). This has reference to the northwestern section of the Euphrates River and its tributaries in modern Syria, i.e., not the Euphrates in modern Iraq.

The Eastern Border, Numbers 34:10-15

Two known geographical features on the eastern border are the Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee) and the Jordan River. A line from Hazar-enan to the eastern heights (“the shoulder”) above the Sea of Chinnereth includes the area of Bashan (modern Golan Heights). From the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordan River formed the eastern border all the way to the Dead Sea. However, when Israel began the conquest under Moses’ leadership, two additional regions east of the Jordan – the Plateau and Gilead - were captured from two Amorite kings and annexed to the Promised Land by divine initiative (*purple area*). Including Bashan (already part of the promise), Israel captured “from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon” (Map 3-3; Deut. 2:25, 3:2; Ps. 136:19-22).

Surrounding Peoples

The surrounding nations or peoples along the borders of the Promised Land included Egypt to the southwest; Moab and Edom to the southeast; Ammon to the east; Aram on the northeast; and Amurru (Amorites) to the north (Deut. 2:8, 9, 19; Num. 23:7; Josh. 13:4).

Map 3-5 Entry into Canaan: Jericho and Ai

Date: 1406 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

Historical Introduction

The Israelites under Moses' leadership had successfully conquered territory in Transjordan from the Arnon River to Mt. Hermon (Map 3-3). Now they were camped in the **Plains of Moab** on the northeastern side of the Dead Sea. Moses' successor, **Joshua**, was encouraged by God as he prepared the people to strike east across the Jordan into the Promised Land. Joshua's courage and success would depend on how well he knew and kept the Law which Moses had commanded (Joshua 1:1-9). In other words, Joshua's success was dependent on his relationship with God.

Geographical Introduction

The Jordan River (Rift) Valley

Remember that the Jordan Rift Valley is a huge chasm which separates the Transjordan mountains in the east from the Hill Country mountains in the west. You can see on Map 3-5 that the Jordan Rift Valley is made up of three different zones. 1) The cultivated area where soils have been deposited along the foot of the mountains on both sides. Note for instance the cultivated areas around the Plains of Moab on the east, and Jericho on the west. 2) The chalky badlands which are cut by wadis which drain steeply into the Jordan River itself. 3) The Jordan River and its flood plain is a channel sometimes 150 feet deeper than the rest of the plain. This area is called the "jungle," "thicket," or "pride" of the Jordan (Jeremiah 12:5; 49:19). It appears on our map as a green strip which meanders its way to the Dead Sea. If you look at the map closely you can see the Jordan River itself, slightly darker in color, zigzagging its way through the green strip. The area it covers, from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, is some 65 miles as the crow flies; yet, the river with all its meanderings travels over 130 miles.

Routes into the Hill Country from Jericho

At 1350 feet below sea level, the Dead Sea and the cliffs along its sides prove a formidable obstacle for travel. All east-west travel in the region is pushed north of the Dead Sea. The city of Jericho, built near a strong fresh water spring, absorbs this travel. While the Hill Country of Canaan is the heart of the Promised Land, anyone coming from the east into the Hill Country must first pass through Jericho. Jericho is therefore a logical target for Israel's first conquest in the Promised Land, as it guards the eastern gateway to Canaan.

Three routes diverged from Jericho into the Hill Country. These routes generally stay on ridges, avoiding the deep canyons that cut through the rocky wilderness. Find each of these routes on Map 3-5 (You may want to review this video from 7:30 minute: <http://www.youtube.com/v/sa8JfTMxQKo>):

1. The **Ascent of Adummim** route, which connects Jericho to Jebus/Jerusalem
2. **The Way of the Wilderness (of Zeboim)**, which ascends from Jericho toward Bethel and Ai.
3. The **Jericho to Ophrah** route, the northernmost of the three routes.

Remember that the Rift Valley at the Dead Sea is 1350 feet *below* sea level. Jericho is about 800 feet *below* sea level. The watershed in the Hill Country, only about 15 miles (as the crow flies) away from Jericho, is around 2500 feet above sea level. Anyone coming into the Hill Country from Jericho ascends 3300 feet through a rocky-desert terrain. It is not an easy journey and takes a healthy adult about 8 hours to walk.

1. Crossing the Jordan River

From the Plains of Moab, Joshua sent two men to spy out Jericho. After receiving protection from the harlot Rahab, the two spies hid in the desert Hill Country west of Jericho for three days before returning to Joshua on the other side of the Jordan (Joshua 2). The spies of the new generation proved faithful, unlike 8 of 10 of the previous generation. Joshua prepared the people to cross the Jordan River.

READ: JOSHUA 3:7-17 & 4:19-24

Find these cities in the Jordan River Valley: **Jericho**, **Gilgal**, and further north, **Adam**.

As a sign that the Lord was with Joshua and the Israelites, and that He would dispossess the Canaanites before them, the waters of the Jordan River were halted for Israel to cross. When the feet of the priests, who were bearing the Ark of the Covenant, touched the waters of the Jordan, the river was stopped up as in a heap. The water was blocked up as far back as **Adam** nearly 20 miles upstream. The fact that the Jordan River was in flood stage added to the grandeur of the miracle. Joshua had two monuments of 12 stones set up as reminders that the Lord had dried up the **waters of the Jordan just as He had done to the Reed Sea** (Joshua 4:23). One monument of stones was placed in the middle of the river where Israel had crossed. The other 12 stones were set up in Israel's new camp at **Gilgal** on the eastern side of Jericho (Joshua 4:19-24). Unfortunately, while there are several candidate locations, no archaeological site found to date satisfies the requirements for identification with Gilgal. At **Gilgal** the second generation was circumcised. It was springtime, forty years to the day since Israel had departed Egypt. They **celebrated the Passover at Gilgal**. The very next day the manna ceased, and Israel ate of the produce of the Promised Land (Joshua 5). Gilgal would later be an important religious site, especially in the days of Samuel and Saul (1 Samuel 7:16; 11:15).

2. The Conquest of Jericho

Joshua's conquest of Jericho is among the most well-known events of the Old Testament. We have already noted reasons why Jericho was the gateway to the Promised Land from the east, and is therefore a logical first step in Israel's invasion of the land. The conquest of Jericho is described in **Joshua 6**. As the priests blew ram-horn trumpets, Israel circled the city one time each day for six days. On the seventh day they circled the city seven times, and when the priest blew the trumpets, the Israelites shouted, and the walls of Jericho came down.

Tel Jericho is not a large site, about six acres, built up next to a strong spring. Archaeologists differ as to the date of the destruction of the Canaanite city. **The outer fortification wall was constructed with two major parts: 1) a lower**, solid stone foundation "revetment" (retaining) wall some 15 feet high, and **2) an upper**, mud-brick wall built on top of the stone revetment wall. The mud-brick wall collapsed and fell to the foot of the stone revetment wall. Some archaeologists date the destruction of the wall and burning of the city to 1550 BC (the end of the Middle Bronze Age). Other archaeologists have found **good evidence that the wall was used into the Late Bronze Age and was destroyed around 1400 BC, the time of Joshua**. The fall of the mud-brick wall to the front of the stone revetment wall fits the biblical description of the wall falling "**underneath itself**" (a literal translation of Joshua 6:20). The collapse of the mud-brick wall would have created a ramp-like entrance into the city.

To the victor belong the spoils - to no human in this case. Metals went to the tabernacle and the city was burned (*herem*, "devoted to the Lord"). Only Rahab and her family were preserved from the destruction. Memorializing God's victory, Joshua placed a curse on anyone who rebuilt Jericho, which came to pass some 550 years later in the days of King Ahab of Israel (1 Kings 16:34).

3. The Conquest of Ai

Joshua sent men into the Hill Country to spy out "Ai, which is near **Beth-aven**, east of **Bethel**" (Joshua 7:2). These spies reported that Ai was a small city, "only two or three thousand men need go up." But Israel suffered a humiliating defeat. As Joshua discovered, it was because there was sin in the camp. Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah had coveted a coat from Shinar, 200 shekels of silver, and a 50 shekel gold bar from the booty of Jericho that was to be devoted to the Lord (cf. Joshua 6:17-18). It was a grievous sin because Achan was in effect claiming responsibility for the victory by claiming some of the spoil. The Valley of Achor (Trouble), where Achan was stoned and buried, is possibly the **Wadi Qilt** which cuts a deep canyon through the wilderness southwest of Jericho (Joshua 7; cf. 15:7).

READ: JOSHUA 8:1-29

Bethel is located on the **Road of the Patriarchs**, the north-south watershed route through the Hill County. **Ai (Ruin)** is located to its east, on a route that absorbs traffic coming from Jericho. While the Ai of Abraham's time (Gen. 12:8; 13:3) can be indentified with the large Early Canaanite ruin called **et-Tell**, there are (apparently) no archaeological ruins there which date to the days of Joshua (the Late Bronze Age, but there are some rumors of LB Age finds at et-Tell). It is possible the name "Ai" shifted to a smaller site nearby. Several sites in the vicinity with Late Bronze Age ruins have been excavated. The best candidate so far is Khirbet el-Maqatir, about one-half mile west of et-Tell, where ruins from the Late Bronze Age have been excavated.

The biblical description of the **conquest of Ai** is very geographically specific. Joshua placed an **ambush between Bethel and Ai**, perhaps in the upper reaches of the **Wadi Suwenit** (Wadi Shiban). Joshua's main camp was north of Ai, with a **valley** (יַבֵּי) **separating his camp from the city** (Josh. 8:11). If Ai is located at Maqatir, Joshua's camp would have likely been on the same ridge that et-Tell sits on, just west of et-Tell, as marked on the map. If Ai is located at et-Tell, Joshua's camp would have been north of Wadi Gaya. The area can be seen in detail on Map 1-9.

Coming from Gilgal, Joshua would have reached his position either by ascending the **Way of the Wilderness** of Zeboim or the Jericho-Ophrah route. The **blue arrow** is marked on the Zeboim Wilderness route. At night Joshua moved his forces to a **wider plain** (הַעֲרָבָה) east of Ai (Josh. 8:13, the modern village of Deir Dibwan partially spreads out in the plain). The king of Ai saw this maneuver and attacked. Joshua drew the Canaanite forces out by pretending to flee east on the Way of the Wilderness. At a strategic point Joshua raised his javelin and the signal was relayed to the ambush force behind Ai. The ambush force emerged to capture and **burn Ai**. The Canaanites were slaughtered, caught between Joshua's main force and the ambush. The king of Ai's body was hung on a tree and then buried under a pile of rocks at the city gate.

Contrary to the critical contention that a lack of archaeological evidence at Ai casts doubt on the historicity of the biblical narrative (see above), the *geographical detail* of the biblical narrative is evidence of historicity. The Bible gives Ai's location in association with two other cities (Josh. 7:2), describes a valley and hill to the north of Ai (8:11), a wider plain east of Ai (8:13), and access on a route heading east through the wilderness toward Jericho (8:15).

It is no coincidence that Israel's first victory in the Hill Country at Bethel and Ai was where God had covenanted with their forefathers years before (Genesis 13; 28:13-19).

4. Altar Built on Mt. Ebal, the Blessings and Curses Recited

One of the curious elements of the conquest narratives is the lack of any description of Israel's conquest of the north-central Hill Country, the area eventually called the Hill Country of Ephraim and Manasseh. Either the Canaanites here ran away (Exodus 23:28; Deuteronomy 7:20; Joshua 2:24), co-operated with Israel (cf. Map 3-8), and/or we simply lack descriptions of any battles that did take place. Whatever the situation, the Israelites seemed to arrive at sites like **Shechem** and **Shiloh** (Joshua 18:1) with relative ease.

In obedience to Moses' command (Deuteronomy 11:29-30; 27:1-5) the Israelites built **an altar** and **sacrificed** to the Lord on **Mt. Ebal**. A copy of the Law of Moses was written in plaster on stones. The blessings and the curses from the Law of Moses were recited while half the people stood in front of **Mt. Gerizim** and half in front of **Mt. Ebal**. The ceremony was an affirmation of covenantal relationship to the Lord, also acknowledging that the Lord God had been faithful to His promises. It is no coincidence that the ceremony took place at **Shechem**, the first place where the Lord had promised to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land (Genesis 12:6-7).

REVIEW, Map 3-5

1. Highlight in yellow highlighted the following sites or features: **Jericho, Gilgal, Adam, Ai, Bethel, Jerusalem Mt. Ebal, Mt. Gerizim**.
2. Know **geographical elements** discussed on this map, including the characteristics of the **Jordan River (Rift) Valley**. The Jordan River (Rift) Valley is a chasm separating Transjordan from Israel. What three types of terrain make up the Jordan Valley? How far below sea level is the Dead Sea? Why is Jericho a gateway for traffic approaching Israel from the east? Which three routes ascend into the Hill Country from Jericho?
3. Reminiscent to the Reed Sea crossing, Israel miraculously crossed the **Jordan River**. Know that Israel's first camp in the Promised Land was at **Gilgal**, east of Jericho. Here the Israelite men were circumcised, Israel celebrated Passover, and manna ceased. From Gilgal Israel went out and encircled Jericho.
4. Archaeologists disagree on the date of the destruction of the Canaanite city at **Jericho**. The outer fortification wall in question was made up of two parts, a lower stone revetment, supporting a mud-brick wall. The mud-brick wall collapsed to the foot of the lower stone wall, fitting the biblical description that the wall fell "underneath itself".
5. Review the historical geography associated with the **conquest of Ai** in the Central Hill Country. Israel's first attempt to take Ai failed because of Achan's sin. In the successful second attack, Joshua placed an ambush to the west of Ai (between Bethel and Ai) while the Israelite main force camped north of Ai, separated from Ai by a deep valley. Joshua moved to the flat plain and then feigned retreat to the east of Ai toward the wilderness. Canaanite forces from Ai and Bethel were drawn out. The Israelite ambush captured Ai and the Canaanites were trapped.
6. Immediately after the conquest of Ai, Joshua led Israel in a covenant affirmation ceremony in the area near **Shechem**. The Bible notably gives no description of Israel's conquest of the Central Hill Country of Ephraim and Manasseh. An **altar** was built on **Mt. Ebal**, and the blessings and curses recited at the foot of **Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim**. This was where God had first promised that the descendants of Abraham would inherit the land.

3-6 Joshua's Conquest: Central and Southern Campaigns

Date: c. 1400 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

1. CANAANITE ATTACK ON GIBEON, Joshua 10:1-5

The **Gibeonites** in the Central Hill Country of Canaan heard of Israel's astonishing territorial conquests. Fearing for their own safety, they tricked Israel into making a non-aggression pact (Josh. 9). Together with Joshua's conquest of Ai, the Gibeonite-Israel treaty formed a real threat to the Amorite king of **Jerusalem**, Adoni-zedek. Now Joshua commanded not only the eastern and western approaches to Jerusalem, but also the northern (most vulnerable) side. Adoni-zedek "feared greatly" (10:2) and called Canaanite kings in the Shephelah and Hill Country to attack Gibeon for siding with Joshua. **Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish** and **Eglon** (*black boxes and arrows*) joined the attack. They too were threatened by the Israelite presence in the Central Hill Country.

2. JOSHUA'S NIGHT HIKE FROM GILGAL, Joshua 10:6-9

When Joshua received word that the Amorites were attacking, he and his soldiers hiked all night from **Gilgal** to **Gibeon**, a distance of some 18 miles, and an ascent of 3500 feet. The shortest route utilizes the Zeboim Valley route from Jericho and crosses a strategic pass between the cities of Michmash and Geba. A soldier in the cool of the evening could make the hike in about seven hours. The all-night hike enabled Joshua to come upon the Amorites suddenly.

3. BETH-HORON HAILSTONES, Joshua 10:10-28

Joshua gained a stunning victory at Gibeon and pursued the Amorites down the "way of the **ascent of Beth-horon** and struck them as far as **Azekah** and **Makkedah**" (*black flight arrows* and *blue pursuit arrows*). The **Ascent of Beth-horon** is the main route from the west into the Hill Country near Jerusalem. It is a continuous ridge that avoids the deep Hill Country canyons. As we will see, armies and travelers used this route on a number of occasions later in both biblical and secular history.

As the Amorites fled down the Beth-horon Ridge Route, "the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah" (10:11, *red shading*). The sniper-like precision with which these stones fell was evidence that Israel's God was fighting this battle, since Israel, without harm, pursued the Amorites on the same route. More Amorites were killed by hailstones than by the sword. Additional evidence that it was the Lord who fought for Israel came with another cosmic sign. Joshua prayed "O sun, stand still at **Gibeon**, And O moon, in the valley of **Aijalon**." The sun and moon are in these respective positions around 10:00 in the morning, about one week after a full moon. "There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man." The very uniqueness of these events was evidence that the God of creation was involved.

As the Amorites came off the Beth-horon Ridge Route and into the Shephelah, they turned south. Their flight to Azekah and Makkedah illustrates two north-south routes through Shephelah. Although the location of Makkedah is uncertain, the best candidates (e.g., Beit Maqdam and Kh. el-Qum) are along a route that runs in the valley seam between the Hill Country and the Shephelah ("Chalk Moat" Route). Azekah, on the other hand, is on a route that runs diagonally through the Shephelah from the city of Aijalon, past Beth-shemesh, to Azekah and beyond to Lachish. Besides scurrying for home, the Amorites sought caves for protection from the falling hailstones. The soft limestone hills of the Shephelah are full of caves.

Joshua gave orders to keep the five kings imprisoned in a cave at Makkedah, and not lose the opportunity to strike down as many of the enemy as possible before they entered fortified cities. This strategy allowed for the eventual capture of the fortified cities without physically destroying them.

4. CAPTURE OF SOUTHERN CITIES, Joshua 10:29-43

Joshua made an example of the five kings at Makkedah, showing what "the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight" (Joshua 10:25). He then proceeded to capture cities in the southern Shephelah and Hill Country. After Makkedah, Joshua took **Libnah** (Tel Borna or Tel Labnin?). "He struck it and every person who was in it with the edge of the sword" (Joshua 10:30). This metaphor, repeated throughout the campaign, means Israel killed the inhabitants, but left the city walls and buildings intact. The Lord had promised to give Israel

great and splendid **cities which you did not build**, and **houses full of all good things which you did not fill**, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

Accordingly, Joshua's policy was to preserve the cities for Israel's own use. With a few exceptions (Jericho, Ai, Hazor) archaeologists should not look for burn or destruction layers as evidence of the Israelite conquest.

From Libnah, Joshua moved to **Lachish**. He was able to take the city after a very short siege of only two days. The short siege enabled the preservation of the material structures and contents of the city. Most of the enemy's fighting men had already been killed in the Beth-horon hailstone battle. The remaining inhabitants were struck with "the edge of the sword". Whether or not Israel was successful settling and staying in cities like Lachish is a different question. Archaeological evidence indicates that Canaanites were eventually able to re-settle in Lachish. In any case, Joshua left the city there for the taking.

The King of Gezer came to help Lachish (*orange arrow*), to no avail. Joshua soundly defeated him.

From Lachish, Joshua took **Eglon** (Tel Eitun or Tel el-Hesi?). The result was the same – the inhabitants dispatched, but the city preserved. Then Joshua moved up into the Hill Country and took **Hebron** and **Debir**. Caleb and his nephew-son-in-law, Othniel, captured these Hill Country cities (Joshua 14:6-15; Judges 1:10-15; Map 4-3).

The Central and Southern campaigns were complete: "Thus Joshua struck all the land, the **Hill Country** and the **Negev** and the Lowland (**Shephelah**) and the **Slopes** and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. And Joshua struck them from **Kadesh-barnea** even as far as **Gaza**..." (Joshua 10:40-41).

3-7: Joshua's Conquest: Northern Campaign

Date: c. 1400 BC (some prefer 13th century BC)

READ: JOSHUA 11

1. CANAANITE MOBILIZATION, Joshua 11:1-5

Joshua's victories in Central and Southern Canaan prompted action from the Canaanite kings in the north. They knew their number was up next. The leader of the coalition was Jabin King of **Hazor**. Hazor is the largest tel (hill formed by accumulation of ruined cities) in Israel, over 200 acres in size. In the Canaanite period, Hazor consisted of a large walled lower city, with an even stronger, fortified upper city. The prominence of Hazor in the centuries prior to Joshua's conquest is attested in both Mesopotamian and Egyptian documents. Hazor is mentioned as an important site in the royal documents of Mari which date to the 18th century BC (NE Map 1), as well as in Egyptian records (Maps 4-3 and 4-4). Archaeological excavations at Hazor have revealed an extensive city, developed in architecture and Canaanite cult. Geopolitically, Hazor's position in the Hulah Valley gave it control of the northern gateway of the Great International Route.

With Hazor at the head, the Canaanites planned a unified front against Israel. Canaanite kings came from all directions: from the Aravah south of Chinnereth, from the Dor coast, Jezreel Valley, Phoenician coast, and Galilee (*dashed black arrows* and *boxes*). They assembled their armies at the Waters of Merom. The location of the Waters of Merom is uncertain. The name is preserved at a spring and mountain in Upper Galilee. If this be the location, this is the only significant event described in the Bible which occurred in Upper Galilee. Because of Upper Galilee's difficult terrain, it was used infrequently by travelers and avoided by merchant and military. The presence of Canaanite chariots may suggest the Waters of Merom were in a wider plain, perhaps near Lake Hulah. We have marked the event in Upper Galilee but it should be kept in mind that the presence of Canaanite chariots there is problematic. Perhaps in fear the Canaanites gathered in more secure Upper Galilee to plan their defense. Before they had a chance to maneuver their chariots into strategic positions in the plains, Joshua's sudden attack caught them off-guard.

2. ISRAELITE ATTACK, Joshua 11:6-7

Israel surprised the Canaanite hordes at the Waters of Merom. To "hamstring their horses" made them ineffective for battle, useful only as plow or pack animals (another translation of עָקַר is "make incapable of reproduction"). Likewise, Israel was to "burn their chariots in fire" because God's people were not to depend on the latest or best military hardware for their victories, but on God (2 Samuel 8:4; Deuteronomy 17:6; Psalm 20:7).

3. CANAANITE FLIGHT, Joshua 11:8-9

Joshua defeated the Canaanites and pursued them into distance lands (*black flight* and *blue pursuit arrows*). **Great Sidon** is on the Phoenician Coast in the northwest. **Misrephot-maim** may be the Litani River which flows through northern Upper Galilee. The **valley of Mizpah** was the northern part of the Hulah Valley below Mount Hermon (Joshua 11:3).

4. DESTRUCTION OF HAZOR, Joshua 11:10-15

Returning from the pursuit, Joshua captured Hazor. He "struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword," and then, in contrast to the other cities, "he burned Hazor with fire" (Joshua 11:10). The Scriptures are very clear about this distinction:

However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds (Hebrew "tel"), except Hazor alone, which Joshua burned (Joshua 11:13).

There is considerable debate as to evidence of destruction by fire at Tel Hazor which could be attributed to Joshua. The archaeologists who have excavated Hazor in modern times attribute the final destruction of the Canaanite city in the 13th century BC to Joshua (*BAR* 25/3, 1999:22-39). Biblically, credit for the final destruction of Canaanite Hazor should go to Israelites following the victory of Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:24, Map 6-4). Earlier destruction-with-burning evidence at Hazor could be associated with Joshua. The biblical picture is that during the 170 years separating Joshua from Barak, the Canaanites were able to resettle in Hazor. That the Israelites in Joshua's days took as plunder "all the spoil of these cities and the cattle" (Joshua 11:14), suggests that Israel was not able to immediately or successfully inhabit many of the conquered cities (cf. Joshua 13:13 and Map 6-2). In any event, it should be emphasized that destruction of the Canaanite cities by the Israelites was the exception rather than the norm. Only Hazor was burned during the northern campaign, as Jericho and Ai earlier. The Israelite policy was to preserve the physical structures of the city with the hope of inhabiting them.

Conquest as Judgment

A corollary to the Israelite conquest is divine judgment on the Canaanites. By the time God brought Israel into Canaan the corruption of the Canaanites had reached a point where the only remedy was judgment (Gen 15:6, 1 Ki. 21:26). Judgment meant annihilation, removal from the land (Deut. 7:1-2). In the days of Noah, God similarly removed the wicked from the earth (Gen. 6:5-7). The difference between "Noah's" and "Joshua's" judgments being that Joshua's involved human beings, the nation of Israel, as the channel through which the judgment was administered in a comparably small area of land. Even so, Joshua's judgment on Canaan was an obvious divine act (waters of the Jordan stopped, Jericho's walls falling down, hailstones from heaven, lengthened day, cf. Deut. 7:1-2). Joshua's judgment appears to be a unique humans-involved-as-the-instrument-of-annihilation period of which "there has been none like it before or since" (Josh. 10:14). Human armies since Joshua cannot claim divine sanction for population annihilations.

The flood and Israel's conquest serve as paradigms for a final cleansing of the evil from the earth. When human corruption and wickedness reaches pre-flood or Canaanite levels, a divine cleansing judgment will come - not by water or human armies accompanied by miracles, but by a divine heat (2 Peter 3:5-7). Then the humble who have found God's grace will inherit the earth.

Length of the Conquest

A cursory reading of the Book of Joshua may give the impression that Joshua's conquest of the land was a lightning strike event of days, weeks or months. But the Book of Joshua specifically states that this was not the case: "Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings" (Joshua 11:18). This was in accordance with the earlier predictions of the Lord:

I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate, and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land (Exodus 23:29-30).

And the LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly (Deut. 7:22).

Evidence from the testimony of Caleb shows that the conquests described in the Book of Joshua lasted at least seven years (Joshua 14:7-10, 1406-1399 BC). Caleb was 40 years old when he spied out the Land, spent 38 years in the wilderness (until age 78), and 85 when he was given his inheritance at Hebron.

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war" (Joshua 11:23).

3-8 The Amarna Letters: Canaanite Inter-relations and Relations with Egypt

Date: 1380-1350 BC

Note these markings:

1. **Green box** around Gaza.
2. **LABAYU & SONS** near Shechem, with three **orange arrows** pointing north
3. **ABDU-HEBA** near Jerusalem.
4. **MILKILU** near Gezer.
5. **'APIRU** with **blue arrows** emanating in various directions in the Central Hill Country.

This map shows the chaotic political situation in Canaan in the first half of the 14th century (1400-1350 BC). A glimpse of life in Canaan at this time is derived from letters of correspondence sent from Canaanite princes to the Pharaohs in Egypt, both Amenhotep III (1417-1379 BC) and Amenhotep IV (1379-1362 BC). These letters of correspondence are known as the Amarna Letters.

Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, also known as Akh-en-Aton, attempted to change the religion of Egypt and promoted a quasi-monotheistic worship of the sun god, solar disk Aton. He built a new city to centralize worship at Akhet-Aton (Tell el-Amarna), where the letters were found. The location of Tell el-Amarna along the Nile River in Egypt can be seen on Map 3-1.

One feature of the correspondence between the Canaanite kings and the Pharaohs is that peoples called the **'Apiru** were taking over the land. This is particularly evident from letters written by Abdu-Heba, the Canaanite king in Jerusalem, who kept insisting:

*Lost are the lands of the king (Pharaoh)!
...The 'Apiru plunder all the lands of the king...
All the lands of the king, my lord, are lost!*

*The lands of the king are lost; in its entirety it is taken from me; there is war against me, as far as the land of Seir and as far as Gath-Carmel...but now the 'Apiru capture the cities of the king!
(El-Amarna (EA) #286, ANET 487-488 and EA #288, ANET 488-489)*

The Canaanite calls for help went unheeded. Pharaoh was either unable or unwilling to do anything about the 'Apiru taking over land in Canaan. According to a conservative reckoning of biblical chronology, the political situation described in the Amarna Letters is the decades just following the Israelite conquest (1406-1399 BC). Most references to 'Apiru in ancient sources are not to Hebrews and the linguistic similarity between 'Apiru and Hebrew is probably coincidental. The term 'Apiru occurs in a variety of Ancient Near East sources as a derogatory social (not ethnic) label for people living on the fringes of civilization (Rainey 89). The 'Apiru were sometimes mercenaries, robbers, even former slaves, who took advantage of unstable political times. From the perspective of both the Canaanites and Egyptians, 'Apiru would have been a term which well fit a conquering Israel. Canaanite kings of the Amarna correspondence may be describing the upheaval caused by the Israelites during the early decades of their settlement (Merrill 117-125).

Another feature of the Amarna correspondence is the prominence of a local king named Labayu and his sons who ruled from Shechem. Labayu and his sons were accused of taking territory that was not theirs, and even of cooperating with the hated 'Apiru:

Labayu has carried out hostilities against me...and now his face is set to take Megiddo.

...the two sons of Labayu have determined to destroy the land of the king...saying... "Gath-padalla...the city which Labayu, our father, captured..."

...the sons of Labayu have given the land of the king to the 'Apiru.

... shall we do like Labayu, who gave the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru?

(EA #244, ANET 485; EA #250, ANET 485; EA #287, ANET 488; EA #289, ANET 489)

It is of interest that **Shechem** played an important role in both the Amarna correspondence and in the biblical account of the Israelite settlement in Canaan (Joshua 8:30-35 and Joshua 24). Joshua convened two assemblies at Shechem, separated by some 40 years (1406 BC and 1366 BC). The Israelites' easy access to Shechem – there is no description of an Israelite conquest of Shechem – parallels the cooperation of the sons of Labayu, princes of Shechem, with the 'Apiru.

We have already seen the prominence of **Shechem** in the patriarchal narratives (Maps 2-2, 2-3). It should be noted that Shechem developed a reputation for playing by its own rules. Shechem did not always cooperate with other ruling powers in the region, preferring rather to "go it alone." Labayu is an example of this attitude. In the Israelite period the "go it alone" stance of Shechem was shown when Jeroboam broke off from Judah and established the capital of the new Northern Kingdom (Israel) at Shechem. The city today, called Nablus, prefers not to cooperate with the modern State of Israel.

REVIEW, Map 3-8.

1. The Amarna Letters date to c. 1380-1350 BC. The Amarna Letters are correspondence from Canaanite princes to the Egyptian Pharaoh Akh-en-aton. The letters make a desperate call to the Pharaoh that his land in Canaan is being taken by the 'Apiru, and that certain other local Canaanites, prominently Labayu and his sons, are cooperating with the 'Apiru. A conservative chronological reckoning places the Amarna Letters in the decades just following the Israelite conquest.
2. Know the geographical location of Shechem, and of the city's readiness to be its own ruler.

4-1 Israelite Tribal Allotments

Date: circa 1400 BC and following

The cities and territorial allotments of the tribes of Israel are given in Joshua 13-19. The detailed geographical information suggests historicity. These chapters were written by a local (or locals) intimately familiar with the land of Israel. For example, one border marker for Benjamin comes to "the hill that lies south of Lower Beth-horon" (picture on map, Josh. 18:13). Such details can only be supplied by eye-witnesses. The Regional Maps (Section 1) show greater detail.

1. Note **MOAB** and **AMMON** in Transjordan. As noted on Maps 3-3 and 3-5, the Israelites did not attack Edom, Moab or Ammon (Deuteronomy 2:8-19). Israel knew that all land is God's and that God grants land as gift.
2. The Israelite tribes of **REUBEN** and **GAD**, and **HALF MANASSEH** (**MACHIR**) settled territory in the Transjordan territories conquered from the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. The territory extended from the Arnon River in the south to Mt. Hermon in the north. Reuben settled in the Plateau north of the Arnon River. Gad settled in the south half of Gilead, the hill country south of the Jabbok River. Half the tribe of Manasseh (Machir was Manasseh's son) was given the northern half of Gilead and also Bashan (Numbers 32, Deuteronomy 3:8-10, Joshua 13:8-32).

The Israelite tribes east of the Jordan were aware of the division the Jordan Rift Valley and the Dead Sea created between themselves and the rest of the Israelite tribes. Concerned that their origins as Israelites might be forgotten, they built a copy of the Tabernacle altar on the banks of the Jordan. The altar was to serve as a witness in generations to come that the tribes east of the Jordan were indeed Israelites (Josh. 22:10-34).

3. The allotments for the tribes of **JUDAH** and Joseph (**EPHRAIM** and **MANASSEH**) were in the Central Hill Country in Canaan. Interestingly these tribes received their territories before the other tribes, and without waiting for the casting of lots (Joshua 14-16). Judah and Ephraim particularly were leading tribes. Throughout most of Israel's history there was uncertainty and often animosity between these two tribes as to which of them should be the ultimate leader. The divinely chosen King of Israel eventually came from the tribe of Judah, as Psalm 78:67-68 relates:

He also rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.

Note the important buffer territory left between Judah and Ephraim. We will see this territory divided up and allotted to two tribes, Benjamin and Dan.

4. **Scouts Sent, and the Land Divided by Lot at Shiloh** (*orange box* around Shiloh)

JOSHUA 18:1-10

Joshua assembled the people of Israel at Shiloh in Ephraim and set up the tabernacle there. Three men from each tribe were commissioned to survey the land and write a description of the land in a book with the purpose of dividing the land into seven portions. The seven land sections would be distributed by lot to the remaining seven tribes. The geographical description of the land written down by these scouts "by towns" is most likely a source for the record found in Joshua 18-19 (and perhaps Joshua 14-17).

5. The allotment for the tribe of **BENJAMIN** came up first. **Joshua 18:11.**

Note Benjamin's allotment fell "*between*" the allotments for Judah and Joseph (Ephraim). Little brother Benjamin's territory was destined to be the battleground over which his older brothers Judah and Ephraim would contest for leadership. In comparison to other tribes, the number of sites listed for the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Dan are extensive.

6. **SIMEON** was next. His territory "was in the midst of the territory of Judah" (Joshua 19:1b) including Beersheba (#56).
7. Find **ZEBULUN** to the north of the Jezreel Valley. The village of Nazareth (not mentioned in the Old Testament) was later built in Zebulun's allotment.
8. Find **ISSACHAR** from where it touches the border of Zebulun to the Jordan River just south of the Sea of Galilee.
9. Locate **ASHER** on the coastal territory north of Mt. Carmel and **NAPHTALI** in both Lower and Upper Galilee, reaching to the Sea of Galilee.

10. Dan's Allotment and Move

JOSHUA 19:40-48 and JUDGES 1:34-35

The territory originally allotted to **DAN** was west of Benjamin, extending out to the Mediterranean coast at Joppa. Like Benjamin, DAN sat in the unenviable position *between* Judah and Ephraim. But the Amorites kept the Danites from settling the coast and caused some Danites to look for different territory. These Danites moved way to the north in the Hulah Valley near Mt. Hermon. Here they attacked the city of Leshem (Laish) and renamed it after their own ancestor, Dan (see also Judges 18 and Map 4-9).

11. Covenant Renewal at Shechem (*orange box* around Shechem)

JOSHUA 24

Near the end of his life (Joshua 23:1-2, 14), Joshua gathered the Israelites at Shechem for a covenant renewal ceremony. He reviewed Israel's historical relationship with God and then challenged the people to "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (24:15). The Israelites confirmed their covenant relationship with the Lord. A stone was set up as a witness and a memorial to that fact (24:25-27).

Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel" (24:31).

Unfortunately, this would not be the case in the next period of Israel's history, the time of the Judges.

REVIEW, Map 4-1:

1. Know the relative location of the allotments of the tribes of Israel. Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh settled in Transjordan in territory that was formerly occupied by Amorite kings. This territory extended from the Arnon River to Mt. Hermon and included the geographical regions of the Plateau, Gilead, and Golan.
2. Know the positions of the stronger tribes of Judah and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) in the Central Hills of Canaan. Benjamin and Dan were allotted the territory *between* Judah

and Ephraim. Benjamin's allotment would historically serve as a battleground between the feuding bigger tribes of Judah and Ephraim.

3. The tabernacle was first set up by Israel in Canaan at **Shiloh**. After scouts gave a description of the land in seven portions, the remaining seven tribes were given their territories by lot at Shiloh.
4. Know the relative positions of Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali in the north. Know why Dan moved from the western coast to the north by Mt. Hermon.
5. At the end of his life Joshua gathered the Israelites at **Shechem** to renew their covenantal relationship with the Lord.

4-2 Unconquered Territories - Date: 1400 BC and following

The Israelites were not successful in settling all the land allotted to them by God. Because of religious apostasy in the generations following Joshua – as the Lord had warned them – they were not able to defeat their enemies. Territory remained unconquered.

They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed (Judges 2:13-15, cf. Deuteronomy 28:15-68, 30:17-30).

1. UNCONQUERED TERRITORY – READ: JUDGES 1:27-3:6

Judges 1:27-36 describes cities and land which the Israelites were not able to settle. Manasseh was unable to drive out the Canaanites from the important Jezreel Valley cities of **Beth-shan**, **Taanach**, **Ibleam**, **Megiddo**, and from the coastal city of **Dor**. Canaanites also persisted in the Jezreel Valley cities of Zebulun. Asher unsuccessfully settled the northern coast and "lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land." Naphtali could not drive out the Canaanites of some of the cities in Upper Galilee. Around the Sea of Galilee and Golan "Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day" (Joshua 13:13). In the Coastal Plain, Ephraim could not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in the strategic city of **Gezer**. The Amorites pushed the Danites out of the Coastal and Shephelah cities – causing some of the tribe of Dan to move north. Although Judah had some early victories in the Coastal Plain, he was not able to hold and inhabit that territory (Judges 1:18-19). In the Hill Country around Jerusalem the Hivites by stratagem had made a treaty with Israel (Joshua 9) and lived in the cities of **Gibeon** and **Kiriath-jearim**. Although Judah had attacked and burned **Jerusalem (Jebus)**, Jebusites re-inhabited and remained in the city (Judges 1:8, 21).

In summary, Israel was not able to settle three areas:

- a. The plains, including the northern and southern Coastal Plains and the Jezreel Valley. There is literary and archaeological evidence that the Canaanites in the plains had the support of Egypt. For military and economic purposes Egyptian operations in Canaan focused on asserting control over the routes in the plains (Maps 3-8 and 4-4).
- b. Parts of Golan and the Hulah Valley north of the Sea of Galilee.
- c. A corridor to Jerusalem from the Coastal Plain.

On the other hand, the areas Israel had been successful settling were the Hill Country territories of Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh, some of Galilee, and Transjordan.

It is of interest to note the borders on this map parallel the borders drawn in 1948 for the modern State of Israel. Ironically, in our time it is a Jewish population that inhabits the Coastal cities, Jezreel Valley and the Jerusalem Corridor. Following Israel's War of Independence in 1948 the country of Jordan occupied the Hill Country of Judah and Samaria (Ephraim and Manasseh) and called that hill country area the West Bank (of Jordan). The modern country of Israel has held the Hill Country of Judah and Samaria (the "West Bank") since 1967.

4-3 Early Judges in Judah and Benjamin

Date: Othniel c. 1350 BC; Ehud c. 1300 BC

Introduction to the Book of Judges – the *JUDGES CYCLE*

The conquests by Israel described in the Book of Joshua lasted some seven years, from 1406-1399 BC. Both Joshua 24:31 and Judges 2:7 state that Israel served the Lord faithfully throughout Joshua's days, and also throughout the days of the elders who outlived Joshua. Therefore the transition between Joshua and the judges occurred at about 1350 BC (Merrill 146ff).

God did not intend for Israel to disinherit the Canaanites all at once, but little by little over a period of time (Exodus 23:29-30, Deuteronomy 7:22). However, because of incomplete obedience to the Lord's covenant in the generations following Joshua, the Lord left Canaanites in the land to discipline and test Israel.

So the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice, **I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died**, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not." So the LORD allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua (Judges 2:20-23).

This was the state of affairs during the period of the judges. Israel's unfaithfulness brought oppression from an enemy as part of God's discipline. When Israel cried out to God in repentance, God raised up a judge to deliver them. But then the whole *Judges Cycle* of **unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance** and **deliverance** would recur again. However, with each cycle came a downward movement in Israel's spiritual life. By the end of the Book of Judges, Israel's spiritual life had degenerated to wickedness and civil war when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (17:6, 19:22-30, 21:25). That adage appropriately describes much of the Western World today. As in the days of the Judges, doing what is right in one's own eyes leads to wickedness and defeat. Judgment is avoided through repentance and return to the Only God (Map 5-1, #4).

1. **JUDAH (Caleb and Othniel) EARLY CONQUESTS.** Note the *blue arrows* pointing south to Hebron, Debir, to the Negev (Arad and Hormah) and to the west.

READ: JUDGES 1:8-23 The description here is best understood as a flashback to earlier conquests in the territory of Judah in the days of Joshua's associate Caleb (cf. Joshua 15:13-19). During these conquests Caleb's nephew **Othniel** conquered **Debir**. Othniel was to become Israel's first judge.

Also note the *blue arrow* pointing at **Bethel** showing Ephraim's conquest of that city. Bethel was a border city between Ephraim and Benjamin and eventually would mark the border between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Southern Kingdom of Judah.

2. **OTHNIEL**

READ: JUDGES 3:7-11 being aware of the first *Judges Cycle* of **unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance** and **deliverance**. Because of their unfaithfulness, the Lord gave Israel into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim from Aram-naharaim (north eastern Mesopotamia). His name means "Cushan the Double Wicked". Following Israel's repentance, the Lord raised up Othniel as the first judge-deliverer. The site locations associated with Othniel's triumph over the Aramean king are not mentioned, but following the victory, Israel had rest for 40 years.

3. EHUD

Note the *blue arrow* through Benjamin to Jericho and the Jordan River.

READ: JUDGES 3:12-30. Israel forgot the Lord and served Baals and Ashteroth. The Lord brought Eglon the king of Moab against them. Eglon led a coalition of Moab, Ammon and Amalek and took the **City of Palms (Jericho)**. There is significance in the fact that Jericho, the first city of the Promised Land which Israel possessed under Joshua, was once again under control of foreigners. The land which was promised and possessed for covenant faithfulness was already in the process of being lost because of covenant unfaithfulness.

The city of Jericho serves as an important gateway to the Promised Land from the east (cf. Map 3-5). With Eglon at Jericho, Israel's whole eastern flank was exposed. Israel served Eglon for eighteen years. When Israel cried to the Lord in repentance the Lord raised up a Benjamite, the left-handed Ehud, as deliverer. Ehud's assassination of Eglon in a palace in Jericho initiated a battle in which Israel was able to cut off the Moabite army's escape attempt at the fords of the Jordan River. After the victory the land had rest for eighty years.

4-4 19th Dynasty Egyptian Operations in Canaan

Date: 1320-1220 BC

Review of biblical correlation to Egyptian relations with Canaan:

- a. Thutmose III (Maps 2-4 & 2-5) had campaigned successfully along Canaan's international routes. His campaigns would have been in the decades prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt. Biblical chronology suggests that the Exodus occurred in 1446 BC (I Kings 6:1). Thutmose III's campaigns would have occurred while Moses was in Midian and Israel still in Egypt.
- b. The Amarna Period (Map 3-8, 1380-1350 BC) shows an Egypt unable or uninterested in intervening in the affairs of Canaan. Biblically, the Israelites at this time were finishing the conquest and beginning the settlement of the land.
- c. Pharaohs of the 19th dynasty (marked here on Map 4-4, 1320-1220 BC) re-established an interest in Canaan. The major concern of the Egyptian pharaohs was to secure international routes in the plains. These operations occurred during the period of the judges in Israel, in territory the Israelites had been unable to settle (Judges 1:27-35. Merrill 173-175 summarizes Egyptian interests in Canaan during this period).

1. SETI I in the BETH-SHAN PLAIN

- a. Note: *Orange underline* under **Hamath** and **Pehel**. *Orange arrows* from Hamath and Pehel toward Rehob and Beth-shan. *Red boxes* around **Rehob** and **Beth-shan**.
- b. **SETI I** - the *black/red arrows* from SW corner of map along **International Highway** through the **Megiddo Pass** to Beth Shan, Hammath and Yenoam and the *black arrow* from Megiddo to Tyre.

In a stele (commemorative pillar with inscription, ANET 253-254) found at Beth-Shan, Pharaoh Seti I (1318-1304 BC) recorded that the towns of **Hamath** and **Pehel** (*orange underline*) were attacking the towns of **Beth-Shan** and **Rehob** (*red boxes*). These towns are all located at the intersection of the Jordan and Jezreel Valleys, where major trade routes connect.

Seti I sent his armies to assist Beth-Shan and Rehob. His efforts illustrate again Egyptian interests in the major routes that travel through the plains of the Promised Land. Seti's armies (*black arrows*) came from Egypt past **Gaza**, along the Coastal Plain, through the **Megiddo** pass and into the Jezreel Valley. Then they turned toward Beth-Shan, journeying through the Harod Valley, a route that connects the Jezreel Valley with the Jordan Rift Valley. The Harod Valley lies between two mountains – **Mount Gilboa** on the south and the **Hill of Moreh** on the north. On a map the Jezreel and Harod Valleys together look like an arrow pointing northwest. The triangular shaped Jezreel Valley is the arrowhead, and the Harod Valley the shaft of the arrow. Together these two valleys form a strategic section of the coveted international routes of the Promised Land. Seti I was successful in asserting Egyptian hegemony at the Jezreel-Jordan Valley intersection. An Egyptian fort dating to this period has been excavated at Beth-Shan.

A second stele of Seti I from Beth-Shan describes an attack by the 'Apiru from Mt. Yarmuta. Additional expedition records of Seti I show he was interested in securing the northern coastal route to Tyre. One of his reliefs shows him felling cedars of Lebanon.

2. RAMESES II TO KADESH ON ORONTES

Seti's successor, Rameses II, fought to a draw against the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes River (north off the map in modern Lebanon). His route is marked on the section of the **Great International Route** that travels from the **Sea of Galilee** past **Hazor** and through the **Hulah Valley** (*black/yellow arrow*). Avoiding the higher elevations of **Golan** to the east and **Upper Galilee** to the west, this route through Hazor is *the northern gateway to and from the land of Israel*.

In other inscriptions, Rameses II mentioned **Dibon** and tribes in Seir, evidence for the settlement of **Moab** and **Edom** in Transjordan. Rameses II is often misidentified as the pharaoh of the Exodus. He can't be the Exodus Pharaoh since the predecessor to the Exodus Pharaoh (i.e., the pharaoh who caused Moses to flee to Midian) reigned over 40 years (Exod. 2:15, 2:23, 4:19, 7:7; Acts 7:23, 30). Rameses II's predecessor (Seti I), reigned less than 20 years, which disqualifies Rameses II as a candidate for "Pharaoh of the Exodus". Rather, Rameses II's 65-year reign was during the period of the Judges (Merrill 85, 173-175).

3. ASHER

A document recalling the difficulties of an Egyptian scribe on the roads of Canaan from the days of Rameses II mentions numerous cities as well as the "**chief of Asher**," most likely a reference to the Israelite tribe that settled in Western Galilee (ANET 476-478). The *orange dots* on site points show locations mentioned by this scribe, including Raphia and Gaza on the southern coast; near Asher: Uzu, Acco, Achshaph, Megiddo; near the Sea of Galilee: Rehob, Yenoam, Adamim, Hammath, Hazor, Aduru, Kiriath-anab.

4. ISRAEL

Note the *blue capital letters* in Hill Country (ISRAEL). Pharaoh Merneptah (1236-1223 BC) recorded an excursion into Canaan on a memorial stele known as the "Israel Stele." He records his conquest of Canaan, Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoam and then says, "**Israel** is laid waste, his seed is not" (ANET 378). This is the only known specific reference to Israel in ancient Egyptian texts. The reference here in 1220 BC to the tribe or people of Israel argues strongly against a late date (13th century BC) for the Exodus and conquest (Merrill: 85, 175).

CORRELATION OF JUDGES TO EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS

Egyptian pharaohs showed little interest or ability to interfere with matters in Canaan in the decades following 1400 BC, the first decades of Israel's settlement in the land. These were the "days of rest" of Joshua's generation (Josh. 23:1, Jud. 2:7) and 40 years (c. 1350-1310) of rest after Othniel's victory (Map 4.6, Jud. 3:11). However, the Pharaoh's of the 19th Dynasty (c. 1320-1220 BC) showed a renewed interest in Canaan/Israel. Their interests focused on the international routes in the flat plains, precisely the areas Scripture says Israel was unable to settle because of covenant unfaithfulness to God (Baal worship, Map 4-2). The black arrows (Egypt) on Map 4-4 show Egyptian Pharaohs in Canaan seldom, if ever, ventured into the Hill Country where the Israelites predominantly lived.

Both Seti I's and Rameses II's campaigns occurred about the same time as the Moabite Eglon's oppression at Jericho (c. 1320-1300 BC, Map 4-3). Merneptah's campaign is some 70 years later (cf. 80 years of rest following Ehud, Jud. 3:30) in about 1230 BC. Deborah and Barak's victory over the Canaanites in the Jezreel Valley (c. 1220 BC) followed close on the heels of Merneptah's invasion. Merneptah's invasion may have softened up Canaanite strongholds for Deborah and Barak (Map 4-5).

REVIEW, Map 4-4

1. Review how maps 2-4, 3-8, 4-4 chronologically fit into the biblical record. What was happening in the Bible when the events marked on these maps occurred?
2. The southeast entrance-exit route of the Jezreel Valley is called the Harod Valley. The Harod Valley route connects the Jezreel Valley to routes in the Jordan Rift Valley and east to Gilead. The Harod Valley is defined by Mt. Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh, and intersects the Jordan Rift Valley at the city of Beth Shan. Pharaoh Seti I's assertion of Egyptian control at Beth-shan is a good illustration of this route. We will see the route's importance later in biblical history.
3. Review the terrain of the Great International Route's northern gateway – ascending from the Sea of Galilee (700 ft. below Sea Level) to Hazor (800 feet above sea level), through the Hulah Valley past Laish/Dan.
4. The "Merneptah Stele" or "Israel Stele" contains a reference to the people of Israel in the Land of Canaan. The stele dates to 1220 BC.

4-5 Deborah and Barak

Date: c. 1230 BC

Geographical Background.

The action in the Book of Judges shifts north to the Jezreel Valley and Galilee. As context for Deborah and Barak's defeat of the Canaanites, note or review the following features on Map 4-5:

- a. The **Jezreel Valley** and mountains around it, including **Mount Carmel**, **Mount Gilboa**, **Hill of Moreh**, **Mount Tabor**, and the **Nazareth Ridge** of Lower Galilee. The **Kishon River** drains from the Jezreel Valley to the Mediterranean Sea. Note the **Harod Valley** which connects the Jezreel Valley with the Jordan Rift at Beth Shan.
- b. The Bet Ha Kerem Valley divides between Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee. Lower Galilee consists of mostly east-west running mountain ranges (1200-1850 feet) separated by wide flat plains. Upper Galilee is a block of uplifted limestone (some peaks over 4000 feet) cut by deep canyons.
- c. East of Upper Galilee is the **Hulah Valley**, a wide, flat plain, dominated by the city of **Hazor**, home of the Canaanite King Jabin.
- d. The location of the northern tribes, including NAPHTALI, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, ASHER.
- e. Sites *underlined in black* representing unconquered Canaanite cities (Judges 1:27-33).
- f. **Kedesh of Naphtali** (Barak's hometown) and the **Oak of Zaananim** on the southwest side of the Sea of Galilee, **Hazor** in the Hulah Valley, **Megiddo** and **Taanach** in the Jezreel Valley area.
- g. The location of **Harosheth-ha-goim**, where the Canaanite general Sisera lived, is uncertain. Most Bible geographers place it somewhere in the Jezreel Valley near Megiddo. A recent suggestion with some justification places Haroshet-ha-goim near the Sharon Plain entrance to the Megiddo/Aruna Pass (*BAR* 28/3, 2002:18ff). The name means "plowed field of the gentiles."

DEBORAH, BARAK, AND YAEL

Note the *blue circle* around Mount Tabor, the *blue arrow* from Mount Tabor to the *red confrontation marker* in the Jezreel Valley, the *black arrows* from Megiddo and Taanach to the confrontation marker, and the *black flight arrow* from the Jezreel Valley to the Oak in Zaananim.

READ: JUDGES 4:1-24

The *Judges Cycle* (unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance, deliverance) played out again. This time Israel's unfaithfulness led to oppression from local Canaanites that had been left in the land. The leader of the oppression was **Jabin, King of Hazor**. Some 170 years earlier Joshua had destroyed the city of Hazor (Map 3-7, Joshua 11), but Canaanites had rebuilt and re-inhabited it. Jabin is a dynastic name, used by separate Canaanite kings of Hazor in both Joshua's and Barak's time. Israel cried out to the Lord, for Jabin of Deborah's day had oppressed Israel for twenty years.

Deborah, a "southerner" prophetess who lived "between Ramah and Bethel in the Hill Country of Ephraim" teamed up with a "northerner," Barak of Naphtali, to remove the Canaanites from the Jezreel Valley. The Canaanite presence in the Jezreel Valley was a wedge that cut off the northern tribes from the stronger southern tribes (Ephraim, Manasseh and Judah). Canaanite control of the Jezreel Valley was an issue that affected both the southern and northern tribes.

Barak gathered 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun at **Mt. Tabor**. The poetical account in Judges 5 mentions Issachar also with Barak. Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh (Machir) came with

Deborah (Judges 5:14-15) to draw the forces of the Canaanite general Sisera out to the **Kishon River** in the Jezreel Valley.

The Canaanite god Baal was believed to be in charge of the rain. Apparently his timing was bad. The Canaanite chariots, normally an advantage in the flat plains of the Jezreel Valley became a liability during heavy rainfall and flooding (Judges 5:19-21). Even in modern times mud-slides will cover roads in the Jezreel Valley during heavy winter rains.

In the land of Israel, water and rain are a metaphor for life (Deut. 11:14-17). As in the days of Gideon and Elijah to come, Deborah and Barak's confrontation shows the true God who sends rain and dew is Yahweh and not Baal. Heavy rain forced Sisera to abandon his chariot and flee by foot. He thought he could find refuge in the tent of Yael at the Oak of Zanaanim. But he misjudged the woman. Yael gave Sisera a drink of milk and sent him off to bed. When he had fallen asleep she drove a tent peg through his head.

Judges 4:23-24 says that after the Lord's victory, the Israelites gradually got the upper hand on Jabin at Hazor and then eventually destroyed him. Credit for the final destruction of the Canaanite city of Hazor should go to God and the Israelites following Deborah and Barak's victory. The land had rest for forty years (Judg. 5:31).

4-6 Gideon

Date c. 1180-1140 BC

Abimelech, c. 1120 BC

After 40 years of rest following the defeat of the local Canaanites by Deborah and Barak in the Jezreel Valley, the Israelites once again turned to the Canaanite gods Baal and Asherah. This time Israel's oppressors were the Midianites from the southeast. The Midianites "would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it" (Judges 6:5). The Midianite oppression was so great that some Israelites had to take refuge in dens and caves in the mountains (Judges 6:2). An unnamed prophet reminded the people that the external oppression was because of Israel's spiritual failures.

1. Gideon Called near Ophrah (*red box*)

READ: JUDGES 6. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon of the tribe of Manasse at **Ophrah** (modern Afula?) in the **Jezreel Valley**. The Lord told Gideon that he would deliver Israel from Midian. Gideon understood the Midianite oppression to be a result of Israel's religious unfaithfulness so he destroyed the altar of Baal at Ophrah. He built in its place another altar called "**Yahweh** is Peace." Gideon was reassured that the Lord was with him by the famous sign of the fleece. The sign was related to the Baal vs. Yahweh controversy. Heavy dew, formed by overnight condensation of moist Mediterranean Sea air, is an important source of moisture for vegetation in Israel in the summer time. Who controls this dew, Baal or Yahweh (cf. 1 Kings 17:1, Job 38:28)?

2. 300 Chosen at En Harod. Yellow *highlight* En Harod. Note **MIDIANITES** along southern side of the Hill of Moreh.

READ: JUDGES 7

The Jezreel Valley region was once again the stage for deliverance. It is not a coincidence that the first two judges following the declining Egyptian influence in Israel involved episodes in the Jezreel Valley (Maps 4-4 and 4-5). On a map the Jezreel Valley looks like an arrow head. The shaft of the arrow (the **Harod Valley**) extends southeast between the Hill of Moreh and Mt. Gilboa. Led by Gideon the Israelites gathered at En Harod (The Spring of Harod) at the foot of Mt. Gilboa while the Midianites and their allies were across the Harod Valley by the **Hill of Moreh**. At En Harod the Lord had Gideon trim down his fighting force from 32,000 men to a mere 300 "lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" Clearly the victory was due to the Lord and not the strength of man.

3. Gideon's Attack on Midian. Note *three blue arrows* pointing from En Harod to the *red confrontation marker* between En Harod and the Hill of Moreh.

Gideon divided his 300 men into three companies of one hundred each. The men were equipped with only trumpets, torches, and a clay vessel to cover the torches. In the middle of the night the 300 Israelites surrounded the Midianite camp, broke the clay vessels, blew their trumpets and shouted "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon." The Midianites probably thought that each of the 300 torches represented a division of men, and in panic took flight.

4. Midianite Flight, Judges 7:24-8:21. Note the *black flight arrows* and *blue chase arrows* from En Harod going southeast, past Beth-shan, Abel Meholah, Succoth, Penuel, Jogbehah and off the page at "Karkor." Note the *blue arrows* from EPHRAIM to the Jordan River near Adam.

The Midianite flight illustrates the **Harod Valley** route that connects the **Jezeel Valley** to the **Jordan Rift** and **Transjordan**. They forded the Jordan River near Abel-meholah (later to become the hometown of Elisha) and turned southeast up into **Gilead** at the **Jabbok River**. In the panic of the night flight, the Midianite armies turned on each other.

Gideon called for Ephraimites to cut off the fords of the Jordan near **Beth-barah (Adam?)**, preventing the Midianites from escaping south through the Jordan Rift. The Ephraimites then captured and killed two princes of Midian (Oreb and Zeeb). Ephraim's position as a leading tribe is detected in the complaint that they were not called to the battle sooner.

Gideon and his 300 men crossed the Jordan in pursuit of the rest of the Midianite army. Note the **Jabbok River** around **Succoth** and **Penuel** serves as an entryway into the hills of **Gilead** from the Jordan Valley. The inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel (Israelites from the tribe of Gad!) refused to offer Gideon aid. A political regionalism had developed in the two centuries since the conquest under Joshua. The Gadites did not think victory was yet Gideon's – and feared a Midianite reprisal. In the end Gideon would make them pay for their unfriendly attitude, knocking down a tower at Penuel and thrashing the men of Succoth with thorns.

Gideon caught up with the Midianite forces at **Karkor**, over sixty miles east of the Dead Sea. Even though the Midianite coalition had lost 120,000 of 135,000 men, they still were vastly superior in number to Gideon's 300 (Judges 8:10). But the Lord was saving by few. Gideon routed the Midianite forces and captured Zebah and Zalmunna, two Midianite kings.

Deliverance from Canaanite and Midianite oppressors in the Jezeel Valley marked on Maps 4-5 and 4-6 is recalled by later authors of Scripture, as in Psalm 83:9-11:

Deal with them as with Midian,
As with Sisera and Jabin,
at the torrent of Kishon,
Who were destroyed at En-dor,
Who became as dung for the ground.
Make their nobles like Oreb
and Zeeb,
And all their princes like Zebah
and Zalmunna,
Who said, "Let us possess
for ourselves the pastures of God."

The prophet Isaiah recalled Gideon's victory when he predicted that the Lord would end Assyrian oppression of Judah "like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb" (Isaiah 9:4, 10:36). Isaiah also looked forward to the day when the Midianites would come with their hordes of camels not to oppress Israel, but to worship Yahweh (Isaiah 60:6).

5. ABIMELECH

Note the *red boxes* around **Thebez** (Tubas), and **Shechem** and the name **JOTHAM** on **Mt. Gerizim**.

READ: JUDGES 8:28-9:57

After Gideon's victory the land had rest 40 years. However "as soon as Gideon was dead...the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god" (Judges 8:33). Baal-Berith means "Master of the Covenant." Apparently Israelites were attributing the covenants associated with Abraham and Joshua at **Shechem** to Baal. This time God's discipline came not in the form of foreign oppression, but through internal political turmoil. **Abimelech**, a son of Gideon by a concubine from **Shechem**, became ruler in Shechem. He killed 70 other sons of Gideon minus one, Jotham. Jotham's famous parable given from **Mt. Gerizim** warned that Abimelech's rule would lead to trouble. Jotham was right. Within the next few years Abimelech himself had destroyed the city of **Shechem** (*red box*), including the temple of Baal-Berith (or El-Berith). Archaeological remains of this temple may have been exposed in excavations at Shechem. Also, the city gate at Shechem (Judg. 9:35, 40) is most likely the Middle Bronze (Canaanite) Age gate being used in the Israelite period. Remnants of the gate still stand in-situ at Shechem today.

Abimelech was killed with the aid of an upper millstone thrown from a tower by a woman in **Thebez** (*red box*). This first attempt by Shechem to set up its own king (cf. Map 6-3) ended in failure.

REVIEW, Map 4-6

1. The *Judges Cycle* of unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance and deliverance played out in the days of Gideon. Dew on the fleece was a sign that Yahweh controls dew, not Baal.
2. The oppressors of Israel in Gideon's days were a coalition of southeastern peoples led by the Midianites.
3. Gideon's involvement with Midianites illustrates the southeast entrance-exit into the Jezreel Valley via the Harod Valley. Midian's presence here threatened both the agricultural and political livelihood of Israel. Know the locations of En Harod, Mt. Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh.
4. The Jabbok River, Succoth and Penuel region is a gateway from Israel to Gilead.
5. After Gideon's death the *Judges Cycle* spun again with Israel's defection of Yahweh to Baal Berith. Review the geographical locations associated with Abimelech's attempt to make himself ruler, including Shechem, Mt. Gerizim and Thebez.

4-7 Jephthah

Date: c. 1100 BC

Geographical Background

Events in the life of Jephthah occurred in Transjordan. Note the following geographical and historical features:

- a. The Arnon River canyon (Wadi Mujib), only part of which appears on the south side of the map (cf. Map 3-3). The Arnon is a huge gorge that drains from the eastern desert into the Dead Sea. It is 1700 feet deep and over two miles wide. It creates a barrier to travel, and served as the northern border of the territory of Moab (Numbers 21:13).
- b. The Jabbok River canyon (Wadi Zarqa) on the north side of the map. The Jabbok River splits Gilead in two.
- c. Between the Arnon and Jabbok Rivers are two regions: the flat Plateau (of Medeba) and the southern half of the Hills of Gilead. Under Moses' leadership the Israelites conquered this territory from two Amorite kings (Numbers 21:21-35, Map 3-3). The tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh settled here (Numbers 32).

1. **AMMONITE OPPRESSION.** Note the *black arrows* pointing from and toward Ammon.

READ: JUDGES 10:6-9

This time the oppressors of the *Judges Cycle* were the Ammonites, descendants of Lot, who had settled in the region between Gilead and the eastern desert. The Ammonite capital was at Rabbat-Ammon, modern Amman, capital of the modern country of Jordan. The Ammonites oppressed the Israelites in Transjordan, and even crossed the Jordan River to make raids into Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim.

2. JEPHTHAH

Note the LAND OF TOB off the northeast side of map. Note the *blue arrow* from the north pointing at Mizpah, the *blue box* around **Mizpah**, the *blue arrows* from **Mizpah** to **Abel-Keramim**, across map south, with forks, toward **Aroer** by the Arnon River.

READ: JUDGES 10:17-11:40

After repenting and putting away their foreign gods, the Israelites gathered at Mizpah in Gilead to choose a leader (this Mizpah is undoubtedly the site of the treaty between Laban and Jacob, Genesis 31:46-49). The Israelites chose as their leader the outcast warrior Jephthah, who was from the family of Gilead, a descendant of Manasseh (Numbers 26:29). With Jephthah's leadership the Israelites succeeded in recovering the territories of Gilead and the Plateau as far south as the Arnon River.

The correspondence between Jephthah and the Ammonite king recorded in Judges 11 is of great interest since it has a bearing on the nature and date of the Israelite conquest by Moses and Joshua. In the Ammonite revisionist version of history, the king of Ammon claimed that "Israel took away my land when they came up from Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok and the Jordan" (Judges 11:13). Jephthah clarified the historical facts, stating that the Israelites traveled around the east side of the territory of Edom and Moab and took no territory from Ammon. Jephthah claimed: "We did not take this territory between the Arnon and Jabbok Rivers from you Ammonites. We took it from the Canaanite-Amorites!" (Judges 11:21-23).

Jephthah went further: "Israel has been living in the Plateau villages like Heshbon and Aroer and along the banks of the Arnon River for *three hundred years!* Why do you come to make a claim now?" (Judges 11:26). The reference here to Israel being settled in Transjordan for *three hundred years* helps date the Exodus-Conquest. Extrapolating back from well-accepted dates for the kings of Israel like David and Solomon, Jephthah lived around 1100 BC. Therefore the Israelite conquest occurred around 1400 BC (a date corroborated by 1 Kings 6:1).

Jephthah's rash vow concerning his daughter is indicative of the distorted morality of this period of the judges. The author of Judges leaves ambiguous whether Jephthah followed pagan practice in sacrificing his daughter, or if she was committed to some form of celibacy. Interestingly, Jephthah has a place in the faith hall of fame in the New Testament (Hebrews 11:32).

3. **EPHRAIM (Shibboleth).** Note the *blue arrows* from **EPHRAIM** pointing toward and away from **Zaphon**, and the blue arrow from Gilead toward Zaphon. Note the *red box* around Zaphon and the *red confrontation marker*. Note the word "**Shibboleth**" near Zaphon.

READ: JUDGES 12:1-7

As with Gideon, the "we are-supposed-to-be-leader" Ephraimites confronted Jephthah, this time sparking an internal war between tribes of Israel. Geo-political regionalism is evident again, with Ephraimites on the west side of the Jordan accusing Gileadites on the east side of being renegades. Linguistic differences had developed. Jephthah and the Gileadites got the upper hand in the battle and at the fords of the Jordan could detect Ephraimites by their inability to pronounce the "sh" of the Hebrew letter "shin" in the word "shibboleth."

REVIEW, Map 4-7:

1. Know the geographical features of Transjordan including the Arnon River and the Jabbok River, and the two regions between these rivers, the Plateau and Southern Gilead. Be familiar with the sites of Mizpah in Gilead and Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Canyon.
2. The oppression by the Ammonites was part of the *Judges Cycle* of Israel's unfaithfulness, oppression, repentance and deliverance.
3. In Jephthah's days the Ammonites claimed that the territory of the Plateau and Southern Gilead was theirs. Ammon said that Israel had taken the territory from Ammon when Israel came out of Egypt. Jephthah clarified the historical facts, reiterating that Moses and the Israelites did not take this territory from Ammon, but from the Canaanite-Amorites.
4. Jephthah's historical lesson includes a reference to the fact that by his time the Israelites had already been in the towns of Transjordan for three hundred years (Judges 11:26). Along with 1 Kings 6:1, this reference shows that the Israelite conquest began around 1400 BC (Jephthah is to be dated to c. 1100 BC considering his chronological relation to the kings of Israel).
5. The Ephraim-Shibboleth battle was sparked by internal Israelite regional jealousies that had developed in the three hundred years since the conquest under Joshua.

4-8 Samson Date: c. 1100 BC

Geographical and Historical Background

- a. The deeds of Samson occurred mainly in the **Shephelah** (accent on the last syllable) of Judah. The Shephelah ("lowlands") is a region of foothills (elevation 400 - 1300 feet) sandwiched between the Coastal Plain and Hill Country. The Shephelah foothills are bisected by flat valleys with routes that run east-west connecting the Coast to the Hill Country. Cities were built in the foothills above the valleys to control the routes. The Shephelah functioned as a buffer zone between the remote Hill Country (Israelites) and Coastal Plain (Philistines). The battles of Samson in the Sorek Valley and David in the Elah Valley illustrate that the Shephelah was debatable ground between Israel and the Philistines. Find the **AIJALON, SOREK** and **ELAH Valleys** in the Shephelah.
- b. Note the location and borders of the tribes of Israel: **DAN, JUDAH, BENJAMIN** and **EPHRAIM**. Samson was from the tribe of Dan. *Yellow Highlight* cities associated with Samson along the Sorek Valley: **Eshtaol, Zorah, Timnah**.
- c. Israel's oppressors this time were the **PHILISTINES** (*black text and arrows*). The Philistines stand out as one of Israel's main enemies in the days of the judges, Samuel, Saul and David. The Philistines were descendants of Ham, not through Canaan but by Mizraim (Egypt) (Genesis 10:14). Some Philistines were already living on the Coast in the days of the patriarchs, but most migrated from the island of Crete (Caphtor) in c. 1175 BC during the Sea Peoples' migrations (Amos 9:7, Zephaniah 2:5, Deuteronomy 2:23, ANET 262-263).
- d. Judges 10:6-7 suggests that the judgeships of Jephthah and Samson were contemporaneous. As with Jephthah, we date Samson to c. 1100 BC, putting him about 75 years after the arrival of the Sea People Philistines.

THE LIFE OF SAMSON

READ: Judges 13:1-16:31 which describes the escapades of Samson. Numbers in *white boxes* indicate where events occurred. You may want to neatly *yellow highlight* these boxes.

1. Between **Eshtaol** and **Zorah** (Judges 13)

Samson's parents were told by the angel of the Lord that they would have a child. The child was to be a Nazirite from birth. Sorek, the name of the valley along which Samson lived, means "a choice vine." Refraining from any product of the vine would require no small measure of self-discipline. The "spirit of the Lord began to move upon Samson at Mahaneh-Dan between **Zorah** and **Eshtaol**" (Judges 13:25).

2. Near **Timnah** in the Sorek Valley (Judges 14:1-4)

Samson saw and wanted to marry a Philistine girl from Timnah (Tel Batash), which is about a two-and-a-half hour walk down the Sorek Valley from Zorah (see Map 1-11 for better detail). It is in the Shephelah that the Israelite and Philistine cultures came face to face. Timnah is the only city in the Old Testament period that was built directly in a valley of the Shephelah. All others, for security measures, were built on the foothills. Timnah could not resist having access to the flowing waters and agricultural potential of the Sorek River. The agricultural productivity of the Sorek Valley is evident as products like grapes, wheat and olives appear in various places in the Samson story.

3. Near **Timnah** (Judges 14:5-18)

Traveling to Timnah with his parents to meet his girlfriend, Samson was enabled by the Spirit of the Lord to kill a young lion. The lion must have been living in the thickets of the Sorek River. When Samson returned later to marry his fiancée, he found bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. The honey and lion prompted Samson's riddle: "Out of the eater something to eat. Out of the strong

something sweet.” By “plowing with Samson’s heifer” (Judg. 14:18), the Philistines provided the answer just before sundown on the seventh and last day of the wedding feast.

4. **Ashkelon** (Judges 14:19-20)

Samson killed thirty Philistines in Ashkelon to pay off his debt from the riddle.

5. Near **Tinnah** (Judges 15:1-6)

After learning that his wife had been given to another man, Samson burned the Philistines' wheat fields and olive orchards with the aid of 300 foxes (although the Hebrew word for “barley” has the word “fox” in it). When the Philistines learned of it, they burned his wife and father-in-law in their house.

6. Near **Etam** (Judges 15:7-20)

The location of Etam and Lehi is uncertain although they are probably to be located in the Hill Country of Judah south of Bethlehem (modern Artas, cf. 2 Chronicles 11:6). The men of Judah were concerned that Samson had brought his battles with the Philistines into their territory, stating, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" With the Spirit of the Lord and the jawbone of a donkey, Samson was able to kill one thousand Philistines. There are Hebrew word plays in this passage: jawbone and Lehi are the same word, as well as donkey and heaps (Judges 15:16-17).

7. **Gaza** (Judges 16:1-3)

Samson went to a harlot in Philistine Gaza. The Philistines hoped to capture him.

8. **Hebron** (Judges 16:3)

Samson carried the gates of Gaza to a mountain near Hebron in the Hill Country of Judah – a distance of 40 miles (64 kilometers) and an elevation rise of over 3000 feet (900 meters).

9. **Sorek Valley** (Judges 16:4-20)

"Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the **Valley of Sorek**, whose name was Delilah" (Judges 16:4). The lesson of Samson’s life is reiterated over and over again in Scripture. Without the Spirit of the Lord Samson was as weak and incapable as any other human. The flesh is weak. Only by the Spirit of God are great things done. “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit”, says the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

10. **Gaza** (Judges 16:21-30)

The Philistines gouged out Samson's eyes and brought him to Gaza where he labored in grinding (grain or olives). With God’s Spirit Samson had torn off the gates of Gaza. Without God’s Spirit Samson was weak and Gaza became his prison. His hair – the symbol of his relationship to God - grew back. He brought the house down one last time.

11. Between **Eshtaol** and **Zorah** (Judges 16:31)

Samson's brothers retrieved his body and buried him in the tomb of his father Manoah, between **Eshtaol** and **Zorah**, the very same area in which the Spirit of the Lord first stirred him.

REVIEW, Map 4-8:

1. Know the geographical characteristics of the Shephelah. The Shephelah is a region about 10 x 40 miles of foothills bisected by valleys. The Shephelah is a buffer zone between the Hill Country of Judah and the Philistine Coastal Plain. Routes in the Shephelah valleys connect the Coast to the Hill Country.
2. Samson was from the tribe of Dan and many of his efforts were in the Sorek Valley in the Shephelah. He is unique in Scripture because his military victories were done by one man, and not by armies – all the more evidence of the divine Spirit’s involvement.
3. Samson, although of questionable moral character (like Jephthah), made it into the faith hall of fame (Hebrews 11:32). What is a lesson of Samson’s life that is reiterated often in Scripture?

4-9 Judges Appendices and Ruth (the Bethlehem Trilogy)

Date: 14th-12th centuries BC

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Judges 17-21 and the Book of Ruth form a trilogy of events which have some common elements, including the city of Bethlehem. The events in the trilogy are:

1. the northern **Migration of the Tribe of Dan** – with a Levitical priest from Bethlehem
2. the **Benjamite Civil War** sparked by the death of a concubine from Bethlehem
3. the story of **Ruth**, centered around Bethlehem

The Migration of Dan and the Benjamite Civil War appear to have occurred early in the days of the judges, since Jonathan, the grandson of Moses is mentioned as the priest who served the tribe of Dan (Judges 18:30, the best Hebrew manuscript evidence reads "Moses" and not "Manasseh" – only a one letter difference in Hebrew); and Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron served as priest during the Benjamite Civil War (Judges 20:28). However, Ruth must be toward the end of the judges' era since she was the great grandmother of David (Judges 1:1, 4:21-22).

The preceding chapters of Judges have left us with the feeling that over time the quality of leadership in Israel deteriorated. From Joshua -- to Jephthah and Samson -- there was serious spiritual and moral decline. By the end of the book at least one tribe in Israel is a moral and spiritual equal to the Canaanites. The Book of Judges closes with the statement that "in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25, 17:6, 18:1). Could a righteous king clean up the mess? Maybe. Saul came from Gibeah of Benjamin, a site viewed negatively in these narratives. David descended from the one real bright spot in all the Judges narratives, the foreigner Ruth in Bethlehem of Judah.

1. MIGRATION OF THE TRIBE OF DAN

READ: JUDGES 17:1-18:31 and note the following graphics on the map as you read:

- a. **Orange arrow** labeled **DAN** from **Zorah** to **Kiriath-jearim**, to **HILL COUNTRY OF EPHRAIM** and pointing to **Laish-Dan** north off the map.
- b. **Yellow highlight** (fine-tip) the Hill Country Central Ridge (watershed) Route from **Shechem**, south past **Bethel**, **Gibeah**, **Jerusalem**, **Bethlehem** and off the page.

As mentioned above, this Migration of Dan probably occurred early in the period of the judges. The migration involved some but not all of Dan. Samson descended from Danites that had remained in their allotted southern territory. Other Danites, unable to settle territory in the Shephelah and Coast (Judges 1:34-35), moved way north to the well-watered and productive **Hulah Valley** at the foot of **Mount Hermon** (see Map 1-5). The sources of the **Jordan River** are here, including the largest fresh water spring in the Promised Land, which emanates from the foot of **Tel Dan**. It is "a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth" (Judges 18:10). The region is geographically segregated by the higher elevations of Upper Galilee, Mt. Hermon and Golan.

Six hundred armed Danites set out from **Zorah** and **Eshtaol** into the Hill Country. They stopped at **Mahanah (Camp of) Dan** (modern Yad Ha Shmonah – Neve Ilan), just west of **Kiriath-jearim**. Passing through Ephraim on the **Central Ridge Route**, they found a priest with a graven image and idols. At the end of the narrative we learn that this priest was Jonathan the grandson of Moses. The Danites conquered the city of **Laish**, renamed it **Dan**, and set up for

themselves the graven image and idols. They think they are worshiping Yahweh, but it is a twisted form of worship where people do what's right in their own eyes. Jonathan and his sons served as priests of Dan all the time that the Tabernacle was at Shiloh (i.e., until c. 1100 BC, cf. Map 5-1).

2. JOURNEY OF THE LEVITE FROM BETHLEHEM

READ: JUDGES 19:1-30, noting the *green arrow* along the Central Ridge Route from **Bethlehem** to **Jerusalem** to **Gibeah**.

A Levite from **Ephraim** went to retrieve his concubine who had fled to her hometown of **Bethlehem**. The woman's father in Bethlehem was a hospitable man, providing abundance of wine and food. After four and a half days the Levite, his concubine and a servant headed home along the **Central Ridge Route**. The route is indicated by the *green arrow* from **Bethlehem** past **Jebus (Jerusalem)** to **Gibeah**. They started the journey late in the day. Unwilling to stay the night in Canaanite Jebus (quite likely they would have been better off if they had!), they pressed on to reach a city of Israelites "either **Gibeah** or **Ramah**" before nightfall (Judg. 19:12-13). Their travel itinerary places each of these cities along the Central Ridge Route.

In **Gibeah of Benjamin** the travelers received hospitality only from an old Ephraimite. The wickedness of the men of Benjamin was shocking. Israel's, at least Benjamin's, spiritual and moral decline was complete. They had become like the men of Sodom – totally canaanized and deserving of judgment, doing what they determined was right (like much of modern society). They became an example of sin to later generations. "They have gone deep in depravity as in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sin" (Hos.9:9).

3. BENJAMITE CIVIL WAR

READ: JUDGES 20:1-48, noting the following map graphics:

- a. *Red box* around **Gibeah**.
- b. *Blue arrows* pointing at **Bethel** and **Mizpah** with *white text*: **TRIBES MOBILIZE**.
- c. *Red confrontation marker* between **Ramah** and **Gibeah**.
- d. *Blue arrow* from **Mizpah** to the confrontation marker at Gibeah. The *red arrow* from the confrontation marker to **Rimmon** shows the **BENJAMIN RETREAT**.

All the rest of the tribes of Israel gathered at **Mizpah** for council on how to respond to the wicked deed of the men of Gibeah. The tribe of Benjamin would not hand over the perpetrators and civil war resulted. After two unsuccessful attacks from **Bethel** the tribes of Israel got the upper hand and almost totally wiped out the tribe of Benjamin. Six hundred surviving Benjamites fled east to the wilderness and found refuge at the Rock of **Rimmon**.

READ: JUDGES 21:1-25, noting the *orange boxes* around **Shiloh** and **Jabesh-gilead**.

In order that the tribe of Benjamin would not totally disappear, four hundred wives were brought from **Jabesh-gilead** in Transjordan and two hundred more were snatched from the vineyards of **Shiloh** (forget about dating!). King Saul most likely descended from one of the gals of Jabesh-gilead. His first military expedition was at Jabesh-gilead (Map 5-2). The

Apostle Paul eventually descended from one of these marriage arrangements (Romans 11:1, Philippians 3:5). Oh the depths of God's grace!

A geographical description of the **Central Ridge Route/Road of the Patriarchs** is given in Judges 21:19: "**Shiloh**, which is on the north side of **Bethel**, **on the east side of the highway** that goes up from **Bethel** to **Shechem**, and on the south side of **Lebonah**." The need for directions implies that the location of Shiloh, where God's Tabernacle stood, had already become uncertain to some Israelites. The Israelites' relationship with God had been neglected.

3. RUTH & NAOMI

Find **NAOMI & RUTH FROM MOAB** along the *white arrow* pointing to and from Bethlehem.

Events described in the **Book of Ruth** occurred "when the judges ruled" (Ruth 1:1), when there was **no king in Israel** and everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The Moabitess Ruth appears as a lily among the thorns of the political, moral and spiritual chaos of the period of the judges. Importantly, the Moabite maiden was a channel for the fulfillment of **God's promise of a king** descended from Abraham and Judah (Ruth 4:11-12; Genesis 17:6, 16; 49:10; Matthew 1:5). This king was not to be Saul from Gibeah in Benjamin, but **David from Bethlehem of Judah**.

REVIEW, Map 4-9:

1. Know the sites associated with the Migration of Dan, including: Zorah, Eshtaol, Mahaneh Dan, Kiriath-jearim, Hill Country of Ephraim and Laish-Dan.
2. Know the sites associated with the Benjamite Civil War: Bethlehem, Jebus, Gibeah, Ramah, Mizpah, Bethel, Rimmon, Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh.
3. The Central Ridge Route – Road of the Patriarchs is illustrated well in the Benjamite Civil War account. The Levite returning to Ephraim walked the section Bethlehem-Jebus-Gibeah-(Ramah). The northern continuation is the "highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem."
4. The Book of Judges closes with the statement that "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The Book of Ruth, which occurred during the era of judges, traces the origins of King David of Bethlehem who would lead the people of Israel back to their God. However, Israel's history was to prove that unfaithfulness to God occurred both with and without the monarchy.

5-1 Samuel's Ministry

Date: early 11th Century BC (Battle of Aphek, 1104 BC)

1. BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF SAMUEL AT RAMAH AND SHILOH – 1 Samuel 1-3

The Period of the Judges - when "there was no king in Israel" (Judges 21:25) - came to a close in the days of Samuel. As Israel's last judge, Samuel launched a religious revival that resulted in political and territorial gains for Israel. Samuel anointed Israel's first two kings.

The Book of 1 Samuel opens with a description of Samuel's birth. Samuel's parents traveled back and forth from their home in **Ramah** to **Shiloh** (1 Samuel 1:1, 3, 19) along the Road of the Patriarchs (*brown arrow*). Because of the circumstances surrounding Samuel's birth, he was dedicated as a lad to the Lord's service in the Tabernacle at Shiloh. "And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD" (1 Samuel 3:20-21).

2. The Battle of Aphek (1104 BC) – 1 Samuel 4

The battle of **Aphek** dates to 1104 BC, not long after the efforts of Samson against the Philistines. Samuel was probably in his late teens at the time (Merrill 149-150, 173-176). The high priest in the **Tabernacle at Shiloh** was Eli. His sons were "worthless men; they did not know the LORD" (1 Samuel 2:12). They robbed sacrifices, and practiced Canaanite cult immorality "with women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting" (1 Samuel 2:22). The devastating loss in the battle at Aphek is in part a judgment on the house of Eli.

The *black arrow* pointing from PHILISTINES to **Aphek** indicates the Philistine strategy. The Yarkon River blocked traffic on the coast and forced all routes inland to Aphek, making this a strategic choke-point along the International Coastal Highway. By taking Aphek, the Philistines were in a position both to strike east into Israel's heartland, and to expand north along the Sharon Plain and into the Jezreel Valley (cf. Map 5-2).

The *blue arrows* pointing from Shiloh to **Ebenezer** show Israel's reaction to the Philistine mobilization. But the Israelite effort to halt the Philistines at Aphek was a catastrophic failure. The Israelites thought the LORD to be a kind of talisman that could help carry out their plans. They held only to a form of religion, not its power. Their thoughts and actions were far away from the God of the Ark of the Covenant. Let us not be deceived. God is not mocked. Thousands of Israelites, including the two sons of Eli, perished in battle. The Ark of the Covenant was captured and upon hearing the news in Shiloh, Eli the high priest died.

Archaeological evidence shows a **destruction of Shiloh** at about this time. Shiloh's devastation became legendary and was used to teach spiritual lessons later in Israelite history. People living in the prophet Jeremiah's day thought they were safe simply because they had the temple (and Ark of the Covenant) in their midst. God told them:

But go now to My place which was in **Shiloh**, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel ... therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to **Shiloh**. (Jeremiah 7:12-14. cf. 26:6, 9 and Psalm 78:60).

3. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT in PHILISTIA and RETURN VIA BETH SHEMESH (1104 BC) – 1 Samuel 6:1-7:3

The *orange arrows* track the journey of the Ark of the Covenant through Philistia. 1 Samuel 5 records how the Philistines brought the captured Ark of the Covenant to the temple of their god Dagon in **Ashdod**. The Philistines imagined the God of Israel was humbly prostrate before their god. Just like in our day people imagine the God of the Bible lies prostrate before the theory of evolutionary humanism. But the incomparability and invincibility of Yahweh will be asserted.

The next morning Dagon was found lying face downward before the Ark. Dagon was set up again, but the following day was once again prostrate, but this time his hands and head were found severed, lying on the temple's threshold. If this symbol of Yahweh's unrivaled power was not enough, the people of Ashdod were struck with a plague of tumors. The Ark was sent off to other Philistine cities, first **Gath** and then **Ekron**, but with similar results. Here too the Philistines were struck hard by a plague. In desperation they sought a way to return the Ark of the Covenant to Israel.

The Ark of the Covenant was in Philistia for seven months (1 Samuel 6:1). Those seven months must have been a humiliating and soul-searching time for Israel. Could things get any worse? The very object which symbolized Yahweh's presence among Israel was in the hands of the enemy! If God wasn't with them they were (weak) as any other people. On the other hand, perhaps news of the difficulties the Philistines had with the Ark of the Covenant reached Israel.

Journey of the Ark from Ekron to Beth-shemesh via the Sorek Valley

The Philistines devised a plan to send the Ark back to Israel. They put the Ark on a cart, together with an offering of five golden tumors (?) and five mice – one each for the five cities of the Philistines – and hitched the cart to two milk cows. **Ekron** sits close to where the mouth of the **Sorek Valley** spills out into the Coastal Plain. From Ekron, the cows pulled the Ark along the road up the Sorek Valley to the Israelite city of **Beth Shemesh**. The proximity of Beth Shemesh to Ekron (i.e., of Israelite culture to Philistine) is noted in the text as the Philistine lords were able to travel back and forth between the two cities in less than one day (1 Samuel 6:16). There is irony in the fact that the Israelites had lost the Ark when they tried to manipulate God, but God used two milk cows to bring it back.

It was during the wheat harvest, springtime, when the Ark of the Covenant arrived in Beth-shemesh. The best texts of 1 Sam. 6:19 read “He struck down of all the people 70 men, and 50 thousand men”. The Hebrew for “struck” נכה can but does not necessarily mean “killed”. It can also mean strike with a plague or sickness. The numbers “70 men, and 50 thousand men” appear to refer to a sum total of:

1. all people who were struck during the Ark's dishonoring, both Israelites (70?) and Philistines (50,000?), perhaps even including those killed in the battle of Aphek (1 Sam. 4:2, 10). Or,
2. all the people in the Beth-shemesh area who were struck, perhaps killed (70?) and sick (50,000?).

In any case "they sent messengers to the inhabitants of **Kiriath-jearim**, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; *come down* and *take it up* with you" (1 Samuel 6:21). Beth-shemesh is in the foothills (Shephelah) of Judah, 800 feet (243 m) above sea level. Eleven miles east in the Hill Country sits Kiriath Jearim at 2500 feet (756 meters). The men of Kiriath-jearim *came down* 1700 feet in elevation to *take up* the Ark. They would have used a Hill

Country ridge route to do so, perhaps the same Kiriath-jearim ridge that a portion of the modern highway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem travels on today. See Map 1-11 for geographical details.

4. NATIONAL REPENTANCE & VICTORY over the PHILISTINES at MIZPAH (1084 BC) – 1 Samuel 7:1-14

The Ark of the Covenant had been in Kiriath-jearim for 20 years, and then Samuel initiated religious and political reform that resulted in a nation-wide repentance. Samuel recognized that the external Philistine oppression was the result of an internal spiritual problem (1 Samuel 7:3). "So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only" (1 Samuel 7:4). The national repentance brought about a substantial improvement in Israel's political and military situation. An initial battle occurred in Central Benjamin at **Mizpah** (*black arrows* and *blue pursuit arrows*). "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car" (1 Samuel 7:11). The location of Beth Car is uncertain. We associate Beth Car with Lower Beth-horon, showing the Philistines fled west down the Beth-horon Ridge. Also of uncertain location are "Shen" and "Ebenezer" (Stone of Help) (1 Samuel 7:12). Samuel's Ebenezer appears to be a different location from the place where the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 4:1). However, Samuel is deliberately using the same name, as if to say: "When you went after other gods and acted as you liked, and thought you could use Yahweh as a talisman – you lost big time. That was no Stone of Help. But now, when we have directed our hearts toward Yahweh, to serve Him only – we have gained a powerful victory. This is our Stone of Help (Ebenezer)."

The victory at Mizpah was only the beginning of a general reprieve from Philistine oppression in the days of Samuel. The people acknowledged that these victories were not man's but the Lord's (1 Sam. 7:3, 8, 10).

So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:13-14).

5. SAMUEL'S CIRCUIT – 1 Samuel 7:14-17

Orange underline and the *dashed light blue line* around **Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah** and **Ramah** indicate Samuel's leadership focused in the allotment of Benjamin. Things had changed much for the better since the Benjamite civil war, and from the opening of the book of 1 Samuel. Pure Yahweh worshipped had been restored and Israel appeared to be much more unified as all acknowledged Samuel to be God's prophet.

REVIEW, Map 5-1:

1. Know historical and geographical elements (including site locations) associated with the birth and childhood of Samuel, especially Ramah and Shiloh.
2. Know historical and geographical elements (including site locations) associated with Battle of Aphek. What makes Aphek a strategic location? Know that a conservative reckoning dates this battle to 1104 BC.
3. Review events which occurred during the Ark of the Covenant's seven month journey through Philistia and back to Israel at each of the following locations: Ashdod, Gath, Ekron, Beth Shemesh, Kiriath-jearim. Through which valley in the Shephelah was the Ark of the Covenant pulled by two cows when it traveled from Ekron in Philistia to Beth-shemesh in Judah? Then the Ark of the Covenant was brought from Beth-shemesh to Kiriath-jearim in Judah, where it stayed 20 years until Samuel's victory over the Philistines at Mizpah.
4. What is the Battle of Mizpah? How long did it occur after the Battle of Aphek? Why would Samuel name a new site Ebenezer following the Battle of Mizpah in contrast to the Ebenezer associated with the Battle of Aphek?
5. How had things improved in Benjamin between Judges 19-21 and 1 Samuel 7? In which tribe did Samuel's judging circuit focus?

5-2 Saul's Beginning and End

Date: 1051-1011 BC (Merrill 210-211)

1. Saul Chosen as King at Ramah and Mizpah – 1 Samuel 10

The Book of Judges records four times that "there was no king in Israel" (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). When Samuel was old (1 Samuel 8:1, 12:2) the elders of Israel requested that he "appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). The notion of Israel being ruled by a king is indeed consistent with earlier revelation (Genesis 17:6, 16, 35:11, 49:10; Deuteronomy 17:14-20). However, Samuel's negative reaction to the people's request is due to the nature of the kingship they wanted – "like all the nations". and, because of the people's inability to wait for the man of God's own choosing (Deuteronomy 17:15; 1 Samuel 14:14, 16:1).

When Samuel was old (1 Samuel 8:1, 12:2) the elders of Israel requested that he "appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). Israel's request for a king was rejection of God who became their King by covenant at Sinai. While the Sinai Covenant itself had provision for a human king (Deut. 17:14-20; Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:7), he was to be a king that ruled in theocratic relation under God. Israel's desire wasn't for a king to rule under God, but for a king "like all the nations". Samuel explained clearly that a nations-like king would take advantage of the people and ultimately lead Israel away from their God. As the Lord told Samuel: "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7-18).

The Scriptures warn of over-centralized human power removed from divine subjection. Unfortunately history has shown that time and time again man has rejected God's sovereignty in favor of centralized human government.

While Saul was searching for his father's donkeys in Central Benjamin, he came to **Ramah** where Samuel privately, and from Saul's perspective, unexpectedly, anointed him to be king (1 Sam 9:1-10:16). Aside from this rather strange way in which Israel's first king is introduced, an interesting geographical note contained in Samuel's instructions to Saul shows that the tomb of the matriarch Rachel is in the territory of *Benjamin* – not at the traditional location near Bethlehem of Judah (1 Samuel 10:2).

In **Mizpah**, Samuel made a public proclamation of Saul's kingship (1 Samuel 10:17-27). The people probably expected the first king to come from one of the leading tribes, either Judah or Ephraim. The selection of Saul as the first king is all the more surprising since he was from the tribe of Benjamin, whose territory sat *between* that of the leading tribes of Judah and Ephraim (1 Samuel 10:21). The reluctant (fearful?) Saul was brought from hiding during this public declaration in Mizpah. While some people were satisfied with the choice of Saul as king, others – one can surmise that there were men of Ephraim and Judah among them – said, "How can this man deliver us?" So they despised him, and brought him no present" (1 Samuel 10:27).

2. Saul's Victory at Jabesh Gilead against Ammon – 1 Samuel 11

Note the Israelite *blue arrows* mobilizing first at **Bezek** and then crossing into Transjordan to wage war against the Ammonites at **Jabesh Gilead**. Yellow HL box #2, **Bezek**, and **Jabesh Gilead**.

The Ammonite king Nahash had oppressed **Jabesh Gilead**. The Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul (1 Samuel 11:6). This is the same enabling power which Israel's victorious judges

had experienced (Judges 6:34, 11:29, 15:14, etc.). At least initially God was with Saul. This victory at Jabesh-gilead demonstrated so. With a surprise attack Saul was quickly able to relieve the Ammonite oppression in Gilead. As a Benjamite, Saul would have had near kin at Jabesh Gilead (Judges 21:11-13).

3. Covenant Renewal at Gilgal

After Saul's stunning victory over the Ammonites in Gilead there was a suggestion that Saul eliminate those who had earlier expressed disdain at his kingship. Saul humbly took a different course, acknowledging that "today *the LORD* has accomplished deliverance in Israel." If only Saul could have kept the same attitude throughout his rule! At Samuel's initiative, all Israel gathered at **Gilgal** and confirmed Saul as King (1 Samuel 11:12-14). This was in fact the third time that Saul was either anointed or proclaimed king (see events at Ramah and Mizpah above). It is not coincidental that the coronation ceremony took place at the same location where the first Israelite memorial acknowledging God's power had been erected upon entering the Land of Canaan (Joshua 4:19-24).

4. Battle against the Philistines at Geba-Michmash, The Pass

Note the Philistine *black arrows* pointing in three directions from **Michmash** toward **Ophrah**, the **Zeboim Valley**, and **Upper Beth-horon**. Note the Israelite *blue chase arrows* from **Beth-horon** toward **Aijalon**. Yellow HL box #4, **Michmash, Geba, Gibeah, and Aijalon**.

READ: 1 SAMUEL 13:1-14:31

Saul's attitude and Israel's situation had taken a turn for the worse since the earlier victory at Jabesh-gilead. The Philistine oppression which had been removed in the earlier days of Samuel returned. Saul's son, Jonathan killed a Philistine governor (or military garrison) at **Geba**. This meant open rebellion against Philistine dominion. The Philistines planned to extinguish the emerging Israelite monarchy and assembled a huge army at **Michmash**. In addition to the size of the Philistine forces, the ease of their arrival in the Hill Country at Michmash shows just how grim the situation was for Israel. Was it idolatry that brought Israel again to these dire straits? Some Israelites hid in caves and cisterns, others fled to Transjordan. Jonathan stayed in Geba but Saul moved to **Gilgal**. Saul grew impatient waiting for Samuel at Gilgal and took over the priestly role himself, offering sacrifices. For his presumption and unfaithfulness Saul was condemned. A moment after Saul's blunder Samuel arrived and told Saul "now your kingdom shall not endure." This event marks the beginning of the end for Saul.

Samuel and Saul returned into the Hill Country to Gibeah and Geba with a small army of 600 men. The Philistines sent out forces in three directions from Michmash. One unit went north toward **Ophrah**, another west to guard the **Beth-horon Ridge**, and the third went east toward Gilgal-Jericho in the **Valley of Zeboim**. Finally, an additional Philistine garrison "went out to *The Pass of Michmash*" (1 Samuel 13:23).

The Pass is a strategic route that crosses over the Suwenit canyon between **Michmash** and **Geba**. This area can be seen in greater detail on Map 1-9. Michmash sits on the north side of the canyon, Geba on the south side. Both sides of Wadi Suwenit are defined by steep limestone cliffs which prevent any significant travel across the canyon. However, between Michmash and Geba the terrain slopes enough that a route can cross over from one side of the canyon to the other. This route is *The Pass of Michmash*. For video review of the Pass start at 9:10 minute of [this video](#).

While Saul was in Gibeah (1 Samuel 14:2, 16), his son Jonathan went out from Geba determined to confront the Philistines on the north side of the Pass at Michmash. It is worthwhile to note how geographically specific the narrative is:

At the Passes in which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison there was a cliff on one side and a cliff on the other side. The name of one cliff was Bozez, the name of the other was Seneh. One cliff stood on the north in front of Michmash. The other stood on the south in front of Geba (author's translation, 1 Samuel 14:4-5).

The writer of 1 Samuel knew well the geographical elements of the Pass. Some 300 years later the prophet Isaiah did too (Isaiah 10:28-29). The geographical specificity of the text in both cases, again, suggests we are dealing with real historical events.

Jonathan did not attack the main Philistine garrison guarding *The Pass*. Instead Jonathan and his armor bearer crossed the Wadi Suwenit just to the east where he had to scale the difficult cliffs of Bozez and Seneh. Here he attacked the Philistine flank. But it was enough to get the ball rolling. Assisted by an earthquake (i.e., God), the Philistine troops were thrown into confusion and Israel "struck the Philistines that day from **Michmash** to **Aijalon**" (1 Samuel 14:31). Their flight is marked out on the Beth-horon Ridge Route. Knowing the "Lord could save by many or by few", Jonathan and not Saul acted like Israel's king should.

5. **Saul's battles against Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah (Aramea), Philistines and Amalekites Summarized**

Note the *blue arrows* on the upper right portion of the map toward Moab. **Yellow HL box #5**

READ: 1 SAMUEL 14:47-48

The verb used in 1 Samuel 14:47 seems indicative of what was happening to Saul. He "seized" the kingship over Israel. From being a reluctant ruler who acknowledged God's sovereignty (1 Samuel 11:13) the power was going to his head. He forgot that the kingdom was God's. He forgot that he was only a steward in God's house, and began believing the house was his own.

6. **Saul's Battle against the Amalekites, and Disobedience**

Note the *blue arrow* pointing south off the map from Bethlehem. **READ: 1 Samuel 15.**

God instructed Saul to make war on the Amalekites. The Amalekites were semi-nomadic desert dwellers. Originally descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:12, 16), the LORD said the Amalekites would be His perpetual enemies because they had attacked Israel when Israel came out of Egypt (Exodus 17:8-16). Saul set up a victory monument after his battle on the road southeast of **Hebron** at **Carmel**, where pro-Saul sentiments were later expressed by Nabal (1 Samuel 15:12; 25:5-10). Saul's incomplete obedience in the battle against the Amalekites brought an additional clear condemnation, again spoken at **Gilgal**, from Samuel:

"To obey is better than sacrifice... Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22, 23, 26).

Soon after Saul's disobedience in the Amalekite affair, Samuel anointed **David** king in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16). The great enabling power which had worked in the judges and Saul, the Spirit of the LORD, came upon David from that day forward. But the Spirit of the LORD

departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16:13-14). Much of the rest of Saul's life was taken up with battles against the Philistines or pursuit of David. By this time the change for the worse in Saul's life was complete. His attitude went from being "little in his own eyes" (1 Samuel 15:17) to megalomania. He deluded himself into thinking that the kingdom was his, and forgot that it was God's. The lesson is for all, since there is a little bit of Saul in everyone. No nation, no institution, no ministry, no teaching, no land, no bank account, belongs to us. As another Saul of Benjamin said, we are but servants and stewards of that which belongs to God (1 Corinthians 4:1).

Saul's disobedience caused a break in his fellowship with others. Saul and Samuel went to their respective homes in **Gibeah** and **Ramah**, two miles apart, yet never saw each other again.

7. Saul's Death and the Philistine victory on Mt. Gilboa

Note the Philistine *black arrows* which point to **Aphek**, then along the Sharon Plain and into the Jezreel Valley toward **Shunem** and then to **Beth Shan**. **Yellow HL** the cities of **Aphek**, **Jezreel**, **Shunem**, **En Dor**, and **Beth Shan**.

READ: 1 SAMUEL 31

The Philistines used **Aphek** on the Sharon Plain as a springboard for expansion north. David - who in his effort to escape from Saul had been living at **Ziklag** in the Negev as a vassal of the Philistine lord of **Gath** - also came with the Philistines to Aphek, posing as if he was ready to do battle against Saul. But David was sent away because other Philistines lords did not trust him. Returning to Ziklag he found the city burned and his family taken captive by Amalekites (Map 5-4).

While David's Ziklag situation was newsworthy, the main headlines of the day dealt with the battle shaping up between the Philistines and Saul in the **Jezreel Valley**. Saul had camped on **Mount Gilboa** and at the city of **Jezreel**, while the Philistines' main camp was at the foot of the **Hill of Moreh at Shunem** (1 Samuel 28:4, 29:1). The Philistine presence in the Jezreel Valley was a vital threat to Saul's kingdom. In the Jezreel Valley, Philistines could both financially and militarily strangle Saul. They could control all major routes through Saul's kingdom and divide and conquer by driving a wedge between northern and southern Israelite tribes.

Desperate for direction, Saul sought out a witch. He slipped around the Philistine camp at Shunem to get to the witch at **En Dor**. But necromancy didn't help. Samuel informed Saul that all was happening under the LORD's sovereignty. The LORD was taking the kingdom away from Saul and giving it to David (not to the Philistines!).

The battle the next day went terribly for Israel. Saul was wounded and retreated to **Mt. Gilboa**. His armor bearer would not kill him so Saul fell on his own sword. The Philistines found his body and the bodies of his three sons on Mt. Gilboa. They cut off Saul's head and sent it as a trophy throughout Philistia. His armor was placed in a temple of Ashtoroth (a temple uncovered at Beth-shan?). The bodies of Saul and his sons were displayed on the walls of Beth-shan. But Israelites, Saul's relatives from Jabesh Gilead - the same city where Saul had his first military victory - came at night and took the bodies and buried them in Jabesh.

REVIEW, Map 5-2:

Review the geographical locations and principle players in events marked above (#1-7) of the life of Saul:

1. Saul was privately anointed by Samuel as king at **Ramah**, and then publicly confirmed at **Mizpah**.
2. Saul's first military victory was against the Ammonites at **Jabesh-gilead**.
3. The coronation covenant was renewed – in effect a third declaration of Saul as king – at **Gilgal**.
4. Jonathan initiated a stunning victory over the Philistines at **the Pass of Michmash**. The geographical specificity of the biblical description of the terrain around the Michmash-Geba Pass shows an intimate relationship between the history and geography, and is evidence that the episode is a real historical event. Saul's presumptuous sacrifice at **Gilgal** prior to the battle was the beginning of the end for him.
5. A summary of Saul's victories over Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah (Aramea), Philistines and Amalekites is given in 1 Samuel 14:47-48, but also hints at the changing attitude of Saul from humility to pride.
6. Saul battled against the **Amalekites** but for his disobedience the LORD told Saul in no uncertain terms that the kingdom would be taken away from him. Be aware of the attitude change which had occurred in Saul – *from personal humility to personal kingdom ownership*. In addition, the great enabling power, the Spirit of the LORD, was taken away from Saul.
7. Saul's Death and the Philistine victory on **Mt. Gilboa**: The Philistines used **Aphek** as a springboard for expansion north. David and his men attempted to join the Philistines at **Aphek**, but were sent back to the town of **Ziklag**. The Philistines assembled at **Shunem**, while Israel under Saul camped at **Jezreel**. Saul sought the witch at **En Dor**, but was mortally wounded in battle the next day. The Philistines found Saul's body and the bodies of his three sons on Mt. Gilboa. They cut off Saul's head, and displayed the bodies on the wall of Beth Shan. Israelites from **Jabesh Gilead** took the bodies and buried them at Jabesh.

5-3 David and Saul

Late 11th Century BC

Introduction

Events in the life of David and Saul marked on this map illustrate the regional distinctions of the area of Judah. In addition to the Coastal Plain, Judah is composed of four distinct regions: 1) the **Hill Country**, Judah's heartland; 2) the **Shephelah**, the foothills separating the Hill Country from the Coastal Plain; 3) the **Wilderness**, flanking the Hill Country's eastern side down to the Dead Sea, and 4) the **Negev**, drier territory to the south.

Before considering David's flight from Saul, three events marked on this map illustrate some intriguing internal political circumstances of Saul's reign. Saul's wars against Amalek in the Negev and against the Philistines in the Shephelah stood to gain support for his Benjamin-based monarchy from the larger tribe of Judah. Yet, sandwiched between these two battles, unbeknownst to Saul, Samuel anointed David of Judah to be the new king of Israel. Saul's efforts to court Judah's support were in vain. The LORD was taking the kingdom from him and would give it to a man from Judah.

Saul's Campaign against Amalek: Disobedience and Rejection – 1 Samuel 15

Saul's victory over the Amalekites undoubtedly scored him political points with the tribe of Judah since it was segments of Judah that the Amalekites harassed in the Negev and southern Hill Country. As a reminder that Saul had worked a great triumph on Judah's behalf, he set up a victory monument at Carmel, a location in close proximity to the Hill Country, Wilderness, and Negev (1 Samuel 15:12). Ironically at the very time that the Benjamite Saul thought he was *gaining* political support from the tribe of Judah, he was actually *losing* his kingship because of his disobedience to God. Saul's political aspirations had displaced more important elements in his life – namely his relationship with God and God's word. Saul was told by Samuel:

"...you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel...The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you" (1 Samuel 15:26, 28).

David Anointed King at Bethlehem of Judah. READ: 1 SAMUEL 16

Unknown to Saul at the time – although he may have had his suspicions - the "neighbor" who would succeed him as king was from Judah. Soon after Saul's disobedience in the Amalekite affair, Samuel was sent to Bethlehem to anoint the king whom God had selected. "The LORD sought for himself a *man after his own heart*" (1 Samuel 13:14, cf. 16:1) refers as much to the fact that *God* (not man) made the selection as it does to any character traits of David. It was at this time that the great enabling power – the Spirit of the LORD – came upon David but departed from Saul.

David Defeats Goliath in the Valley of Elah

The Shephelah region functions as a buffer zone between the Coastal Plain and the Hill Country. The Shephelah's rolling foothills, 400-1300 feet in elevation, provide the first line of defense against infiltration into Judah from the Coast. The wide valleys in the Shephelah provide convenient east-west routes which connect the Coastal Plain to the Hill Country. Cities built on the foothills control the valley routes. Note the valleys of the Shephelah on the map and the cities associated with each valley: The **Aijalon Valley** controlled by **Gezer**; the **Sorek Valley** and **Bethshemesh**; the **Elah Valley** and **Azekah** and **Socoh**. Note that routes ascending into the Hill Country from the Shephelah travel on ridges (i.e., not in the deeply cutting canyons of the Hill

Country). Find the ridge routes that lead from the Elah Valley up into the Hill Country. One ridge route travels past **Hushah** and arrives at **Bethlehem**. Another branch angles south and then up into the Hill Country at **Hebron**. Note greater detail on Maps 1-10 and 1-11.

The Elah Valley is the setting for one of the most famous stories in all of Scripture. The Philistine plan was to gain access to the ridge routes up toward Bethlehem and Hebron. Doing so would allow them to cut off Judah from Saul's Benjamin-based monarchy. It was a strategy of *divide and conquer*.

The situation was critical for Saul. Support for Saul among the people of Judah hinged on his success or failure in this battle. The Philistines had already established a foothold at **Azekah**, **Socoh** and **Ephes-dammim**. This meant they controlled the west and southern sides of the Elah Valley and were perhaps pushing to the north side of the valley (if Kh. Qeiyafa is Efes-dammim). Saul had to oust the Philistines from the Shephelah and prevent any further incursion into Judah. He must have established his camps in the Hill Country just east looking down into the Elah Valley, and as much as he dared, out into the Shephelah hills extending along the northern side of the Elah Valley.

READ: 1 SAMUEL 17 noting the geographical elements of the passage. The Philistine *black arrows* point to **Azekah** and **Socoh**. Saul's forces (*blue box and arrows*) were probably guarding routes into the Hill Country, and along the north side of the Elah Valley. Jesse told David to bring supplies to his brothers (and a gift for their commander!). David would have traveled from Bethlehem down the **Hushah** Ridge Route to the Elah Valley, some 15 miles and the better part of a day's journey (*blue arrow*). The slaying of Goliath possibly occurred near **Socoh**. The Elah Valley is only several hundred yards wide near Socoh and voices would easily be heard from one side to the other. David's victory, coming as it does immediately after Samuel anointed him (1 Sam. 16) was evidence that David was the chosen-by-God rightful king of Israel. The victory shows the nations that Israel's God is God alone, and that His kingdom is not established by the sword.

Following David's triumph the Israelites pursued the Philistines on the "war to Shaaraim". Excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa on the north side of the Valley of Elah have exposed a well-fortified site that archaeologists date to the time of either Saul or David. City walls, two city gates, a large palace, storehouses and an inscription that appears to be Hebrew have been uncovered at the site. The site could be either Shaaraim ("two gates") as the excavator suggests, or perhaps Efes-dammim (as on our map). Both sites are mentioned in the David-vs.-Goliath narrative.

The Philistines fled to the cities of **Ekron** and **Gath**. Archaeological excavations at both sites uncovered large Philistine cities. Of special interest from recent excavations at Gath (Tel es-Safi) is a Philistine inscription which the archaeologist believes contains a name with linguistic similarities to Goliath. The inscription dates to around 900 BC, over 100 years after the biblical Goliath lived, but is corroboration to the linguistic and cultural reality presented in the biblical account.

The battle resulted in a resounding victory for Israel. But was it for Saul? We can be sure that Saul's emotions were mixed at the end of the day when he learned that the young stripling with the giant's head in his hand was from Bethlehem – of Judah!

David's Flight from Saul

David proved himself a successful warrior. As time passed the women of Israel made up folk dances and sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on (1 Samuel 18:7-9).

Saul felt that the young man from Judah was stealing the show, and had to be eliminated. Instead of performing the duties of king, Saul, consumed with jealousy and fear, pursued David (1 Sam. 18:6-9). The **boxed numbers** show David's flight from Saul. Events and human testimonies (e.g., Samuel, Jonathan, Abigail, even Saul) in the narrative emphasize that David, although a fugitive and rejected by many, is the rightful king chosen by God. His experience at this time parallels that of Jesus, the Son of David who would "suffer these things and then enter into His glory" (Luke 24:26). Once again the many geographical details given are evidence of the historical reality of the events. It is impossible to know exactly how long this period lasted but it may have been as long as eight or nine years (Merrill 244). Read the following biblical texts and follow David's movements as indicated by the boxed numbers on the map.

1. Gibeah: 1 Samuel 18:10 – 19:17.

In **Gibeah** Saul attempted a number of times to kill David, either by pinning him to the wall with a spear or by getting him killed in battle against the Philistines. Hampered by an evil spirit, Saul wavered between vows of death and life toward David.

2. Ramah: 1 Samuel 19:18-24.

David fled to Samuel in **Ramah**. Saul's efforts to pursue David in Ramah were frustrated by the Spirit of God in a rather unusual fashion.

3. Gibeah: 1 Samuel 20.

Back in fields near **Gibeah**, David and Jonathan made their covenant of friendship and devised a plan to determine the extent of Saul's hatred. Saul even attempted to assault his son Jonathan with a spear.

4. Nob, 1 Samuel 21:1-9.

David came to **Nob**, located just northeast of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. The Tabernacle was there and David ate the bread of the presence, normally reserved for priests (cf. Matthew 12:3-4). He also took Goliath's sword. David's fascination with the sword seems misplaced considering that previously he had proved that God doesn't save by the sword.

5. Gath: 1 Samuel 21:10-15 & Psalm 56, Psalm 34.

David fled to **Gath**, knowing that he endangered any Israelite that assisted him. He supposed that he could find refuge from Saul in Philistine territory. But the plan did not work. David was seized by the Philistines and "feared greatly" for his life, pretending like he was crazy in order to escape. In this context read **Psalm 56**, written by David "when the Philistines captured him in **Gath**" (title). The Psalm centers on trust in God and His Word during times of fear. Note the similar title and themes in **Psalm 34**.

6. Adullam: 1 Samuel 22:1-2.

David escaped from Gath to the caved-lined hill of **Adullam**. Adullam is situated in the seam between the Hill Country and Shephelah. It is *in-between* territory both geographically and politically. Even today it sits in a no-man's land between Jewish and Arab populations along a border drawn in 1948. In this frontier territory David found refuge from Saul on one side and from the Philistines on the other. Neither Saul nor the Philistines even knew he was there.

David hiding in the caves of Adullam is a good place to stop for a moment to look ahead at the **dramatic change** that he would experience. David's situation at Adullam, humanly speaking, looked like it had little chance for success. But David went from hiding out in caves with 400 outcasts to being sovereign over a kingdom that reached to Damascus and Egypt. Without the latest military hardware he went from refugee to sovereign over Israel, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Gilead, Golan and beyond. This dramatic change, for those with eyes to see, is evidence of the divine involvement in David's life. Israelite and foreigner alike could stand back and say, "God is in this."

There is a parallel with the Son (descendant) of David – Jesus the Messiah. Jesus – "who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3) – moved about with a band of followers in the hills of remote Galilee. Jesus, like David, was pursued by the leaders of the nation. Humanly speaking, Jesus had little possibility for success. But the small beginnings were part of the divine plan. There was to be an incredible growth which man could recognize as the hand of God. Without taking up a sword, the humble Jesus has influenced the nations to the ends of the earth. The **dramatic change** from Galilean peasant to someone being discussed with these very words is evidence of divine involvement. For those who have eyes to see, this is no human plan.

7. **Moab: 1 Samuel 22:3-4.**

Saul could have kidnapped David's parents as leverage against David, so David brought his parents to **Moab** in Transjordan. David's family had connections to Moab as his great grandmother (Ruth) was from there. From Bethlehem, David would have descended on a ridge toward the Dead Sea and En Gedi, then perhaps crossing into Moab via the Dead Sea Lisan Peninsula.

8. **The Stronghold: 1 Samuel 22:4-5.**

From Moab David came to the **Stronghold** (Metsudah). This may be the desert fortress today known as Masada. Masada is a rock plateau which rises over a thousand feet above the desert terrain around it. The top of the plateau is 2000 x 650 feet (600 x 200 meters) with steep canyons on all sides. Masada eventually was built up by Herod the Great and then served as the last stand for Jewish nationalists in the 1st Revolt against Rome (67-73 AD). Masada's height and the barren rocky desert terrain around it make it a secure refuge. Rocks like Masada were the inspiration for themes in **Psalms 18, 31, 61, 62, 63.**

The LORD is my **rock** and my **fortress** (metsudah) and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my **stronghold** (Psalm 18:2).

9. **Forest of Hereth: 1 Samuel 22:5-23.**

At the advice of Gad the prophet, David left the Stronghold and came to the **Forest of Hereth**, of unknown location. The fact that it is a forest suggests the Hill Country, perhaps just south of Maon or maybe even on the west side of the watershed. At this point David's whereabouts became known to Saul. Tribal politics and Saul's threatened personality stand out in the passage. Saul shouted at his fellow tribesmen, "Hear now, O Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse also give to all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? For all of you have conspired against me..." Then in his insecurity Saul presumed that the high priest Ahimelech had conspired with David. In a fit of jealous rage Saul had 85 priests killed, including the high priest, and destroyed the city of **Nob**. Abiathar the son of Ahimelech the high priest escaped to David.

10. Keilah: 1 Samuel 23:1-14.

At **Keilah** in the Shephelah the Philistines were robbing the grain right off the threshing floors. David enquired of the Lord if he should intercede. If only we all had access to a high priest with an ephod for important decision making! This was a momentous decision since, until this time, David had not functioned militarily in defense of Israel, independent of Saul. We can assume that Saul's destruction of Nob and its priests influenced David's decision. For the first time David's men would operate in defense of the people of Judah since Saul was not getting the job done. David's band became a military option for Judah as opposed to Saul's army. Saul believed David's open appearance in a fortified town would allow him to capture David. The Judahites of Keilah still felt a loyalty to Saul. At least they perceived Saul's superior military strength. Once again David sought the Lord for direction and moved to the Wilderness of Ziph.

11. Wilderness of Ziph: 1 Samuel 23:14-29.

David was visited by Jonathan while in the Judean Wilderness east of **Ziph**. Even in light of David's recent military operations, and probably because of Saul's actions at Nob, Jonathan encouraged David. Jonathan's confession that David was God's chosen king shows humble insight. Either from respect or fear, the Ziphites (of Judah!) informed Saul of David's whereabouts. The description here fits the geography of the region. "Jeshimon" (waste, barren) may refer to the Judean Wilderness generally, or to a specific area of it (eastern slope where little vegetation grows?). Ridges and mountains are formed by the deep-cutting canyons that drain east toward the Dead Sea. David and his men were on one side of a ridge while Saul and his army were on the other side. At the last moment Saul called off the pursuit in order to deal with a Philistine raid on a different front. The ridge was named "Rock of Division" since it had kept Saul's troops separated from David.

12. En Gedi: 1 Samuel 23:29-25:1.

The only real oasis along the western shore of the Dead Sea is at **En Gedi** (Spring of the Young Goat). Here in the barren terrain and heat of the Wilderness and Dead Sea regions, both man and animal find refreshment. There are a number of fresh water springs and waterfalls in the canyons on both sides of the En Gedi ridge. Saul came with 3000 choice soldiers to look for David by the Rocks of the Ibexes. In order to relieve himself, Saul entered into the very cave in which David and his men were hiding! The episode contrasts the paranoia of Saul with the patient humility of David.

13. Ramah: 1 Samuel 25:1.

The prophet Samuel died after the incident at En Gedi. The narrative gives the impression that there was enough of a timeout in Saul's hatred to allow David to attend Samuel's funeral in Ramah. But David knew Saul's animosity would return. He went to the Wilderness of Paran. This appears to be a different Paran from the wilderness of the same name much further south (Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12). It may be the desert area around the Parat Spring just east of Gibeah and Anathoth, or perhaps an unknown location near Maon.

14. Maon and Carmel, 1 Samuel 25.

Nabal was another resident of Judah who either from fear or gratitude gave allegiance to Saul. Saul's army was still the official army and superior to anything David could offer. In addition, Saul's victory monument in Carmel was a reminder of his efforts on behalf of the people of the region. Nabal's resistance to David was also motivated by a great deal of selfishness. Different entirely was his wife Abigail. This sagacious and humble woman (1 Samuel 25:41) not only preserved her husband's life (at least temporarily) but also kept David from alienating a population which lived only miles from where he would eventually be crowned as king. Abigail's words add weight to the narrative's testimony that David is God's chosen king.

15. Wilderness of Ziph, 1 Samuel 26.

David moved to the same place he had hidden before when he was in the Wilderness of Ziph, "on the hill of Hachilah" (1 Samuel 23:19; 26:1). Whereas previously the Rock of Division and a Philistine incursion had frustrated Saul's pursuit – this time David was able to enter right into the sleeping Saul's camp. Saul's unfounded fear was again confirmed.

16. Gath, 1 Samuel 27:1-5.

Knowing that Saul would never give up the pursuit, David went once again to **Gath**. David was able to make a deal with the Philistine king of Gath. As the sayings go: "politics makes strange bedfellows," and "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." The game had changed from both David's and the Philistines' perspectives since the last time David was in Gath and barely got out of town alive. This time David had showed up in Gath with six hundred armed men, and a reputation for being Saul's enemy.

17. Ziklag, 1 Samuel 27:5-12.

Achish of Gath assigned David the city of **Ziklag** on the southern frontier of Philistia. David's sixteen months at Ziklag before he was crowned king of Judah at Hebron are considered in greater detail on Map 5-4.

REVIEW, Map 5-3

1. Know the location and characteristics of the four geographical regions of **Judah: the Hill Country, Shephelah, Wilderness and Negev**.
2. There is a relationship between Saul's battles in Judah to the anointing of David as king of Judah. Saul's battles against the **Amalekites** in the **Negev** and the **Philistines** in the **Shephelah** could theoretically have gained him the support of the tribe of **Judah**. However, because of his disobedience to God, at this very time Saul was losing the kingdom. David of Judah was anointed to take his place. Credit for the victory against the Philistines in the Shephelah ultimately would go not to Saul, but to David, who credited God.
3. Know the geographical elements associated with David's battle with **Goliath**, including site names (the **Elah Valley, Azekah, Socoh, Ephe-dammim, Gath and Ekron**) and how the Shephelah functions as a **buffer zone** between the Hill Country and the Coastal Plain. Why can the Philistine incursion into the Elah Valley be called a strategy to divide and conquer?
4. Ten chapters of the Bible (1 Samuel 18-27) deal with Saul's relentless pursuit of David. The period may have lasted up to nine years. David must have learned many lessons during this time concerning patience, leadership, humility and seeking and trusting in God. The period was the inspiration for many of the Psalms. In addition, the sufferings David experienced in these years before he became king are parallel to those experienced by David's descendant, Jesus, who said, "Ought not the Messiah (Anointed) to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26). The dramatic change from humility to glory is evidence of divine involvement in the lives of both David and Jesus.
5. During his flight from Saul, David gained hands-on exposure to the geographical and regional features of Judah. These chapters abound with geographical information – evidence of the events' historicity. Review in order each of the successive stages in David's flight from Saul (#1-#17 on the map). Try to associate events with site names.
6. Saul's fear of David was totally unfounded. His fear was a result of his own self-centered attempt to hold onto his position. Ironically Saul's unfounded fear was one factor that destroyed him. His relentless pursuit of David sapped much time and effort that should have been spent elsewhere. How different Saul's life might have been if he could have come around to understanding the statement of the predecessor to the Son of David, "he must increase, but I must decrease."

5-4 David Works for the Philistines at Ziklag

Date: 1012 BC

Note the regional distinctions of this southwestern part of Israel. Locate the (Philistine) **Coastal Plain, the Shephelah, Hill Country, Negev and Wilderness (Highlands)**. Note especially how agriculture diminishes in the Western Negev Basin south of **Ziklag** and **Gerar** and disappears entirely south of the **Brook Besor**. The events marked on this map involve raids in and out of the semi-arid Negev region. The description of nomadic tribal raids (Amalekites) into the settled agricultural region conforms to the character of life here (cf. Map 2-2).

1. David at Ziklag

READ: 1 SAMUEL 27

After years of fleeing from Saul in Judah, David found refuge, of all places, with Achish the King of Gath. A change in political factors caused Achish to gladly receive David; he even assigned David and his men the city of **Ziklag**. For sixteen months Achish believed that David's raids on nomads south of the Negev were raids on the families of the tribes of Judah.

2. Philistines Mobilize at Aphek: David Sent Back

READ: 1 SAMUEL 29

In the meantime the final battle between the Philistines and Saul was brewing in the Jezreel Valley. As the Philistines consolidated their forces at **Aphek**, Achish insisted on David's loyalty but other Philistine lords were not convinced. David and his men were sent back and after a journey of three days came to **Ziklag**.

3. Amalekite Raid of Ziklag

READ: 1 SAMUEL 30

When David and his men returned to **Ziklag**, they found the city burned and their families taken captive by the **Amalekites** (*black arrows*). Some of David's men even spoke of stoning him. After another day's journey to the **Brook Besor**, 200 men were too weary to keep up the pursuit and stayed with the baggage. Gaining information as to the whereabouts of the Amalekite camp from a captured slave, David and 400 men defeated the Amalekites, retrieved their families, and returned to Ziklag with much spoil. Those who stayed with the baggage received a like portion of the spoil as those who went to battle. Gifts were sent to the elders in various towns of Judah where support for David was growing.

READ: 2 SAMUEL 1 – News of Saul's Death

Three days after returning to **Ziklag** an Amalekite came and gave David news of Saul's death on **Mount Gilboa** (Saul's death on Mount Gilboa is marked on Map 5-2). The Amalekite lied – claiming to have played a role in Saul's death – thinking that this would please David. On the contrary, David had the Amalekite killed. Instead of rejoicing over the death of Saul and his sons, David composed a dirge in their honor and instructed that it be taught in Judah: "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain upon the high places. How have the mighty fallen..." Modern Israeli children in 5th grade memorize this poem.

4. David Crowned King at Hebron

READ: 2 Samuel 2-4

David was made king of Judah in **Hebron**. He ruled from Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months, and then from Jerusalem thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 2:11; 5:4-5). The years of David's reign in Hebron were marked by civil war with the house of Saul. Saul's son Ish-Bosheth was made king at **Mahanaim** in Transjordan with the support of Saul's former chief of staff, Abner. One standoff between David's forces and Abner's turned into a deadly wrestling match at "**the pool of Gibeon**." This pool may well be the one exposed in archaeological excavations at Gibeon (el-Jib). Abner realized that "David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually." He initiated the movement to align the northern kingdom of Israel with David. Jealous to keep his own position, Joab, David's chief of staff, murdered Abner in Hebron. David did all he could to distance himself from Joab's deed.

REVIEW, Map 5-4:

1. Knowing some of the political and geographical circumstances of this period, why would Achish the Philistine king of **Gath** be ready to make a pact with David? The answer involves both the Philistines' and David's relations with the house of Saul at this point. Keep in mind also that there are no recorded battles between David and the Philistines all the time David ruled from Hebron. However, that would change as soon as David was made king over all Judah *and* Israel.
2. Know the location of **Ziklag** in the **Western Negev Basin**. David operated from here during the last sixteen months before he was made king over Judah at **Hebron**. Review events associated with David's stay at Ziklag, including: his raids against nomadic peoples like the Amalekites, his duping of Achish, his appearance in Aphek as if he would join for battle against Saul, the Amalekite raid on Ziklag, David's pursuit of Amalek beyond the **Brook Besor**, and his reaction to news of Saul's death.
3. David ruled seven years and six months from Hebron over Judah. These years were marked by civil war with the house of Saul in which David continually got the upper hand. Who was Abner and why would Joab murder him?
4. We can date events on this map quite confidently to 1012 BC. The period is the last sixteen months before David became king over Judah in Hebron.

5-5 David's Reign

Date: 1011-971 BC

1. David Moves the Capital from Hebron to Jerusalem – 1004 BC

READ: 2 SAMUEL 5:1-10. Note the *blue arrow* from **Hebron** to **Jerusalem**.

After seven years and six months as king over Judah in Hebron, and following the deaths of Abner and Saul's son Ish-bosheth, the elders of the northern tribes came to Hebron and proclaimed David king over all Israel and Judah. David quickly moved the capital of the now unified kingdom from **Hebron** to **Jerusalem**. Using a subterranean water shaft – several have been found in excavations in the City of David – David's general Joab initiated the successful attack against Jebus-Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 11:6). From then on Jerusalem played a vital role in the history of Israel. The city would also be called the City of David and Zion.

There are geographical, political and theological elements associated with David's establishment of the capital in Jerusalem. Hebron is land-locked by the Dead Sea to the east. As subsequent *blue arrows* on this map show, David expanded his kingdom east through Benjamin and Jericho, avoiding the severe elevation differences and difficult terrain along the Dead Sea. Further, Hebron in the south of Judah would have been neither accessible nor acceptable to the northern tribes. David needed a more central location suitable to both Judah and the northern tribes. Jebus/Jerusalem sits in the tribal allotment of Benjamin (location of Saul's monarchy!) just across the border from Judah. Jebusites still inhabiting the city gave David the perfect pretext to attack and settle it. The Scriptures are careful to relate God's sovereignty to Jerusalem becoming the capital of a united Judah and Israel (Psalm 78:68; 132:13). It is the city that God chose to place His name and reputation in.

2. Philistine Attack via the Valley of Rephaim

READ: 2 SAMUEL 5:17-25. Note the Philistine *black arrows* via the **Valley of Rephaim** toward Jerusalem, and the Philistine flight from **Gibeon** to **Gezer**.

The Philistines realized that David was no longer their vassal when David was made king over both Judah and Israel. It was in the Philistines' interest to nip in the bud the newly unified Israelite kingdom. Their attack was an effort to *divide and conquer* – to separate Judah from the northern tribes. The Philistines came up through the Shephelah, and then into the Hill Country along the **Hushah Ridge** route. They spread out in the **Valley of Rephaim**, the broad valley to the southwest of Jerusalem. They were apparently able to take **Bethlehem** at this time (2 Samuel 23:13-17). Through the Lord's guidance David was able to fend off the Philistine attack twice. On the second attack David's forces got behind the Philistine troops (as far as Adullam?) and cut off their route of escape. Because of the deep canyons of the Upper Sorek Valley on Jerusalem's western side, and because the Hushah Ridge had been cut off, the Philistines were forced north through central Benjamin and were struck down from **Gibeon** to **Gezer** (1 Chronicles 14:16).

David's subsequent expeditions completely subdued the Philistines. "David defeated the Philistines and subdued them and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines" (1 Chronicles 18:1; cf. 1 Chronicles 20:4-8; 2 Samuel 8:1; 21:15-22). Although the Philistines were not to disappear yet entirely, they would never hamper Israel again after David's days as they had in the days of the judges, Samuel and Saul.

3. Jerusalem becomes the Religious Capital of the United Monarchy – the Ark of the Covenant brought from Kiriath-jearim

READ: 2 SAMUEL 6. Note the *dashed-crimson arrow* from **Kiriath-jearim** through Benjamin to **Jerusalem**.

The Ark of the Covenant had been at **Kiriath-jearim** ever since it returned from Philistia. Counting the rule of Samuel and Saul and into David's reign, the ark stayed in Kiriath-jearim for about 100 years. The ark had been separated from the Tabernacle, which, during these years had moved from Shiloh to Nob and Gibeon, possibly via Mizpah or Gilgal (1 Sam. 21:1-4; 1 Chr. 16:39; 21:29). When David brought the ark into Jerusalem he combined the religious and political centers of Israelite life into one place. Perhaps this is because the Lord is both Israel's King and Redeemer. As the Lord's representative, David himself performed the combined roles of king and priest – putting on priestly garments and making sacrifices – although his sacrifices apparently did not infringe on the Levitical rite.

The ark's journey from **Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem**, a ten mile distance as the crow flies, probably did not take the most direct route between the two cities. The most direct route is not the most convenient. The direct route goes up, down and across two deep canyons of the Upper Sorek Valley that sits like a moat protecting Jerusalem's western side (the main modern highway from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv treacherously negotiates these canyons). The ark probably traveled on the more convenient route that follows a ridge to Gibeon through Benjamin. This area can be seen in greater detail on Map 1-9.

The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

When David expressed a desire to build a house (temple) for God, God responded that He would build a house (dynasty) focused on a descendant of David. God's promise – known as the Davidic Covenant – states that a physical descendant of David will rule forever (cf. Luke 1:32-33).

4. Southeastern Expansion: Moab and Edom, and Summary of David's Conquests

READ: 2 SAMUEL 8. Note the blue arrow pointing off the map toward Moab and Edom.

2 Samuel 8 gives a summary of David's conquests. David defeated the **Philistines** in the west (1 Chronicles 18:1 says Gath and its villages were taken by David) and in the Jezreel Valley. Next, David's united monarchy brought a change in relations to kingdoms in Transjordan – he subdued **Moab and Edom**. **Edom** was subdued following a decisive battle in the Valley of Salt, the plains south of the Dead Sea. The best reading of 2 Samuel 8:13 is "Edomites" and not "Arameans." The two words in Hebrew vary by a small stroke on one letter (cf. 1 Chr. 18:12-13).

God's sovereignty in all of David's military and political accomplishments can be perceived since at this time in the 10th century BC there were no big powers in either Egypt or Mesopotamia to contend for control in the Promised Land. Egyptian and Mesopotamian weakness left a power vacuum in the land between – a vacuum that the Israelites under David and Solomon filled. The Israelite monarchy flourished only in the absence of big powers in Mesopotamia or Egypt.

5. Eastern Expansion: Plateau (Medeba)

READ: 2 SAMUEL 10:1-14 & 1 CHRONICLES 19:6-7. Note the *blue arrow* from **Jerusalem** through Benjamin pointing at **Medeba** in Transjordan.

In Moses' day Israelites had settled in the **Medeba Plateau, Gilead,** and **Bashan** – but from the judges to Saul the Israelites had mixed success in politically ruling these areas. David sought to re-establish Israelite hegemony in Transjordan. War ignited when a new king in Ammon misinterpreted David's attempt at diplomacy. Ammon formed a coalition with Aram and together attempted to stop David's army at **Medeba**. Led by Joab and his brother Abishai, the Israelites scored a resounding victory, but neither the Ammonites nor the Arameans were completely subdued.

6. North East Expansion: Aram in Bashan and Beyond

READ: 2 SAMUEL 10:15-19. Note the *blue arrow* from Jericho through Gilead north off the map toward ARAM-ZOBAH and Tob.

The loss at the battle of Medeba showed the Aramean king Hadadzezer that David posed a threat to the Aramean kingdom further north. He called out a coalition of Aramean forces to stop David's advance at **Helam** in the **Bashan** east of the Sea of Galilee – to no avail. Israel routed the Arameans, put garrisons in Aram and exacted tribute. Note **Psalm 60**, written when David "struggled with Aram-naharaim and Aram-Zobah and Joab returned and killed 12 thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt."

God's promise of land to the descendants of Abraham was being fulfilled.

7. Rabbat-Ammon and the Bathsheba Affair

READ: 2 SAMUEL 11-12. Note the branching *blue arrow* from **Jericho** to **Rabbat Ammon**.

In the spring of the year David sent Joab to conquer the Ammonite capital, **Rabbah (Rabbat-ammon)**. One wonders if this battle overstepped the bounds of God's promise (Deut. 2:19). While his armies were besieging Rabbah, David had an affair with Bathsheba back in Jerusalem and then had her husband Uriah killed. Power corrupts. The humble shepherd who trusted in the Lord now became an adulterer and murderer, deserving of death. David's sin with Bathsheba was in essence a rejection of God as King. The prophet Nathan told David that the sword would not depart from his house, and that evil would rise up against him from his own family – a prophecy that would soon enough dominate David's life. His sons were to die, kill each other, and lead a national revolt against their father (2 Sam. 12:10-12). Even though David genuinely repented (**Psalm 51**), his sin had severe consequences.

Rabbat-ammon is built on an L-shaped hill accessible only on its north side. This north side is most likely the front where the fiercest battle took place and where Joab stationed Uriah to be sure he would die. Joab gave David the credit for the capture of Rabbah, and Ammon became a tributary state.

8. Absalom's Revolt

READ: 2 SAMUEL 15 & 17:21-18:33 – you may also want to read all of chapters 16, 17 & 19. Note the *dashed blue arrow* from Jericho to **Mahanaim**, and the *orange arrow* pointing to the *red confrontation marker* in the **Forest of Ephraim** in **Gilead**.

Absalom's revolt occurred during the latter part of David's reign. *Theologically* a revolt from within David's own household stems from God's judgment on the Bathsheba and Uriah episode. *Politically* there were additional factors involved. Absalom would have been concerned with royal succession as he was David's third son but had fallen into court disfavor for killing David's oldest son, Amnon. Ongoing resentment to Davidic rule from Benjamin and other northern tribes lent support to a split in the house of David. Also, David apparently became preoccupied with certain areas of government (including building the temple?) to the extent that other affairs of state were neglected.

The anointed King of Israel was being ousted from the capital by his own son. Barefoot and weeping (acknowledging his own responsibility for matters), David crossed the **Kidron Valley** and **Mount of Olives** heading east. Just over the summit of the Mount of Olives, Shimei a Benjamite from the house of Saul vented his frustration on David, but David let him live. David forded the Jordan River and came to **Mahanaim** at the Jabbok River where he received assistance and a pledge of loyalty from a number of Transjordan rulers. Absalom eventually pursued, but David's forces got the upper hand. Absalom died in the **Forest of Ephraim** in **Gilead**. Two messengers ran from the battlefield while David waited for news in the city gate of **Mahanaim**. One messenger arrived sooner since he avoided the deep canyons of Gilead by traveling on the **Way of the Plain**. Tribal and political alliances jump from the pages of 2 Samuel 19 when David was restored as king.

In this context read **Psalms 3**, a "Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son."

9. Sheba of Benjamin Revolt

READ: 2 Samuel 20. Note the *dashed orange arrow* pointing north off the map beyond the Sea of Galilee, and *blue pursuit arrows*.

Absalom's revolt exposed other weaknesses in David's rule. Inter-tribal rivalries surfaced as Sheba of Benjamin sounded his battle cry:

*We have no share in David,
Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse
Every man to his tents, O Israel! (2 Samuel 20:1)*

Sheba found a following among the northern tribes. David viewed the revolt as potentially more dangerous than Absalom's, and wasted no time snuffing it out. The task was assigned to his new (and Absalom's former) commander in chief, Amasa. Amasa was unable to assemble forces (from the north?) soon enough, so Abishai and Joab were sent out from Judah. Joab pretended to embrace but instead murdered Amasa at **Gibeon** and took over command. He chased Sheba to **Abel-beth-maacah**, twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Here a wise woman had Sheba's head thrown over the wall rather than let Joab besiege the whole city. The revolt ended but was a harbinger to the eventual northern tribes' split from Judah some forty years later under Jeroboam.

REVIEW, Map 5-5:

1. After David was crowned king over all Israel at **Hebron**, he moved the capital of the united monarchy to **Jerusalem**. Why was David's move to Jerusalem politically astute?
2. Know the geographical dynamics and locations associated with the Philistine attack on David's united monarchy. What were the reasons for and the strategy behind the Philistine attack? Why would the unsuccessful Philistine attack in the **Valley of Rephaim** cause their flight from **Gibeon to Gezer**?
3. David combined the political and religious centers of Israel when he brought the Ark of the Covenant from **Kiriath-jearim** to **Jerusalem**.
4. Review historical and geographical elements associated with David's conquests in the east (Transjordan): The subjugation of Moab and Edom, the battle against an Ammon-Aram coalition at Medeba, the conquest of Bashan and Aramea, and the battle at Rabbat-ammon and the Bathsheba affair.
5. When David and Solomon rose to power there were no big power competitors in either Mesopotamia or Egypt. The eye of faith can perceive God's sovereign control over the nations when the United Monarchy of Israel reached a zenith under David and Solomon.
6. Power corrupts. The humble shepherd, when he became king, became an adulterer and murderer. David's ubiquitous family troubles resulted.
7. Review political and spiritual reasons for Absalom's revolt. Know sites associated with the revolt including **Hebron, Jerusalem, Mahanaim, Forest of Ephraim** and **Gilead**.
8. The old north vs. south tribal politics influenced Sheba's revolt. Sheba's revolt parallels the division of the monarchy to come some forty years later under Jeroboam. Sheba was finally hunted down and killed at a site in northern Israel called **Abel-beth-maacah**.

5-6 David's Census and Solomon's Reign

Date: mid-900's BC

1. David's Census

READ: 2 SAMUEL 24. Joab's census route went from **Aroer** in the Arnon Valley (in the text here called the **Valley of Gad**), through **Gilead**, to **Dan**, then **Sidon** and **Tyre** and finally to **Beersheba**. *Yellow highlight Dan and Beersheba which are circled in blue.*

The revolts of Absalom and Sheba, as well as plans for transfer of power to Solomon, may have been motivations for David to assess political and military support in the form of a census. In any case the writers of Scripture viewed the census as an unfaithful reliance upon man instead of upon the Lord. God sent a devastating three-day plague upon Israel. As part of the process in stopping the plague, David purchased the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite on the hill north of the City of David and made a sacrifice. His son Solomon would later build the temple at the same location.

David and the Psalms

Though not immune to failure David was a man who sought the Lord with his whole heart (1 Kings 11:4). Perhaps this is most evidenced in the Book of Psalms (2 Samuel 23:1). Knowing some of the geographical and historical backgrounds to the life of David grants a greater understanding and appreciation for the spiritual and theological themes presented in the Psalms.

READ:

- **Psalm 23 & 78:65-72.** In humility David remembered that it was *the Lord* who brought him from shepherding sheep in the wilderness to prosperous palace living. The Lord, faithful to His covenants with the patriarchs and Israel at Sinai, had chosen from among the tribe of Judah one who was to be ruler in Israel.
- **Psalm 24.** David knew that the Lord was ultimately the King of Israel and of the world.
- **Psalm 60 & 83.** The battle and the victory were the Lord's. Opposition to David was often opposition to the Lord and the Lord's plans. Regional military victories achieved by David would show that Yahweh alone is God over all.
- **Psalm 2 & 110.** The nations plot in vain against the Lord and His Anointed. Yahweh sets up His king, called the Son of God, in Zion, and calls on the nations to pay homage to the Son. The righteous ruler-king of Zion is also a priest.
- **Psalm 67.** The Lord's covenant with David, like the covenant with Abraham, was to have a universal effect, benefiting Gentiles in all nations.
- **Psalm 72.** David's counsel and desire toward Solomon.

2. Solomon's Reign – International Routes

James Monson titled his regional study guide of Israel *The Land Between*. It is an apt title, since Israel and surrounding territories are indeed a *land between* the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. David's expansion east, west, north and south brought control over major routes that connect civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Mediterranean. His son Solomon reaped the benefits as a middle-man controlling trade and exacting tribute.

With a fine tip yellow highlighter, carefully *yellow HL* the two main international routes through the *Land Between*. **Skip over site and regional names as you highlight:**

- a. **The Great International Highway.** Start south of **Gaza** on the southwestern edge of the map, then mark the route past these locations: Gaza, **Ashkelon**, **Joppa** and inland to **Aphek**. Also mark the parallel inland branch of the Coastal Highway from Aphek back south through **Lod**, **Ekron**, **Gath**, **Gerar** where it goes off the map toward Egypt. From Aphek, highlight the route north along the **Sharon Plain**, through the **Megiddo** Pass, Jezreel Valley, Sea of Galilee, **Hazor**, Abel-beth-maacah and **Dan**. Mark both branches from Dan, one going north into Lebanon and the other east up the Golan toward **Damascus**.

READ: 1 KINGS 9:15-16. In this account of Solomon's building projects, in addition to attention to Jerusalem, note especially Solomon's fortifications at **Gezer**, **Megiddo** and **Hazor** (circled in orange). These are strategic sites secured by Solomon along the Great International Highway. **Hazor** guards the northern approach, **Megiddo** the choke-point connecting the Jezreel Valley and Coast, and **Gezer** where a route branches off from the International Highway toward Jerusalem. Excavations at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer have exposed **Solomonic fortifications**, including elaborate **chambered gates**. The excavations are a striking parallel to the text here in 1 Kings 9. Highlight three other cities mentioned in this text: Lower Beth-horon, Baalah (Kiriath-jearim) and Jerusalem.

- b. **The King's Highway** in Transjordan. From **Elath** on the southern edge of the map, ascending east into Edom and then north past **Bozrah**, across the **Zered** Canyon, through Moab, across the **Arnon** Gorge to Dibon, Rabbath-ammon and Ramoth-gilead, through Bashan toward Damascus.

3. Solomons's Reign – Taxes, Tribute and Trade

READ: 1 KINGS 4. Note the *underlined-blue* political/regional names and the *blue arrows* pointing from every direction toward Jerusalem which represent taxes, trade and tribute.

By controlling the international routes and the regions through which they pass, peace and prosperity in Israel reached a zenith during the reign of Solomon.

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing. Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River (*Euphrates*) to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life....

For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphshah even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him. So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon (1 Kings 4:20-25).

During this period the temple of Yahweh was built in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5-6). The Ark of the Covenant was brought into the temple and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. In this context examine the themes expressed in Solomon's dedicatory prayer (1 Kings 8) and the Lord's response (1 Kings 9).

Chronology: Solomon's Reign and the Date of the Exodus, 1 Kings 6:1

1 Kings 6:1 chronologically associates Solomon's building of the temple to Israel's exodus from Egypt:

And it came to pass in the *four hundred and eightieth year* after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, *in the fourth year of Solomon's reign* over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, *that he began to build the house of the LORD.*

Correlating biblical chronology with Assyrian records, a date of 971-931 BC can be fixed for Solomon's forty-year reign (Thiele 67-78). Solomon's 4th year was 967/66 BC. Four hundred and eighty years before that, the biblical date for the Exodus, is therefore **1446 BC**. This date corroborates with additional chronological evidence presented in Judges 11:26.

4. Solomon's Reign: Southern Trade, Taxes and Tribute

Our map shows David's and Solomon's jurisdiction over the southern and eastern trade routes with a gateway to Africa, Arabia and the East via the Red Sea port at Ezion-geber and Elath. In addition to the international routes already highlighted, carefully *yellow highlight* the following routes, noting the *blue arrows* which represent trade, taxes and tribute coming into Israel:

- a. The **Way of the Wilderness** (Deuteronomy 2:8) which runs parallel to, but east of the King's Highway. The Way of the Wilderness branches off east from the King's Highway about halfway between Elath and Bozrah, staying on the eastern edge of Edom and Moab and avoiding the deep **Zered** and **Arnon** Canyons. It rejoins the King's Highway near Rabbath-ammon.
- b. The **Aravah** route from **Elath** to **Tamar**, and both forks from Tamar north into the Negev. One fork passes the Ascent of **Aqrabbim** and **Aroer**. The other fork ascends from the south side of the Dead Sea to **Arad Rabbah**.
- c. The **Wilderness Highlands** route from **Elath** to **Kadesh Barnea** to **Beersheba**.
- d. The **Negev** route from **Gaza** to **Beersheba** to **Arad Rabbah**. In modern terminology **Negev** refers to all of the territory between Beersheba and Elath, but in the Bible the term specifically refers to the area between the Hill Country of Judah and the Wilderness Highlands.
- e. Finally, the two routes that connect the Negev to the Hill Country of Judah. One runs from **Arad Rabbah** to **Hebron** to **Bethlehem**, the other from **Beersheba** to **Hebron**.

READ: 1 KINGS 9:26-28 & 10:22-29

Solomon's command over trade in the *Land Between* was completed by his control of the southern routes to the **Red Sea** port of **Elath**. From this port Solomon was able to control a flow of goods to and from Arabia, Africa and the East (the Elath port is vital for modern Israel's import-export to places like India, Japan and China). Archaeological investigation has revealed a number of Israelite settlements and fortresses in the **Wilderness Highlands**, especially north of a line through Nahal Zin to Kadesh Barnea (the southern border of the Promised Land, Numbers 34:1-5). This was the first time historically that the area was settled and corresponds to the United Monarchy's interest and ability to control the region. Large Israelite forts at places like **Arad Rabbah**, **Beersheba**, **Tamar** and **Kadesh Barnea** originate from this period as well.

5. Solomon's Failure and Adversaries

READ: 1 KINGS 11. Note the following names *underlined in red*: **Hadad** in **Edom**, **Jeroboam** on the bottom of the map near **Egypt**, and **Rezon** near **Damascus**.

The Lord raised up political and military adversaries against Solomon. The Scripture makes clear the reason why – the adversaries were God's judgment upon Solomon's spiritual failures. Once again Israel's spiritual failures resulted in political difficulties. Solomon, and certainly with him others in Israel, turned from wholehearted devotion to Yahweh and began to serve the gods of his many foreign wives. The warning he had received some 20 years before went to no avail (1 Kings 10:6-7). He even built high places for these gods on the **Mount of Olives** just east of **Jerusalem**.

Hadad a prince of **Edom** had escaped the Israelite subjugation of Edom and found refuge in Egypt. Both Edom and Egypt without doubt resented Solomon's control of trade routes which in past times had been their own. The Egypt-Edom alignment in marriage suggests a mutual pact to "rectify" the situation. Likewise, **Rezon** of **Damascus** led a revolt against Solomonic authority in Aramea.

As if these external enemies were not enough, the greatest judgment on Solomon's failure was that the old tribal tension between Judah and Israel would tear the kingdom in two. Ten northern tribes were to be given to **Jeroboam** of **Ephraim**. Solomon recognized Jeroboam as a rival. Jeroboam had to flee to Pharaoh Shishak in Egypt.

The glory days were over. The short period of blessing – less than 80 years – was coming to an end. The failure of the son of David to wholeheartedly follow the Lord would leave the humble among Israel longing for a Son of David who would serve the Lord and return Israel to her splendor (see Luke 1:32-33, 67-75; John 17:4).

REVIEW, Map 5-6

1. The revolts of Absalom and Sheba, and considerations of transfer of power to his son Solomon, may have been reasons why David issued a census late in his rule. Geographically the census covered from "Dan to Beersheba" and included Transjordan from the Arnon Valley north. The census is viewed as a lack of trust in God and dependence on man. A plague was sent on Israel because of the census, and to stop the plague David offered a sacrifice on land that would become the Temple Mount.
2. The United Monarchy under David and Solomon prospered by controlling the regions and international routes connecting Africa, Asia and Europe. Know the line of the Great International Highway: from Egypt, the coast, Megiddo, Jezreel Valley, Sea of Galilee, Hazor, Dan and beyond. Know that 1 Kings 9:15-16 lists three sites – **Hazor**, **Megiddo**, **Gezer** – strategically fortified by Solomon along the International Highway. Archaeological finds, especially chambered city gates, confirm Solomonic building at these sites.
3. Know the route of the King's Highway in Transjordan from the Red Sea port of Elath, through Edom, Moab, and the northern extension through Rabbath-ammon, Gilead, Bashan and Damascus.
4. Solomon built a port at **Ezion-Geber** near **Elath** to secure shipping commerce to Africa, Arabia and the East. Solomon developed routes and settlements in the **Negev**, **Aravah** and **Wilderness Highlands** to move these goods through his kingdom.
5. Wisdom and riches failed Solomon. When he was old, Solomon served the gods of his many foreign wives. For this the Lord raised up adversaries including **Hadad of Edom**, **Rezon of Damascus**, and **Jeroboam of Ephraim**. Because of Solomon's spiritual failure there was to be a split in the United Monarchy, with the ten northern tribes given to Jeroboam. Know that Solomon's failure to serve the Lord with his whole heart contrasts with the success of another Son of David, Jesus the Messiah.

6-1 Division of the Kingdom and Shishak's Campaign

Date: 931-925 BC

1. The Division of the Kingdom

Note the following graphics on the map and *yellow HL* cities indicated as background to the division of the kingdom into Israel (north) and Judah (south)

- a. JUDAH (REHOBAM) and *blue box* around **Jerusalem**. *Yellow HL* Jerusalem.
- b. ISRAEL (JEROBOAM I) and *crimson boxes* around **Shechem** and **Penuel** and **Tirzah**. *Yellow HL* these cities.
- c. *Crimson ovals* around the cities **Bethel** and **Dan**. *Yellow HL* these cities.
- d. The *dashed line* near Bethel showing the border between the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- e. The *dashed lines* showing the extent of the northern kingdom's (Israel's) territory.

READ: 1 KINGS 12

The death of Solomon brought about one of the most significant events in the history Israel - the division of the United Monarchy into Northern and Southern kingdoms. This division took place in 931 BC. The ten tribes of the north, hereafter called Israel (sometimes Ephraim, then later Samaria), split off from the southern tribe of Judah. This begins the period known as the Divided Monarchy. The kingdom of Israel lasted for 200 years until taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 BC. The kingdom of Judah lasted until the conquest by Babylon in 586 BC.

As mentioned in discussion for Map 5-6, the writer of the Book of Kings made it clear why the traumatic division occurred. It was judgment by God for the unfaithfulness of Solomon to the covenant principles which God had confirmed with David. Israel/Judah's political difficulties were an outgrowth of its spiritual and moral failures.

While politically the roots of the schism reach further back into Israel's history, we have seen how the North-South rivalry manifested itself in the time of David and Solomon. It took David seven years of diplomacy to unite the northern and southern tribes, yet the designations "Israel" and "Judah" never disappeared during his reign. On at least one occasion open revolt to David's rule developed along these lines (2 Samuel 5:5; 20:2). Solomon kept northern independence aspirations at bay by chasing Jeroboam of Ephraim – the eventual king in the north – to Egypt.

That Solomon's son Rehoboam went to **Shechem** for a coronation ceremony shows a recognized need for Judah to re-confirm control over the northern tribes. Sitting in the middle of wide valleys that create a convenient east-west route through Samaria, **Shechem** is the natural geographical capital of the Mt. Ephraim region. Religiously, a case could be made that **Shechem** had stronger covenantal associations to Yahweh than Jerusalem (Genesis 12:6-7; Joshua 24:1). Rehoboam's coronation ceremony at Shechem fell apart when the northern tribes requested an easing of the tax (and labor?) burden experienced under Solomon. Led by **Jeroboam of Ephraim**, the northern tribes declared independence from Judah:

"What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David." So Israel went to their tents (1 Kings 12:16).

In addition to Shechem, Jeroboam went out and built **Penuel** in Gilead as an administrative center for Transjordan. The **Wadi Far'a** route connects **Penuel** to **Shechem**. Transjordan from the Arnon River through Gilead came under control of the northern kingdom. Priests and

Levites from Israel left the northern kingdom in loyalty to the Davidic monarchy in Judah, and many other Israelites followed (2 Chronicles 11:13-14). Jeroboam feared a mass exodus of populace from his territories because of loyalty to the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, so he built rival religious shrines at **Bethel** and **Dan**, established a new priesthood and pilgrimage practices, and proclaimed that the golden calves at these shrines were representatives of the God who brought Israel out of Egypt. The establishment of this new cult was severely condemned (1 Kings 13:1-6). It became known as the "sin of Jeroboam" which other kings of the North followed and for which Israel was judged (1 Kings 13:34; 2 Kings 17:22-23). The high place originally built by Jeroboam and maintained by subsequent kings of Israel at **Dan** has been exposed in archaeological excavations.

At some point Jeroboam moved his capital to **Tirzah** (implied by 1 Kings 14:17) which was the capital of Jeroboam's successors (Baasha, Elah and Zimri) until Omri built a new capital at **Samaria** (1 Kings 16:23-24).

2. Rehoboam's Fortifications

Note the *blue underlining* of cities fortified by Rehoboam in Judah (2 Chronicles 11:5-10):

- a. In the hill country south of Jerusalem: **Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Bethzur, Hebron, Adoraim, and Ziph**
- b. In the Shephelah: **Aijalon, Zorah, Socoh, Adullam, Azekah, Gath, Mareshah, and Lachish.**

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 10:17-11:17

Though eventually Rehoboam and Jeroboam were to battle, the initial split took place without a fight. Considering previous animosities between the houses of Saul and David, somewhat unexpectedly, Benjamin followed Judah (2 Chronicles 11:1). While other political factors must have been involved, one suspects that Benjamin realized, as the biblical record claims, that Yahweh had chosen the house of David and the city of Jerusalem as the place where He would make His name known (Deuteronomy 12:5, 11; 1 Kings 9:3; 14:21). After all, Jerusalem was in Benjamin's allotment.

Rehoboam's fortifications focused on two areas: 1) the ridge routes in the Hill Country approaching Jerusalem from the south, and 2) the Shephelah, Judah's southwestern flank. It appears Rehoboam was principally defending against attack from the southwest, namely, from Egypt. There is no mention of any fortification along Judah's new northern frontier with Israel. Rehoboam probably never gave up hope of re-unifying Israel and Judah and did not want to establish a de facto border by constructing fortresses between them. Also, Rehoboam knew that the real danger of attack was from Egypt.

The first three years of Rehoboam's reign went well. Faithful priests made sacrifices to the Lord the God of their fathers in Jerusalem. Chronicles sums up Rehoboam's building projects by saying that "he held Judah and Benjamin." But the good times did not last long.

3. Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak, 925 BC:

Note the **black arrows** in three sections showing the campaign of Pharaoh Shishak. The **red underlining** indicates sites mentioned in Shishak's conquest list preserved in the Amon temple in Karnak, Egypt.

- a. The **black arrow** along the Coastal Plain through **Gaza** into the Central Hill Country pointing at **Jerusalem**. Note cities mentioned in Shishak's conquest list along this arrow: **Yurza, Sharuhen, Gaza, Gezer, Aijalon, Lower and Upper Beth-horon, Kiriath-jearim, Gibeon**.
- b. The **black arrow** from **Shechem** to Tirzah, to the Rift Valley by Succoth, into the Jezreel Valley and through Mt. Carmel back into the Sharon Plain. Note the cities mentioned in Shishak's conquest list along this arrow: **Tirzah, Adam, Succoth, Penuel, Mahanaim, Rehob, Beth-shan, Shunem, Megiddo, Aruna, Borim, Gath, Yaham, Socoh**.
- c. The **black arrow** from the southwest corner of the map through the biblical **Negev** past **Beersheba** to the **Arad Rabbah**, and also pointing off the map south toward **Ezion-Geber**. Note cities mentioned in Shishak's conquest list along this arrow: **Arad of Yerahmeel and Arad Rabbah**.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 12

"It took place when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong that he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the LORD" (2 Chronicles 12:1). Rehoboam may have trusted his fortresses, but they did him no good when he forsook the law of the Lord. He built high places for foreign gods and also introduced male cult prostitution to Judah (1 Kings 14:23-24). Judgment for his unfaithfulness came in the form of Pharaoh Shishak.

Shishak took advantage of the weakness in the newly divided monarchy. From his list of conquered cities in Karnak he had three main objectives (Aharoni 323-330). First, he came along the Philistine coast and sacked Gezer, formerly fortified by Solomon. From Gezer he ascended via the two main routes toward Jerusalem – the Beth-horon and Kiriath-jearim ridge routes. Shishak's presence in Central Benjamin was a gun to Rehoboam's head. Rehoboam escaped with his life when he repented, but was forced to buy off Shishak with the gold from the Lord's temple and the king's palace. An Indiana Jones movie claimed that Shishak also took the Ark of the Covenant back to Egypt, which he did not. The Ark of the Covenant was still in Judah over three hundred years later during King Josiah's reign (2 Chronicles 35:3).

Next, though he had formerly protected Jeroboam in Egypt, Shishak attacked the Northern Kingdom. Aware of the vulnerability of his new capital at Shechem, Jeroboam apparently moved to the more defensible location of Tirzah (cf. 1 Kings 14:17). Shishak attacked Tirzah and then sites in the Jordan Valley including Penuel, Israel's administrative center in Transjordan. He then took Beth-shan, Shunem and Megiddo, loosening Israel's control on trade in the Harod and Jezreel Valleys. A fragment of a victory stele belonging to Shishak was discovered at Megiddo confirming his presence there. He made his way through the Megiddo (Aruna) Pass onto the Sharon Plain and Coastal Highway, further weakening both Israel's and Judah's access to trade.

Shishak's third objective was to break Judah's monopoly on the trade routes in the Negev and Wilderness Highlands that had been developed by Solomon. Solomonic control of trade through Ezion-Geber had without doubt been a thorn in Egypt's side. In the **Negev**, Shishak

lists as conquered two Arads: **Arad the Great** and **Arad of Jerahmeel**. Some seventy other Negev and Wilderness Highlands towns and fortresses were sacked with Shishak presumably reaching Ezion-Geber. Archaeological evidence at Negev and Wilderness sites suggests Solomonic forts were destroyed at this time.

REVIEW, Map 6-1:

1. When Solomon died in 931 BC the United Monarchy split into the kingdoms of **Judah** (the House of David) in the south, and **Israel** (also called **Ephraim** and later, **Samaria**) in the north. This schism was a very important element in Israel-Judah's collective history over the next centuries.
2. Know the names of the first kings of the North and the South: **Jeroboam** in Israel and **Rehoboam** in Judah. Over the next 210 years Israel in the north would have twenty kings from multiple dynasties. Judah was ruled by nineteen kings (and one queen) for 345 years, all from one dynasty (David's). These forty rulers can be seen on the chart on the next page adapted from Edwin Thiele's book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. This chart (or another one like it) can be used as a reference for studying Israel-Judah's subsequent history.
3. The authors of Kings and Chronicles assigned grades to the kings of Israel and Judah according to how faithful they were to the covenant of Yahweh. Each king was given either a *thumbs-up* for his faithfulness to Yahweh, or a *thumbs-down* for his unfaithfulness. **None** of the kings of Israel in the north got a *thumbs-up*. In fact, some like Jeroboam got a *double-thumbs-down*. Even in Judah a *thumbs-up* was rare, and only a couple kings deserved a *double-thumbs-up*. For worship of false idols and male cult prostitution, Rehoboam got a *thumbs-down* (1 Ki. 14:21-25).
4. Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim! Know geographical elements associated with the Northern Kingdom: What geographical and religious elements contributed to making **Shechem** the first capital of the North? Jeroboam built **Penuel** as his administrative center in Transjordan. The **Wadi Far'a route** joins **Penuel** with **Tirzah** and **Shechem**. Perhaps either in preparation for or in restoration following Shishak's attack, the capital was moved from Shechem to **Tirzah**. Why did Jeroboam build new religious centers at **Bethel** and **Dan**? Know that this new religious activity is called the "way of Jeroboam, which caused Israel to sin." Because of it, Israel was judged and sent into captivity.
5. 2 Chronicles 11 provides a list of fortifications of Rehoboam in Judah. Rehoboam fortified sites along routes in the Hill Country and Shephelah. It appears that he feared a potential attack from Egypt in the southwest. When Rehoboam "forsook the law of the Lord," what he feared happened. Pharaoh Shishak came against Judah in Rehoboam's 5th year (c. 925 BC). Gold from Solomon's temple and palace was stripped for tribute to Shishak.
6. Besides humbling Rehoboam in Jerusalem, Pharaoh Shishak had two other objectives: Israel in the north was subdued, including trade routes in the Jordan Rift, Jezreel Valley and Sharon Plain. Also, the House of David's monopoly on trade from Ezion-Geber through the Negev was broken. Shishak's list of conquered cities (found in the temple of Amon in Karnak), and the actual invasion itself, are important geographical, archaeological and historical connections with the Bible.

THE DATES OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

(Adapted from E. Thiele *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Kregel: 1983. Appendix B)

Iron I	1200 BC				
Iron IIA	1000 BC	DAVID 1010-970 Solomon 970-931			
		ISRAEL		JUDAH	
		<u>King</u>	<u>Reign</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Reign</u>
		JEROBOAM I	930-910	Rehoboam	931-913
		Nadab	910-909	Abijam/Abijah	913-910
Iron IIB	900	Asa	910-869		
		BAASHA	909-886		
		Elah	886-885		
		Zimri	885 (7 days)		
		Tibni	885-880		
		OMRI	885-874		
		Ahab	874-853	Jehoshaphat	872-848
		Ahaziah	853-852	Jehoram/Joram	848-841
		Joram/Jehoram	852-841	Ahaziah	841
Iron IIC	800	JEHU	841-814	Athalia	841-835
		Jehoahaz	814-798	Joash/Jehoash	835-796
		Jehoash/Joash	798-782	Amaziah	796-767
		Jeroboam II	793-753	Uzziah/Azariah	791-739
		Zechariah	753-752		
		Shallum	752		
		MENAHEM	752-742	Jotham	750-731
		Pekahiah	742-740	Ahaz	735-715
		Pekah	752/740-732		
		Hoshea	732-722	Hezekiah	715-686
		<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/>			
		Assyrian Conquest/Exile		Manasseh	696-642
				Amon	642-640
				Josiah	640-609
				Jehoahaz	609
				Jehoiakim	609-598
				Jehoiachin	598-597
				Zedekiah	597-586
		<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/>			
				Babylonian Conquest/Exile	
	586 BC				

or with
coregency
751-736
743-728
728-696

Capital letters (e.g. JEROBOAM I) indicate founder of a dynasty.

6-2 Judah-Israel Border Disputes: Asa and Baasha

Date: c. 913-877 BC

1. Abijah of Judah invades Israel (c. 912 BC)

"And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" (1 Kings 14:30; 2 Chronicles 12:15). Some of these wars between Israel and Judah were on the political and diplomatic front – a state of animosity persisted throughout their reigns. Certainly that animosity spilled over into actual physical battle, although the Bible does not describe any specific incidents between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. However, during the three-year rule of Rehoboam's son, Abijah/Abijam, details of one such battle are given.

READ: 2 Chronicles 13

Note the *red underline* of **Bethel**, **Jeshanah**, and **Ephron-Ephrain**.

Twenty years after the great split (c. 912 BC), Abijah of Judah marched north with the aim of re-unifying the divided kingdom. He got a foothold at Mount Zemaraim south of Bethel. Though biases are evident in Abijah's historical recall of the schism, he did have a point that Jeroboam's idolatry was against the revealed purposes of God. Jeroboam was not convinced. He set an ambush around the south side of Mount Zemarim and attacked on two fronts. But God helped Judah, and Abijah was able to capture territory and three cities in southern Ephraim: **Bethel**, **Jeshanah** and **Ephron-Ephrain**. Jeroboam was never able to recover from this battle.

Though Abijah's heart was not fully devoted to the Lord, because of the Lord's unconditional promise to David, the Lord did not abandon Judah. There was still hope that a righteous son of David would appear in Jerusalem (1 Kings 15:3-4).

2. Baasha Coup Kills Nadab (Israel)

Note the *crimson arrow* pointing from Israel at **Gibbethon** (*boxed in red*) in Philistia.

READ: 1 Kings 15:25-33

Jeroboam's son Nadab attacked the Philistine city of **Gibbethon** west of Gezer. He probably hoped to access the routes in the Coastal Plain which at the same time could help him remedy the territorial losses sustained by his father in the Hill Country. After only two years of reign, Nadab was killed in a coup led by Baasha of Issachar. Jeroboam's dynasty had lasted only two generations – not one male relative was left alive as the prophet Ahijah had predicted (1 Kings 14:10-11). The *thumbs-down* summation of Nadab's rule was to be typical for Israel's kings: "And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father (Jeroboam), and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 15:26).

3. Asa of Judah Defeats Zerah the Ethiopian at Maresha

In the Shephelah, note the *blue arrow* pointing at **Maresha** and the *blue chase arrows* and *black flight arrows* pointing from **Maresha** toward **Gerar** (*red box*). *Yellow HL Maresha*.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 14 & 15

Asa had a long rule of 41 years. He was given the *thumbs-up* by the biblical narrators because he "did what was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father" (1 Kings 15:11, 2 Chronicles

14:2). He cleared out the male cult prostitutes and deposed his own grandmother queen for her idolatry. With the Lord's help, Asa stopped a huge coalition of forces led by Zerah the Ethiopian. The battle occurred at Maresha in the Shephelah. Once again the Shephelah proved to be the buffer zone – indeed battle ground – on Judah's western flank.

Large Numbers in Scripture

The chronicler states that Zerah came with "an army of one thousand thousands" – a million men (2 Chronicles 14:9). There are other places in the Scriptures where seemingly exaggerated numbers occur (1 Kings 21:29-30; 1 Sam. 6:19, etc.). A few comments about these large numbers:

1. Each case should be considered on its own. While in the case under consideration an army of one million men may not have been impossible, the fact that Zerah's army was accompanied by only 300 chariots suggests that the "million" is idiomatic for "huge." Hyperbole is an acceptable form of speech. "There were a million people in the mall today" means there were lots there – even though the actual number of persons may have been much smaller.
2. The word for "thousand," "aleph" in Hebrew can mean a unit smaller than one thousand. To Gideon "aleph" meant his family or clan (Judges 6:15; cf. 1 Samuel 10:19), a number certainly smaller than 1000. Additionally, "aleph" can have military associations as it stems from the verb "to train." As with "clan," "aleph" may have represented a smaller number than 1000 for a military unit.
3. Numbers are difficult to transmit or translate. There are some number transmission variants in the oldest biblical texts. However, there is no reason to doubt most of the "thousands" related in the Scriptures, even those related to battle texts. For comparison, during the American Civil War the Confederacy sustained over twenty-eight thousand casualties in the three-day battle at Gettysburg. That is comparable to the thirty-thousand Israelite foot soldiers who fell at the battle of Aphek in 1104 BC (1 Samuel 4:10).

4. Baasha-Asa Battle in Benjamin (c. 896 BC)

Note the *crimson arrow* (BAASHA) swooping from Israel into Benjamin and pointing at **Ramah**. Then the *blue arrows* (ASA) pushing back from Jerusalem to **Geba** and **Mizpah** (*blue boxes*). *Yellow HL Jerusalem, Geba, and Mizpah*. Note the *crimson-blue border* line north of **Geba-Mizpah** and south of **Bethel**.

READ: 1 KINGS 15:16-24

As a result of Asa's religious reforms, things were good in Judah. Many recognized God's special protection on Judah in the stunning defeat over the huge Ethiopian army. Certain Israelites were upset with the idolatry in the north and recognized God's covenant relationship with the House of David. Because of this they migrated to Judah (2 Chronicles 15:9).

The mass migration was too much for Baasha king of Israel. What Jeroboam had feared was happening (1 Kings 12:26-27). In recognition of God's covenant with the House of David, Israelites from the north were defecting to Judah. Baasha tried to physically prevent people from migrating to Judah by building a fortress at Ramah in Central Benjamin (*crimson arrow*).

Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to *prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah*.

In the Hill Country, Israel and Judah are connected by only one route – the Road of the Patriarchs on the watershed ridge. Deep canyons cutting east and west from the watershed make

north-south travel possible *only* on the watershed ridge. Baasha knew that if he could control the area around Ramah, a strategic site astride the Road of the Patriarchs, he was shutting the gate on anyone who wanted to leave the Hill Country of Ephraim for Judah.

In addition, Ramah sits at the intersection of the Road of the Patriarchs and routes coming from the east (Jericho) and the west (Beth-horon and Kiriath-jearim). Therefore, even from the east and west the main approaches to Jerusalem must first pass through Central Benjamin near Ramah. By taking Ramah, Baasha was not only cutting off direct access to Jerusalem on the watershed route, but he also put a strangle-hold on all traffic coming up from the east or west to Jerusalem.

Indeed, Baasha's presence at Ramah threatened the very security of the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is most vulnerable from the north – throughout history it has been attacked and conquered from the north. Control of the Central Benjamin Plateau around Ramah is essential for Jerusalem's safekeeping. Asa of Judah had to act.

Unfortunately, Asa chose to rely on man instead of the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:7-10). He made a treaty with Ben-Hadad king of Aram so that Ben-Hadad would assault Israel's northern border. Ben-Hadad "attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinnereth, with all the land of Naphtali" (marked on Map 6-3). Baasha was forced to pull back his army from Central Benjamin in order to attend to his northern border.

Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah – none was exempt – and they carried away the stones of **Ramah** and its timber with which Baasha had built. And King Asa built with them **Geba** of Benjamin and **Mizpah** (1 Kings 15:22).

The battle for Benjamin ended up being an example of Middle East political intrigue more than all-out war between Israel and Judah. Humanly speaking Asa's political maneuvering worked. Utilizing the Wadi Suwenit as a natural border he built **Geba** and **Mizpah** (archaeological excavations have exposed a large section of a defensive wall attributed to Asa at Mizpah). That Asa viewed control of Central Benjamin as crucial is seen in the fact that he called "all Judah - none was exempt" to build these two fortresses. He thus secured the Israel-Judah border for decades. However, at the same time these fortresses created a de facto border which crushed any hope of possible re-unification of the two Hebrew kingdoms.

Sadly, Asa, who started well, did not finish well. Following his unfaithful response to the dilemma in Central Benjamin, Asa became diseased in his feet, "yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord" (2 Chronicles 16:7-14).

As for Baasha of Israel, he gets a *double-thumbs-down*. Although he had been the instrument of God's wrath on the House of Jeroboam, Baasha himself "walked in the way of Jeroboam and made My people Israel to sin." For this Baasha would undergo the same fate as Jeroboam. His son Elah ruled only two years and was then assassinated, along with the rest of the House of Baasha, in the capital of Tirzah (1 Kings 16:1-14).

REVIEW, Map 8-2:

1. Some twenty years after the great schism, **Abijah** of Judah attempted to re-unite Judah and Israel. But Jeroboam would have none of it. During the battle Abijah was able to expand into Ephraim and take **Bethel, Jeshanah** and **Ephraim**. Jeroboam never recovered from this battle.
2. Jeroboam's son **Nadab** besieged **Gibbethon** of the Philistines on the Coastal Plain west of Gezer. Nadab probably hoped to get a foothold on routes coming from the west that would enable him to recover the territory lost by his father in the Hill Country. During the siege of Gibbethon, Nadab was killed in a coup led by **Baasha**, who established a new dynasty in the capital at Tirzah. However, Baasha followed after the sins of Jeroboam, and in accordance with prophetic utterances, both their dynasties were totally eliminated after only two generations.
3. At least initially **Asa** of Judah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He had a long rule of 41 years, overlapping at least portions of the reigns of eight kings in Israel. He successfully repulsed an attack of a huge army led by Zerah the Ethiopian at **Maresha** in the Shephelah.
4. In the decades following the great split there was a migration of Israelites to Judah. These Israelites were upset with the idolatry in the north and also recognized God's covenant relation with the House of David and Jerusalem. **Baasha** tried to physically stop this southward migration by building a fortress at **Ramah** in Central Benjamin. Know why a fortress at **Ramah** would "**prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.**"
5. **Asa** had to respond to Israel's presence at Ramah. Central Benjamin controlled most main routes to his capital in Judah: not only the north-south Road of the Patriarchs, but also routes approaching Jerusalem from the east and west. There were economic, military and religious issues at stake. Jerusalem's very security was threatened – it is most vulnerable from the north. The Battle for Benjamin was on.
6. **Asa** chose political maneuvering to resolve the crisis. He made a treaty with Ben-Hadad of Aram to attack Israel in the north. Israel (Baasha) pulled his forces out from Ramah to attend to the new attack on the northern border. Asa took the stones and timber from Ramah and built **Mizpah** and **Geba** along the edge of the Wadi Suwenit. These fortresses may have secured Central Benjamin from northern assault, but they also created a recognized border that stifled hope for re-unification.

6-3 Elijah, Omri, Ahab: Israel's Relations with Aram and Phoenicia

Date: c. 900-850 BC

1. Ben-Hadad of Aram Conquers the Northern Approaches to Israel

Note the *black arrow* coming from **Aram-Damascus** to **Dan, Ion, Abel-beth-maacah, Hazor, Chinnereth** and the **LAND OF NAPHTALI**.

READ: 1 KINGS 15:16-22

Recall the international jockeying going on here. The date is around 895 BC, thirty-five years after the great split between Israel and Judah. Threatened by Israel's presence in Central Benjamin at Ramah, Asa king of Judah sent gold and silver from Yahweh's temple to Ben-Hadad of Aram saying,

Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you a present of silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me (1 Kings 15:19).

Ben-Hadad shrewdly accepted the offer. He broke through a line of cities along Israel's northern gateway and came all the way to **Chinnereth** on the Sea of Galilee. There is archaeological evidence for the destruction of the Solomonic city at **Hazor** from this time. Ben-Hadad's venture illustrates well the northern **Gateway to Galilee** - the Hulah Valley, which sits between Galilee and Golan, extending north into the Baka Valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges. In the Old Testament period the route ran along the western edge of the Hulah Valley at the foot of Upper Galilee, through Hazor. East-west cross-travel is possible only near Hazor and Dan.

2. Omri: Samaria becomes Israel's 3rd Capital

Note the *crimson boxes* around **Tirzah** and **Samaria**.

READ: 1 KINGS 16:1-28

1 Kings 16 reads like a mafia history. Elah son of Baasha was murdered while drunk at the capital in **Tirzah**. The leader of the coup was Zimri, but he lasted only seven days. Omri the commander of the army eventually succeeded him.

The biblical account mentions little about Omri, only that he ruled for twelve years (885-874 BC), six years in **Tirzah** and then at the newly established capital in **Samaria**. However, it can be seen from extra-biblical texts that he was an influential king. He is credited in the Mesha Stele with subduing Moab, and Assyrian texts more than one hundred years after his death refer to Israel as the "house of Omri" (ANET 284).

In addition to disassociating himself with the failures of Israel's earlier dynasties, Omri's founding of the new capital at Samaria was a clever move. The hill which Samaria sits on is quite defensible, and at the same time has good access to Samaria's routes. The region of Samaria, unlike Judah, has a combination of wide east-west running valleys that enable travel through its heartland. The valleys are the **Wadi Far'a** from the Jordan Rift to Tirzah, **Wadi Beidan** to Shechem, and **Nahal Shechem** to the Mediterranean Coast. The route that runs in this combination of wide valleys can be called the **Trans-Samaria Expressway**. Note that all three of the capitals (Shechem, Tirzah, Samaria) of the Northern Kingdom sat along the Trans-Samaria

Expressway. The city of **Samaria**, however, is by far more defensible than Shechem and has better access to the Mediterranean Coast than Tirzah. Samaria's name eventually became synonymous with the whole northern kingdom. Omri's son Ahab built a temple to Baal at Samaria – new city, new god – which remained Israel's capital until it fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. After that the Assyrians and Persians made it a provincial center. Herod the Great rebuilt the city with a temple in honor of Caesar Augustus, calling it Sebastos (Greek for Augustus). The Arab village on the site today still preserves that name as Sebastia.

3. AHAB MARRIES JEZEBEL

Note the sweeping *black arrow* from Phoenicia toward Israel labeled AHAB MARRIES JEZEBEL with the attendant importation of Religion/Culture/Politics.

READ: 1 KINGS 16:29-34

Part of the plan for the Omride dynasty's commercial and political expansion included a pact with its seafaring neighbor to the north, Phoenicia. A treaty with Phoenicia would help rectify the Aramean disaster in the north (#1) and make Israel a player in commercial business across the Mediterranean. Although the Israel-Phoenicia alliance was politically shrewd it was a religious disaster. The treaty was sealed with the marriage of Omri's son, Ahab, to Jezebel, the Phoenician princess and Baal worshipper. Under Ahab and Jezebel a new official religion was established in the Northern Kingdom, the worship of Baal and his consort Asherah, the Phoenician gods of rain and fertility. With Ahab's new temple to Baal in the capital at Samaria, worship of Yahweh was suppressed, if not totally outlawed (1 Kings 18:4). Ahab's establishment of Baal as the crown-approved competitor to Yahweh is the reason the narrator declared "he did evil in the sight of the LORD, *more than all who were before him*" (1 Kings 16:30). Ahab's twenty-two year reign (874-853 BC) therefore gets a *double-thumbs-down*.

4. Elijah Contests with the Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

The contest occurred on Mount Carmel. Tradition places it specifically at Muhraka (Arabic for "flame"), 1600 feet (550 meters) above sea level.

READ: 1 KINGS 17-18

Rather than abandon Israel to Baalism, the Lord raised up the prophet Elijah to call them back. Elijah ("My God is Yahweh"), from Tishbe in Gilead, told Ahab that as sure as Yahweh, the God of Israel lives, there was to be no rain. Elijah lived for a time near the Brook Cherith, of unknown location east of the Jordan. After ministering to a widow in Sidon and a three-year drought, he called for a contest between Yahweh and Baal on Mt. Carmel. Mount Carmel could be considered neutral ground – there was no home-field-advantage to Yahweh here, since from the heights of Carmel one can look down upon the coasts of Phoenicia where Baal supposedly reigned. Elijah's challenge to Israel was that Yahweh had no competitor, that Baal was nothing. It was impossible to accept both Baal and Yahweh. "How long will you limp over two different opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21)

The showdown on Mount Carmel ended up being no contest since Baal, the alleged god of lightning, thunder, rain and fertility, did not show up. Like other man-made religions and theories on the origin of life, Baal was only the figment of human imagination. Yahweh alone gives rain, blessing and life. The God of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is unique. A person cannot accept the God of the Bible *and* something else. To do so is spiritual adultery. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 15:6). The statement is exclusive. It leaves no room for limping between two opinions.

The prophets of Baal were killed at the **Brook Kishon** in the Jezreel Valley at the foot of Mount Carmel. After proclaiming that the rain was on its way, Elijah outran Ahab's chariot across the Jezreel Valley to the city of **Jezreel**, over 15 miles away.

5. Elijah's Flight to Beersheba and Mount Horeb

Note the *blue arrow* that points south off the map in the Jordan Rift.

READ: 1 KINGS 19

Threatened by Jezebel, and most likely in frustration that the Lord's miraculous demonstration of power did not yank Israel out of its deluded idolatry, Elijah fled to **Beersheba** in Judah. Then he came to Horeb, Mount Sinai, where the Lord had entered into a covenantal relationship with the people of Israel. In like manner to Moses, Elijah was assured that the Lord was not abandoning his people – a faithful remnant was to be preserved. As evidence that God was sovereign over all and was not abandoning Israel, Elijah was told to anoint Hazael king over Aram, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha as his own prophetic successor.

The Scriptures do not emphasize chronological elements of Elijah's ministry, yet there are some clues that he arrived on the scene in the latter part of Ahab's rule. Elijah's prediction of drought occurred in about 860 BC and it appears that he ministered altogether for not more than fifteen years (Merrill 346). Elijah's whirlwind departure apparently occurred early during the rule of Joram of Israel, 852-841 BC (2 Ki. 1:17-2:1, Map 6-5).

Elijah plays an important eschatological role in both the Old and New Testaments. The latest book of the Old Testament canon closes with the promise that Elijah would appear again to turn the hearts of Israel back to the Lord (Malachi 4:5-6). Some people mistakenly thought that Jesus was the reappearance of Elijah (Luke 9:19). John the Baptist, as forerunner to the Messiah, came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), but made it clear that he was not Elijah appearing in the flesh (John 1:21). In powerful testimony to who Jesus was, Elijah was with Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration discussing Jesus' eventual departure at Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31, Map 9-6). Elijah still has an eschatological role to fulfill (Matt. 17:11).

6. Ben-Hadad Sieges Ahab in Samaria, Fails

Note box #6, and the *black siege and flight arrows*, and the *crimson pursuit arrows*, at **Samaria**.

READ: I KINGS 20:1-25

Ben-Hadad is a dynastic name. The Ben-Hadads listed in 1 Kings 15, 20 and 2 Kings 8 may be different individuals of the same dynasty. The Ben-Hadad dynasty in Damascus was the chief nemesis to the Omride Dynasty in Israel.

Ben-Hadad of Damascus had attacked Israel's northern approaches to Galilee as part of the treaty with Judah (event #1 on this map). This Aramean attack must have played a part in the formation of the Israel - Phoenicia treaty. But the Israel-Phoenicia pact would have in turn been threatening toward Damascus. Ben-Hadad saw that pact as a threat to his ability to access the Mediterranean and routes along the Coast, so he attacked Samaria. Such is politics, where a "peace" treaty between two states provokes action from a third. The Israel-Aram battles described in the biblical record are par for the course.

7. Ben-Hadad Sieges Aphek, Fails

Note box #7, and the *black arrow* from **ARAM** to **Aphek**, cf. #7 at lower left corner of map

READ: 1 KINGS 20:23-43

One arrow on the map follows Aharoni's suggested location for Aphek at Fik and En Gev on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. However, there is no biblical evidence for the designations "Upper" and "Lower" Aphek (Aharoni 335, 381). Further, it is quite possible that this battle occurred at the well-known Aphek on the Sharon Plain (#7 lower left corner). In the decades following Ahab, Aramea *was* on the Coastal Plain. Hazael of Aramea captured Gath and even threatened Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoash of Judah (835-796 BC, 2 Kings 12:17, Map 7-1). Not long after that, Elisha promised Joash of Israel (798-782 BC) victory against Aram at Aphek (2 Kings 13:17, 24-25).

8. Naboth's Vineyard

READ: 1 KINGS 21

Note at the city of **Jezeel**, the *crimson underline* which designates Jezeel as a royal city.

Tucked between descriptions of the Aram-Israel battles, and just before the battle in which Ahab was killed, is the story of Ahab's coveting the vineyard of Naboth. Naboth's vineyard was *next to the palace of Ahab* in the city of **Jezeel**. The Omride dynasty had built a "winter palace" in Jezeel, where temperatures are warmer than in the hills around Samaria. By this time Elijah had regained his composure and showed up in the very city where he had been threatened by Jezebel. Elijah pronounced that, for the co-conspiracy murder of Naboth, the dynasty of Ahab would be totally wiped out, like the dynasties of Jeroboam and Baasha before. Dogs would eat Jezebel in the city of Jezeel.

9. Three-year Aram-Israel Truce to Fight Assyria at Qarqar on the Orontes, 853 BC

Note box #9 on upper right hand corner of the map, with *black and crimson arrows*

READ: 1 KINGS 22:1

A three-year truce between Aram and Israel followed the battle at Aphek: "Now three years passed without war between Aram and Israel". One reason to halt their fighting was to jointly stem the rising Assyrian tide in the north. Shalmaneser III of Assyria boasted in his chronicles of a battle against a coalition of kings led by Hadad-ezer (Ben-Hadad) of Damascus. Among others joining the Aramean led coalition was "Ahab the Israelite" who contributed 2000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers (ANET, pp. 278-279. Most scholars doubt Ahab's ability to furnish 2000 chariots. The number may be an exaggeration, and/or could include chariots from other states like Judah). The battle occurred at Qarqar on the Orontes River in Modern Syria. This Assyrian record, dating to 853 BC, has the distinction of being the oldest extra-biblical reference to a king of Israel or Judah.

10. AHAB KILLED IN BATTLE AT RAMOT GILEAD, 853 BC

Note the *crimson* (AHAB) and *blue* (JEHOSAPHAT) *arrows* up and down to **Ramot-gilead**.

READ: 1 KINGS 22:1-44

With the Assyrian advance at least temporarily checked at Qarqar, Israel and Aram went at it again. The proverbial cat was away, so the mice could play.

Having already settled their border dispute in Benjamin (Map 6-2), Judah and Israel aligned in the face of greater external threats, namely from Aram and Assyria. The alliance was sealed by the marriage of Athaliah (daughter of Ahab-Jezebel) to Jehoram (son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah). This alliance was not viewed favorably by the prophets (2 Chronicles 19:2) because of the moral and spiritual defects in the house of Ahab.

Ahab requested and received the assistance of **Jehoshaphat** of Judah to help restore **Ramot-gilead** to Israel. Ramot-gilead is a strategic site on the Way to Bashan section of the King's Highway. The route from the Jezreel Valley climbs up a ridge through Gilead and intersects the King's Highway at Ramot-gilead, from which one has access to either Damascus or further east into the desert. As a coveted location, Ramot-gilead became the site of repeated Israelite-Aramean battles.

Contrary to the advice of one true prophet, Ahab and Jehoshaphat went up to wrest control of Ramot-gilead from Aram. The endeavor was a miserable failure. Ahab was hit by a stray (not to God) arrow that found a chink in his armor. He bled to death while watching the battle. He was brought back in his chariot to **Samaria**, where he was buried.

REVIEW, Map 6-3:

1. **Omri**, father of Ahab, moved the capital of Israel from **Tirzah** to **Samaria**. All three capitals of Israel – **Shechem**, **Tirzah**, **Samaria** – were situated along the Trans-Samaria Expressway. The Trans-Samaria Expressway is the route in a series of wide valleys that cut through Samaria from west to east: Nahal Shechem, Wadi Beidan and Wadi Far'a.
2. Omri/Ahab formed a tri-partied alliance between Israel-Phoenicia-Judah. While the alliance with Phoenicia was perhaps politically astute, it introduced the **Baal** cult into Israel. The prophet **Elijah** confronted this idolatry.
3. The Israel-Phoenicia alliance threatened Aram. The Omri/Ahab dynasty was dominated by battles with Aram, including battles at **Samaria**, **Aphek**, and **Ramot-gilead**. Ahab died in battle at Ramot-gilead and was buried in Samaria.
4. Ahab and Jezebel conspired to murder Naboth and confiscate his vineyard at **Jezreel**. Elijah prophesied Ahab and Jezebel's doom.
5. For three years Aram and Israel called a truce, among other reasons to form a common front against Assyria, typified in their cooperation at the battle of Qarqar on the Orontes. Both Ben-Hadad (Hadad-ezer) and "Ahab of Israel" are mentioned in the Assyrian record of this battle (ANET 278-279). This Assyrian record, dating to 853 BC, is the oldest extra-biblical reference to a name of a king of Israel or Judah.
6. Arrows marking events on this map illustrate the northern routes into Israel: 1) The northwest approach along the plain of Asher is illustrated by the Phoenicia-Israel alliance; 2) The northern Gateway to Galilee is shown by the Ben-Hadad conquest of Dan, Hazor and Chinnereth in the Hulah Valley; 3) Routes descending from the Golan are shown by the battle of Aphek; 4) The connection to Gilead in the east is exemplified in the battle at Ramot-gilead.

6-4 The Mesha Stele: Israel's and Judah's Relations with Moab and Edom

Date: c. 850-841 BC

At first glance this map may look complicated but it can be simplified by understanding that there are four events marked here, all which occurred within 12 years of Ahab's death at Ramot-gilead (Map 6-3, 853 BC). Note these four events:

1. King Mesha of Moab revolted and expanded north onto the Plateau as recorded in the Mesha Stele.
2. Jehoram (Israel) and Jehoshaphat (Judah) attacked the Moabite capital of Kir-hareseth (c. 850 BC), recorded in 2 Kings 3.
3. A coalition of Transjordan kings attacked Jehoshaphat of Judah via En Gedi.
4. Edom rebelled and Jehoram of Judah failed to quash the rebellion, c. 845 BC.

Each of these events is considered in turn.

1. Mesha Stele - Mesha, king of Moab, Revolts against Israel and Conquers the Medeba Plateau

Note the **black arrows** originating from Kir-hareseth pointing north throughout the **Plateau**. The **red underlining** represent sites listed as captured in the victory stele known as the **Mesha or Moabite Stone/Stele**.

The Second Book of Kings begins by declaring that "Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab" (2 Ki. 1:1). Ahab's pre-occupation with Aram and finally his death set the background for the revolt of Mesha King of Moab. The Mesha Stele, found in Dibon in 1868, gives a description of the Moabite revolt from the perspective of its king. The Mesha Stele, 35 lines on a black basalt stone (56 x 32 inches), is one of the most important inscriptions for biblical historical geography and study of ancient languages (ANET 320).

On the stele, Mesha says that "**Omri king of Israel**" and "**his son**" had "oppressed Moab for many days...and taken possession of the land of **Medeba**." Most of the stele is Mesha's boast that through the help of his god Chemosh, he was able to secure the territory of the Medeba Plateau for Moab. He took **Baal-meon, Kiriathaim** and **Nebo**. He said that "**the men of Gad** had dwelt in the land of **Ataroth for a long time**, and the **king of Israel** had built **Ataroth** for himself," but Mesha fought against the town and took it. Similarly the **king of Israel** had built **Jahaz**, but Mesha fought against it and took it. Mesha fortified **Dibon**, as well as **Aroer**, and "**made the highway through the Arnon**" – a route which would connect the Plateau to Moab proper. Interestingly Mesha did not claim **Heshbon** - either Israel, or perhaps even Ammon, must have held it.

Mesha also said that the **House of David** had dwelt in **Horonaim**. This is an important reference to the dynasty that David started, and by implication is confirmation that David was a real person. It is one of only two known ancient extra-biblical references to David. The other reference is from the Tel Dan Inscription (discussed on Map 6-5). Both inscriptions date to shortly after 850 BC, over one hundred years after David lived (*BAR* 20:03, May/June 1994).

2 Kings 1 & 2 explain how things were falling apart in Israel. King Ahab was killed in the renewed battle with Aram at Ramot-gilead. Moab revolted, taking the Plateau in Transjordan from Israel. Ahab's son Ahaziah sought healing from Baal Zebub (The Lord of the Flies) in the Philistine city of Ekron – an act which brought down condemnation from Elijah. Another son of

Ahab became king, Joram (alternate spelling, Jehoram). Apparently early in Joram's reign, Elijah crossed the Jordan River and dramatically left the scene (marked on Map 6-5).

2. Jehoram (Israel), Jehoshaphat (Judah) and Edom join in a campaign against Moab

Note the *crimson* (Jehoram) and *blue* (Jehoshaphat) *arrows* from Hebron around the south side of the Dead Sea past Horonaim to **Kir-hareseth**, *boxed in red*. Edom (*green arrow*) also joined the Judah-Israel coalition against Moab.

READ: 2 KINGS 3

It is impossible to determine the precise chronological relationship between Moab's conquests described in the Mesha Stele with the biblical narrative. It could be that Mesha was able to expand onto the Plateau *after* the battle at Kir-hereseth described in 2 Kings 3, but is marked here as a response to Mesha's revolt (2 Ki. 1:1, 3:5).

Avoiding Mesha's forts on the Plateau (?), the Israel-Judah-Edom coalition attacked from the south via "**the way of the Wilderness of Edom.**" The participation of Edom - still a vassal to Judah - provided a good staging ground for the attack. However, Jehoram miscalculated the need for water on the way through Edom and relief was provided only through the miraculous intervention of the prophet Elisha. It is possible that our arrows showing the seven-day Israel-Judah trek should extend further east into Edom. The valley that filled with water may have been the upper reaches of the **Zered**.

The battle ended as a standoff at **Kir-hereseth**. Although the text of 2 Kings 3:26-27 is ambiguous, it appears the king of Moab sacrificed either his own son or the (captured?) eldest son of the king of Edom as a burnt offering. The deed broke up the Israel-Judah-Edom alliance.

3. Transjordan Coalition Attack against Jehoshaphat of Judah via En Gedi

Note the *black arrow* from **Kir-Hareseth**, across the Lisan (Tongue) of the Dead Sea, pointing at **En Gedi**, and the short arrow from En Gedi up the **Ascent of Ziz**.

Also note the *blue arrow* (JEHOSHAPAT with CHOIR) from **Jerusalem**, passing **Tekoa** and pointing toward **En Gedi**.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 20

Jehoshaphat's twenty-five-year (872-848 BC) reign in Judah got a mostly positive review from the biblical narrators. He sought the Lord like David did, making it a point to have the book of the law of the Lord taught throughout his realm. There was security and prosperity in Judah. Though his ships were broken in an apparent storm at **Ezion-geber**, like Solomon he was in a position to develop trade through that southeast port (1 Kings 22:48). The negative assessments of Jehoshaphat are related to his alliances with Israel. His son married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The Baalist cult in Israel was bound to affect Judah.

Toward the end of Jehoshaphat's reign a coalition of Moab, Ammon, and Edom (Mt. Seir) came against Judah with a surprise attack. Apparently the Transjordan coalition maneuvered across the Lisan Peninsula of the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat did not know about the attack until the enemy was at **Hazazon-Tamar (En Gedi)**. The enemy planned to come up the **Ascent of Ziz**, the steep ridge ascending from the Dead Sea at **En Gedi** between the Nahal Arugot and Nahal David. The route leads through the Wilderness past **Tekoa** and joins the Road of the Patriarchs at Bethlehem.

This **Tekoa-En Gedi** ridge is the only route, and not a good one at that, which permits access to Jerusalem from the southeast.

As Jehoshaphat and all Judah humbly sought the Lord, they were assured that the Lord would fight this battle. When Judah went out past **Tekoa** toward **En Gedi**, Jehoshaphat put a choir in the front line who sang, "Hodu leh Adonai, key leh olam hasdo" – "Give thanks to the Lord, for His loving-kindness endures forever". Something caused the enemy coalition to dissolve; the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites began to fight each other. Judah only had to pick up the spoil. On the way back to Jerusalem they named the valley, probably just west of Tekoa, the **Valley of Berachah** ("Blessing").

4. **Edom's Revolt and the Failures of Jehoram of Judah, c. 845 BC.**

Note the confrontation between Jehoram (Judah) and Edom on the south side of the Dead Sea, just south of Zoar/Zair. Also note PHILISTINES and ARABS (*black*) near Libnah in the Shephelah.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 21 (cf. 2 Kings 8:16-23)

For a period of some seven years, the king of Israel and the king of Judah were both called Je(ho)ram. Jehoram in Israel was Ahab's son, while Jehoram in Judah was Jehoshaphat's son. Jehoram in Judah clearly got a *double-thumbs-down* assessment. He married Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, killed his brothers, and imported Baal idolatry to Judah. The biblical authors list the troubles he underwent "because he had forgotten the Lord God of his fathers." In his days **Edom** revolted against Judah and set up a king over themselves. Jehoram tried to reestablish control over Edom in a battle near Zair/Zoar on the south side of the Dead Sea, but barely got away with his own life. Then **Libnah** revolted (probably Judahites) and **Philistines** with **Arabs** from Africa **attacked Jerusalem**, carrying away royal property and family. As if the revolts in Edom, the Shephelah and Philistia were not enough, Jehoram was struck with a serious stomach illness and died, "to no one's regret" (2 Chronicles 21:20). Not a nice epitaph for a tombstone of a king of Judah: "Here lies Jehoram. He died. No one was sorry."

5. **READ: OBADIAH – Judgment on Edom**

The reign of Jehoram of Judah in the mid-9th century BC could be the setting of the prophetic oracle of **Obadiah**. Edom had revolted from Judean sovereignty. Then, while the **Philistines and Arabs attacked Jerusalem** and carried off Judean royal property and family, **Edom stood aloof and gloated**. For this behavior, Obadiah prophesied judgment upon Edom.

Sadly, throughout history it appears the Edomites never took Obadiah's words to heart. Edom could have cooperated with Judah to derive mutual benefit from trade routes in the south and east. But Edom preferred to make war rather than business. Time and time again Edom would take advantage of Judah's weak moments, grabbing Judean territory when Judah was down.

In contrast to Philistine and Edomite possession of Judean territory that Obadiah witnessed, he prophesied that "those in the **Negev** will possess the **mountain of Esau**, and those of the **Shephelah** the **Philistine** plain." His prophecies were fulfilled within a half century in the days of King Uzziah (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chronicles 26:6, Map 7-2).

REVIEW, Map 6-4:

1. The **Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone)** is an important inscription describing Moab's revolt from Israel after the death of Ahab (853 BC). In the inscription Mesha boasts of conquering cities and territory on the **Medeba Plateau** north of the **Arnon River**. Besides site names, Mesha mentions **Omri King of Israel, Omri's son**, the tribe of **Gad**, the **vessels of Yahweh** and the **House of David**. This is one of only two known ancient extra-biblical references to David.
2. 2 Kings 3 describes an attack upon Mesha by a coalition of **Jehoram** of Israel, **Jehoshaphat** of Judah, and **Edom**. The attack may have occurred before Mesha's conquests described in the Mesha Stele, but is marked on the map as a response to Mesha's revolt. The Israel-Judah-Edom coalition attacked Moab from the south, **via Edom**. The prophet **Elisha** was involved in miraculously supplying water in a canyon, perhaps the **Zered Canyon**, the ancient border between Moab and Edom.
3. **Moab-Ammon-Edom attacked King Jehoshaphat of Judah**. The Transjordan alliance used the **Ascent of Ziz** coming up from **En Gedi**. The Ascent of Ziz, and the **En Gedi-Tekoa ridge** is the only route that approaches Jerusalem from the southeast. Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and was told he would not have to fight this battle. He put singers in front of the soldiers who sang "Give thanks to the Lord, for his loving-kindness is forever." The Transjordan alliance broke apart – Moab, Ammon, and Edom turned upon each other. Jehoshaphat only had to collect the spoil, naming the **Valley of Beracha** (Blessing) near Tekoa on the way back to Jerusalem.
4. In the days of Jehoshaphat's son, **Jehoram of Judah**, things were not good in Judah. Jehoram married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, murdered his brothers and **imported Baal worship to Judah**. Jehoram died of a serious stomach ailment, **to no one's regret**. In his days **Edom and Libnah revolted**, and the **Philistines and Arabs sieged Jerusalem** and went away with royal family members and property. Judah-Edom relations at this time are possibly the setting for the **Book of Obadiah**, making Obadiah the earliest "writing" prophet (others place Obadiah at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonian, Map 7-9). Obadiah prophesied judgment because Edom took advantage of his brother Judah's weak moments.

6-5 Elisha, J(eh)oram, Jehu: Relations with Aram and Assyria

Date: c. 850-841 BC

Note that a number of the events marked on Map 6-5 overlap chronologically with events marked on Map 6-4. Events marked on these maps occurred within the decade following the death of Ahab, from 853 to 841 BC.

1. Elisha's Hometown

Yellow highlight box #1 near Abel-meholah in the Jordan Rift Valley

READ: 1 KINGS 19:15-21

Elisha means "my God saves." Elisha was from **Abel-meholah** ("Meadow of the Dance") in the Lower Jordan plain south of Beth-shan. A potshard dating to the late 800s BC with "Elisha" written in Hebrew was found at Tel Rehov (7 miles NE of Abel-meholah, Map 1-6, 1-7). The Elisha of the inscription may or may not have been the famous biblical figure but nonetheless it is a noteworthy find which dates to the time of the biblical Elisha.

Elisha was plowing fields in this agriculturally-rich area when Elijah threw his cloak over him. The word for cloak here in Hebrew (*aderet*) can also mean "glory."

2. Elijah taken up to Heaven

Yellow highlight box #2 across the Jordan River near the Dead Sea.

READ: 2 KINGS 2:1-14

The situation in Israel at the time of Elijah's departure was not good. Ahab had died in battle yet Jezebel was still alive. Baal worship had not been eradicated. Ahab's son Ahaziah sought the Baal Zebub of Ekron for healing, but died. While the war with Aram went on, the next son of Ahab, Jehoram, would soon be dealing with revolt in Moab (Map 6-4). It is notable that the three main periods of divine miraculous intervention in man's affairs (Exodus/Conquest, Elijah/Elisha, Jesus/Early Believers) were accompanied by no small degree of unbelief.

Accompanied by Elisha, Elijah left the Hill Country down a ridge from **Bethel** to **Jericho**. Striking the **Jordan River** with his cloak, the two miraculously crossed to the Plains of Moab in similar style but reverse direction to Joshua and the Israelites. Here, just below where Moses died, Elijah was separated from Elisha by a chariot of fire and taken to heaven in a whirlwind. But Elisha received Elijah's cloak, signifying a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Elijah's "translation" into heaven, like Enoch's years before him, is evidence that life continues beyond the present age. Elijah was seen with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and is to play a role yet in the biblical drama (Mal. 4:5, Mat. 17:11). He and Enoch are good candidates for the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11:3.

3. Elisha Cleanses the Spring in Jericho

Yellow highlight box #3 near Jericho.

READ: 2 KINGS 2:13-25

After striking the Jordan River like Elijah, Elisha came to Jericho. In the heat of the Jordan Rift near Jericho, 900 feet below sea level, life is totally dependent on spring water. Somehow the spring at Jericho had become polluted. Curiously, Elisha threw salt in it, and purified the waters.

The spring is most likely the one that emanates from the foot of the ancient site (Tel es-Sultan) and provides water for the city of Jericho to this day.

On his way up the ridge from Jericho (*crimson arrow*) some youngsters came out of Jericho and mocked Elisha's bald head. Two bears came from the forest and mauled (or "split up, scattered", Hebrew "baqa", בקע) forty-two of them. Warning: respect your elders (and prophets).

4. Elisha Spends Time on Mt. Carmel

Yellow highlight box #4 on Mt. Carmel.

READ: 2 KINGS 2:25 (cf. 4:25)

Elisha came to Mt. Carmel, where Yahweh had been shown supreme, and Baal nothing.

5. Elisha Provides Water in the Battle against Moab

Yellow highlight box #5 on the lower-right corner of the map.

At this point Elisha miraculously provided water for the Jehoram-Jehoshaphat-Edom coalition against Moab, marked on Map 6-4.

6. Elisha Raises from the Dead a Boy at Shunem

Yellow highlight box #6 near Shunem in the Jezreel Valley.

READ: 2 KINGS 4:8-37

Elisha passed by **Shunem** a number of times in his journeys. Traveling through the **Harod** and **Jezreel Valleys**, Shunem is about half way between Elisha's hometown (Abel-meholah) and Mt. Carmel. A Shunamite woman had a room made and furnished for Elisha, for which she was promised a child. The child grew but when helping his father in the fields of the Jezreel/Harod Valley, suddenly died. The woman made a bee-line across the Jezreel Valley to Mt. Carmel where Elisha was. Elisha returned with her to Shunem and raised the boy from the dead.

Elisha then gave instructions to Naaman, a captain in the Aramean(!) army, to dip in the Jordan River seven times and be cleansed of his leprosy. Naaman became a worshiper of Yahweh. Elisha also caused an iron axe head to float in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5-6).

7. Chariots of Fire, Arameans Blinded

Yellow highlight box #7 near **Dothan** in Samaria.

READ: 2 KINGS 6:8-23

The king of Aram continued attacks upon Israel. However, there was none better at military intelligence than Elisha. He could tell the king of Israel (Jehoram son of Ahab) ahead of time where the attack would be. When the king of Aram learned it was Elisha who knew his battle plans, he sent troops to **Dothan** to capture Elisha. Elisha's servant feared the Aramean troops, but Elisha prayed, and the servant saw why there was no need to fear. The hills were full with supernatural horses, and chariots of fire surrounded Elisha. Elisha prayed again and the Aramean forces were struck with blindness. He led them to downtown **Samaria**, where the king of Israel treated them kindly and sent them home. It appears the king of Aram misinterpreted this gesture of kindness, since instead of smaller marauding units, he would next come against Samaria with his whole army.

8. Aramean Siege and Retreat at Samaria

Yellow highlight box #8 near **Samaria**. Note the Aramean *green arrows* pointing to and retreating from Samaria.

READ: 2 KINGS 6:23-7:20

The Aramean siege caused such severe famine that some in **Samaria** were reduced to cannibalism. Finally one day by the word of the Lord, Elisha prophesied that the famine would be lifted on the morrow. With nothing to lose, four beggars had gone into the Aramean camp. They found all precious manner of goods, but no one around. The Arameans had made a hasty retreat. The Lord had caused them to believe that the Egyptians and Hittites were coming to help Israel. Jehoram's officers followed the Aramean retreat – all the way to the **Jordan River** the path was full of goods that had been left behind. Elisha's very specific prophecies for the day were fulfilled.

9. Jehu's Mad Ride from Ramoth-gilead to Jezreel, 841 BC

Note the **red arrow** from **Ramoth-gilead** to **Jezreel**. *Yellow highlight box #9* at both locations.

READ: 2 KINGS 8 & 9

Elisha mournfully predicted that Hazael would succeed Ben-Hadad as king over Aram. Hazael was to have a lengthy reign, 841-801 BC, and harm Israel much (Map 7-1). The change of power in Damascus was apparently initially viewed by Israel as an opportunity to take back **Ramoth-gilead**. The king of Judah by this time was Ahaziah – *thumbs-down* – "he walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Ki. 8:27). Ahaziah went with Jehoram to battle against Hazael at **Ramoth-gilead**. Jehoram was wounded in the battle, went to **Jezreel** to recuperate, where Ahaziah visited him. The stage was set for one of the most dramatic events in the history of Israel.

Elisha sent a prophet to **Ramoth-gilead** to perform the last part of the commission given to Elijah by the Lord on Mt. Horeb, namely, to anoint **Jehu** as king of Israel. Jehu wasted no time. Coming down a ridge from Gilead, rounding a corner at Beth-Shan, watchmen in the tower at Jezreel could tell it was Jehu by his pedal-to-the-metal chariot driving. Jehoram and Ahaziah met him in Naboth's property, which shows that property must have been on the eastern side of the city. Jehoram was shot through the heart with an arrow and thrown on Naboth's field. Ahaziah, shot near Ibleam at the Ascent of Gur, was brought to Megiddo where he died. Back at Jezreel, **Jezebel** put on her make-up and fixed her hair, but was tossed out the window. When Jehu finally got around to burying her, all that was left of her was her skull, feet and hands. Elijah's prophecies had been fulfilled to the last detail.

2 Kings 10 records how Jehu wiped out the rest of the house of Ahab, and eradicated Baal worship from Israel. Four descendants of Jehu would sit on the throne of Israel making his dynasty the longest lasting (90 years) in the Northern Kingdom. However, he still followed the sin of Jeroboam, the perverted form of Yahweh worship with golden calves at **Bethel** and **Dan**.

10. Tel Dan Stele

The Tel Dan Stele is a fragmentary **Aramaic** inscription on three pieces of basalt stone found in excavations of the Iron Age gate area at Dan. The largest piece, 14.5 x 10 inches (32 x 22 centimeters), was found in 1993. Two smaller pieces were found in 1994.

The inscriptions on the stele are an extraordinary parallel to the biblical narrative. Although the personal names of the kings of Judah and Israel are fragmentary, their titles are complete. The Aramaic king (Hazeal) boasts of killing both Jehoram...the **king of Israel** and Ahaziah **...of the House of David**. While Jehu actually killed these two kings, it is not without some justification that Hazeal could boast responsibility for the deed since his battles against Israel were the backdrop cause for Jehu's purge. Hazeal's eventual successful attacks against Israel (2 Kings 10:32-33) allowed him to set up this stele and make his boast at Dan.

Evidence from the archaeological excavation, the language of the inscription, and its content, all help to date the inscription to just after the purge of Jehu in 841 BC. At this time the king of Aram could claim a victory over both the **king of Israel** and the **House of David**. Like the Moabite Stone, the Tel Dan Inscription takes on added significance since it mentions the House of **David**, furnishing extra-biblical evidence for the existence of the real person, David. It is a measure of the humility of David that, unlike the grand monuments that Egyptian and Mesopotamian monarchs made in honor of themselves, we know of David's existence outside of the Bible from only two relatively small inscriptions. Both the inscriptions are from foreigners (one Moabite, one Aramean) who claimed victories over David's descendants.

11. Shalmaneser III of Assyria: Attack on Damascus and Tribute from Jehu, 841 BC

Note the **black-yellow arrows** coming from Assyria to Damascus, through Galilee to Tyre, and into Israel.

The year 841 BC was significant in biblical history for several reasons.

- Jehu's purge ended the Omride dynasty with its Baal worship, and ushered in the longest dynasty that Israel would know – five kings from 841-752 BC.
- The Davidic messianic line was nearly broken. With Ahaziah killed in the Jehu purge, the queen mother, Athaliah in Judah, thought it an opportune time to eliminate any remnant of the House of David. Her attack upon the Davidic family into which she had married was deadly, but the Lord's promise that David would never lack offspring in the messianic line was kept through the baby Joash (2 Kings 11).
- Finally, on the international scene, in 841 BC Shalmaneser III of Assyria campaigned against Damascus and in Golan and Galilee. Jehu became, for all practical purposes, a vassal to Assyria in the same year that he became king. On the **Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser**, Jehu is named and depicted as bowing down and presenting tribute to the Assyrian monarch (ANET 280-281). Shalmaneser III hampered Damascus until 838 BC. When he withdrew to attend to matters elsewhere in his kingdom, Hazeal of Aram was once again free to wreak havoc on Israel (2 Kings 10:32-33).

The Prophet Joel

While Joel does not date his own writing, the years between 852-841 BC are a likely setting of his prophecies (Merrill 382-383). Joel described a time of severe drought accompanied by a threat from a powerful army in the north. He encouraged repentance before the army reached Judah's borders. If indeed the famine recorded in 2 Kings 6:24-8:6 and the conquests of the Assyrian army of Shalmaneser III are the backdrop of Joel's prophecies, Joel was a contemporary of Elisha, and along with Obadiah (cf. Joel 3:19) wrote his prophecy in the mid-9th century BC.

Introduction: Section 7

Looks like this is the End

The nine maps in Section 7 deal with the final 250 years of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, from 842-586 BC. In some ways this period could be called "the end." First, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria at about the midpoint of this period (722 BC); and then, 135 years later in 586 BC, Babylon destroyed the Southern Kingdom of Judah. When the events portrayed on these maps are complete, the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom are in exile in districts of Assyria, Judah is in exile in Babylon, the descendants of the Davidic dynasty are imprisoned in a foreign land, the Temple of Solomon is destroyed, and Jerusalem is in ruins. The people of Israel and Judah were asking themselves, "Why have these catastrophes come about? What will happen to us now? Is our covenant with Yahweh broken forever? Will there ever be another descendant of David to sit on the throne in Jerusalem? Is this the end?"

Parallels between Extra-Biblical Texts and the Biblical Record

One valuable aspect of this final 250-year period of the Israelite and Judean Monarchies is the abundance of extra-biblical textual and archaeological sources corresponding to the Scriptural record. In this period multiple references in extra-biblical sources to people, places and events support and enhance the biblical record. There is no denying the existence of an Israelite or Judean king as reported in the biblical text at this time, since many of the kings of this period are also mentioned in contemporaneous Assyrian or other archaeological texts.

For example, the first and last kings of Israel of this period are mentioned in Assyrian texts: Jehu, King of Israel (841-814 BC), is depicted pictorially and mentioned by name on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (ANET 281, Maps 6-5 & 7-1). Annals of the monarch Tiglath-pileser III refer to three of the last four kings of Israel: Menahem, Pekah and Hoshea (ANET 284, 2 Kings 15:19, 1 Chronicles 5:26, Map 7-6).

There are numerous other biblical people, places and events found in extra-biblical sources. The parallels are as grand as a 70-foot-long pictorial decoration from the palace of the Assyrian King Sennacherib showing his siege of the Judean city of Lachish. At the time Sennacherib boasted, "Hezekiah the Jew...I made prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage" (ANET 288, 2 Kings 18:13-24, SMM Map 7-6). Some of the historical parallels are of a more obscure nature, as the Assyrian Sargon II's siege of Ashdod in c. 713 BC, to which the Prophet Isaiah referred (ANET 286, Isaiah 20:1-6, SMM 7-5).

The point here: the biblical record fits securely with the extra-biblical textual and archaeological sources. These parallel sources enhance and confirm the biblical account.

Historical Overview (see chart on next page)

A main feature of this period is the presence in the Promised Land of the large Mesopotamian-based empires, Assyria and later Babylon. Everything happening in the biblical record at this time must be understood against the backdrop of the Assyrian and later Babylonian presence in the land of Israel and Judah.

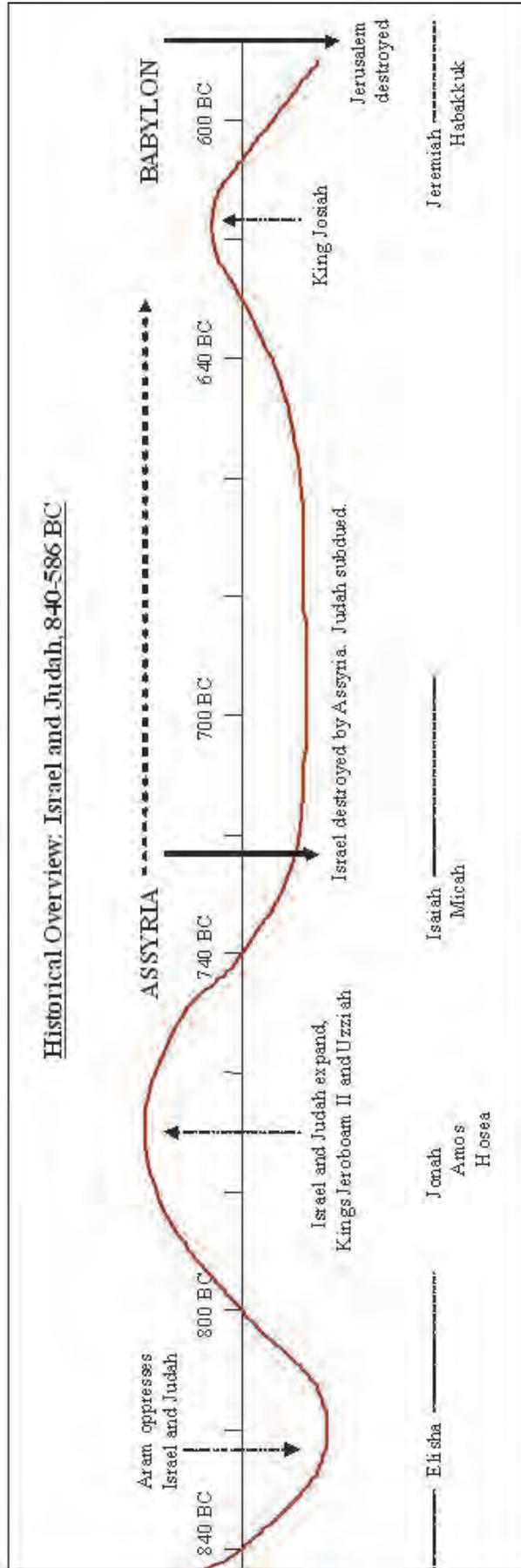
The 250 years of history covered in Section 7 can be broken down into the following periods:

1. **842-743 BC – "The mice play while the cat's away"** – meaning 100 years of local politics and wars, especially between Israel, Judah and Aram, before the invasions of the Assyrian empire. The period has two phases:
 - A. 840-800 BC (Map 7-1) – the Aramean oppression of Israel and Judah under Hazael. This oppression was lifted when the Assyrian Adad-nirari III subdued the Aramean capital of Damascus in c. 800 BC (ANET 281-2, 2 Kings 13:3-5).
 - B. 800-743 BC (Map 7-2) – With Aram weakened and Assyria distracted by events back east, Israel and Judah politically prospered under their respective kings, Jeroboam II and Uzziah.
2. **743-630 BC – Assyrian domination** (Maps 7-5, 6, 7). Tiglath-pileser III came to the throne in Assyria in 745 BC. This began a period of over 100 years of Assyrian sovereignty in the Promised Land. There was a mad political scramble in the Northern Kingdom of Israel as successive kings either resisted or submitted to Assyrian rule. Within twenty years, Galilee, Gilead and Samaria had become Assyrian provinces. Judah barely held out in the south.
3. **630-586 BC – "Babylon, Babylon"** (Map 7-9). The Assyrian empire crumbled rapidly between 630 and 609 BC. Josiah, king of Judah took advantage of Assyria's decline and expanded Judah's borders. But the respite was short-lived – Assyria's conqueror was Babylon, and Jerusalem was leveled by the new empire in 586 BC.

Ministries of the Prophets

One other important feature of this period is the ministry of the writing prophets. The prophetic books cannot be properly understood without knowledge of the historical and geographical setting in which they were written. The prophets paid close attention to the political developments of their time, and interpreted the state of affairs for the people. Amos and Hosea condemned the social and religious evils of the Northern Kingdom in the economically prosperous days of King Jeroboam II (793-753 BC). "The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built. As his country improved, he improved his pagan stone pillars. Their heart is false, now they must bear their guilt... Assyria shall be their king!" (Hosea 10:1-2; 11:5).

In "the year that king Uzziah died..." the prophet Isaiah was looking at a changing world (Isaiah 6:1). The year was 740 BC. The Northern Kingdom was collapsing, its territories being taken away by Assyria. Judah watched Samaria fall and wondered how to react to the coming Assyrian threat. In this context Isaiah and his contemporary Micah gave their prophecies. Likewise, a century later, Jeremiah and Habakkuk interpreted the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians. The words of these prophets can only be understood when seen in their historical context.



7-1 Aramean Oppression of Israel and Judah: Internal Politics and Wars Prior to Major Assyrian Invasions

Date: c. 840-800 BC

So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael (2 Kings 13:3).

1. Hazael of Aram Conquers Transjordan in Jehu's Days

Note the *green arrow* from Aram through Transjordan (Bashan, Gilead and Plateau) pointing all the way to **Aroer** (*red box*) on the edge of the Arnon Valley.

READ: 2 KINGS 10:28-32

For purging Israel of Baal worship the Lord promised Jehu that four more generations of his descendants would sit on the throne. Indeed, the dynasty of Jehu was the longest Israel would know, spanning five generations and almost 100 years (841-752 BC). However, the house of Jehu still followed the sin of Jeroboam, the perverted form of Yahweh worship with golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

Unlike Hazael of Damascus, Jehu submitted to the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser III in 841 BC (Map 6-5). However within a matter of a few years Shalmaneser III became preoccupied with matters in the east and was unable to keep the pressure on Damascus. Hazael of Aram was free once again to harass Israel. Most likely viewing Jehu as an Assyrian ally, Hazael conquered all of Israel's territory in Transjordan, including the **Bashan, Gilead and Plateau** as far as the city of **Aroer** on the edge of the **Arnon River** (2 Ki. 10:31-32). The Israelite tribes of **Manasseh, Reuben and Gad** in Transjordan came under the occupation of Aram.

While the author of Kings shows that Hazael was in fact an instrument of Yahweh for disciplining Israel, later the prophet Amos contended that the Aramean kings were overly cruel in their conquests of Transjordan:

Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron. So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael, And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad" (Amos 1:3-4).

2. Aram Conquers the Coastal Plain and Sieges Joash in Jerusalem, c. 815 BC

Note the green arrow from **Aram** through the Jezreel Valley, along the Coastal Plain, pointing toward **Gath** (*red box*) and then **Jerusalem**.

SKIM: 2 KINGS 11, AND READ: 2 KINGS 12 & 2 CHRONICLES 24:4-27

Meanwhile in Judah, the Baal-worshipping-queen Athaliah had been eliminated when the boy king Joash ascended the throne. Joash (also known as Jehoash) started out well as his long reign of forty years was guided by the priest Jehoida. Joash initiated significant repairs to the Jerusalem temple.

"Jehoash Inscription"

The name and deeds of Jehoash have caused no little stir recently in the biblical archaeological world. In January of 2003 a limestone inscription (11 inches long, 9 inches wide, 3 inches thick, of 15-16 lines) – rumored to have come from the Temple Mount area – appeared on the antiquities market. The inscription, in paleo-Hebrew script, is called the Jehoash inscription. The first line of the inscription is broken off, so Jehoash's name does not appear, but the name of his father Ahaziah appears in the second line. The inscription describes the collection of materials and repairs of the temple and parallels the description of Jehoash's work given in 2 Kings 12:5-17 and 2 Chronicles 24:4-14. Archaeologists have hotly debated the inscription's authenticity. If real, the inscription is one more archaeological artifact which correlates with the biblical text, in this case even offering ancient physical evidence of the Jerusalem temple.

As mentioned, Joash had a good start. But when the righteous priest Jehoida died, Joash fell to worshipping Asherah and other idols. He went so low as to have the prophet-priest Zechariah murdered in the temple courts - an event perhaps referred to by Jesus (Matthew 23:35). "So wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt" (2 Chronicles 24:18).

Once again God's wrath came upon Israel and Judah in the form of an invading army. Hazael of Aram was able to move his armies onto the Coastal Plain: "Then Hazael king of Aram went up and fought against **Gath** and captured it, and Hazael set his face to go up to **Jerusalem**" (2 Kings 12:17). Archaeologists excavating Gath (Tel es-Safi) find evidence of the city's destruction attributable to Hazael. King Joash resorted to giving gold and silver from the temple to buy off Hazael.

3. ASSYRIA: Adad-nirari III, Siege of Damascus, c. 806 BC

The forty years between 840-800 BC were difficult ones for Israel and Judah. With Assyria no longer pressuring Damascus, the Arameans were running roughshod over Israel and Judah. Take another glance at Map 7-1 and note that Aram had secured control of both the King's Highway in Transjordan and the Coastal Highway in the west. Israel and Judah were boxed in. Having control of these two major routes through the Promised Land, Aram could even venture into the Hills of Judah and demand tribute from King Joash in Jerusalem.

The Scriptures make it clear that the Israelites' sin had brought them to these difficult circumstances. Yet Yahweh was ready to honor even the smallest inkling of real repentance. Thankfully that bit of repentance came. Jehoahaz of Israel, son of Jehu, sized up the bitter circumstances and entreated Yahweh for help.

...and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Aram oppressed them. And the LORD gave Israel *a deliverer*, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Arameans...(2 Kings 13:4-5).

The deliverer which the Lord gave Israel appears to be none other than the Assyrian monarch Adad-nirari III, who in c. 806 BC sacked Damascus and exacted heavy tribute in gold, silver, iron and other precious commodities. In Adad-nirari's words, the king of Damascus "seized my feet, assuming the position of a slave" (ANET 281-282). Although Assyria would not stay long this time, Adad-nirari's conquest of Damascus was enough to release Israel from Aramean oppression. Aramean sovereignty over Israelite territory was coming to an end.

REVIEW, Map 7-1:

1. The years 840-800 BC are marked by Aramean oppression of Israel. The Aramean attacks even reached Jerusalem. These years are summed up well in this verse: "So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael" (2 Kings 13:3).
2. The Arameans (Hazael) were able to conquer all of Israelite Transjordan, including Bashan, Gilead and the Plateau as far as Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley. This secured for Aram control over the international Transjordan Highway, the King's Highway.
3. Aram penetrated as far south as the Coastal Plain, taking Gath. Aram was at that point in control of the two major international routes through the Promised Land. Both Israel and Judah were boxed in. The army of Israel was reduced to "not more than fifty horsemen and ten chariots and 10,000 footmen" (2 Kings 13:7). Even Judah's capital in Jerusalem was vulnerable to attack. King Joash of Judah paid tribute to avert an Aramean siege of Jerusalem.
4. Joash (Jehoash) of Judah garnered materials and carried out repairs of the temple. An inscription – the so-called **Jehoash Inscription** – appeared on the antiquities market in January 2003. The inscription describes repair work on the temple which parallels the biblical description of Je(ho)ash's work. The inscription's authenticity is debated.
5. The Aramean oppression which Israel and Judah found themselves in was discipline for unfaithfulness to their covenant with Yahweh. When Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, in a spirit of repentance entreated Yahweh for help, Yahweh sent a "deliverer" in the form of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III. In Adad-nirari's records, he boasts of a campaign in the Levant, and makes special mention of his subjugation of the Aramean capital, Damascus. The Assyrian attack on Damascus (c. 806 BC) initiated the release of Israel and Judah from Aramean oppression. With Aram trimmed to size, and with Assyria still pre-occupied in the east, the next 50 years (800-750 BC) would be a time of economic and territorial expansion for Israel and Judah (Map 7-2).

7-2 Resurgence in Israel and Judah: Jeroboam II and Uzziah

Date: c. 800-740 BC

The difficult days of Aramean oppression were coming to a close. In 800 BC Israel and Judah were on the threshold of a political and economic resurgence that lasted nearly 60 years. Under **Jeroboam II of Israel** and **Uzziah of Judah**, the borders extended to areas ruled by Solomon. Unfortunately, the political and economic expansion was not accompanied by moral and spiritual growth. The 60-year party ended when Yahweh brought powerful Assyria on the scene.

1. Elisha Predicts Victory for Joash of Israel over Aram

Note the *dashed crimson arrows* from **Samaria** to **Aphek** and from Samaria to **Gilead** and **Bashan**.

READ: 2 KINGS 13:9-25

The prophet Elisha had lived through the long 40-year period of Israel's subjugation by Aram. But the political landscape was changing. Damascus was sacked by Assyria and would never regain its former glory. Israel's nemesis Hazael of Aram died and was replaced by Ben-hadad II (801 BC). When Elisha was on his deathbed (c. 800 BC), the third king of the house of Jehu, Joash of Israel, sought Elisha for council on how to proceed in the war against Aram. Though the country and army of Israel were still in shambles (2 Ki. 13:7, 14), Elisha used an object lesson involving a bow and arrows to prophesy that Joash would be victorious over the Arameans. In accordance with Elisha's prophecies, Joash restored to Israel cities like **Aphek** on the coast and most likely territory in Gilead and Bashan (Amos 6:13) that had been taken by the Arameans.

2. Amaziah of Judah Defeats Edom in the Valley of Salt

Note the *dashed blue arrow* pointing to the **Valley of Salt** south of the Dead Sea and into **Edom** at **Sela-Joktheel**.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 25:1-16 (cf. 2 KINGS 14:1-7)

The boy king Joash of Judah ended up ruling for 40 years. He started well, but finished poorly. When the good influence of the priest Jehoida was gone, Joash of Judah fell to worshipping Asherah and other idols. He even had the priest-prophet Zechariah murdered in the temple courts. In the end, Joash was assassinated. His son Amaziah (796-767 BC) came to the throne in Judah at the time when Aramean supremacy was fading. Things were looking brighter for both Israel and Judah. Amaziah gathered an army with the objective of bringing Edom back under Judean influence. Apparently Edom had remained independent ever since its revolt against Judah fifty years before, during Jehoram's reign (2 Kings 8:20-22, Map 6-4). Amaziah defeated 10,000 Edomites in the **Valley of Salt** – located either in the Aravah just south of the Dead Sea or in the Biblical Negev between Beersheba and Arad. Another 10,000 Edomites were brutally cast to their deaths from a high cliff. Amaziah proceeded to **Sela**, a principal city in Edom, and brought it under submission, renaming it **Joktheel**.

But like his father Joash, Amaziah may have started well, but finished poorly. He took the gods of the Edomites and set them up as his gods, an act which brought him under Yahweh's condemnation.

3. Joash (Israel) Defeats Amaziah (Judah) at Beth-shemesh

Note the *dashed crimson arrow* pointing at the *red confrontation marker* at **Beth-shemesh** in Judah.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 25:17-28

As the Aramean oppression ended, Israel and Judah re-defined their relationship to one other. Encouraged by his victory against Edom, Amaziah challenged Joash of Israel. It is difficult to know what Amaziah's motivations were. There had been recent Israel-Judah border skirmishes precipitated by a failed bid to hire Israelite mercenaries (2 Chronicles 25:13). Perhaps Amaziah even had grand plans for re-unification of the Northern Kingdom to the House of David. In any case, the chronicler makes it plain that Amaziah's coming humiliation was because he had "sought the gods of Edom." Joash captured Amaziah at **Beth-shemesh** in Judah, and then proceeded to Jerusalem where he knocked down 200 yards/meters of the city's northern wall, helping himself to whatever he wanted from Jerusalem's temple treasury.

But this was not the end of Amaziah's troubles. Ever since he had turned to other gods there was a plot to kill him. He fled to **Lachish** to escape, but was caught and killed. Another reign that had begun with promise ended poorly.

4. Jeroboam II: Restoration of Israel's Border beyond Damascus

Note the *crimson arrows* that point to **Damascus** and north off the map toward **Hamath**.

READ: 2 KINGS 14:15-29

There is little in the biblical historical texts concerning Jeroboam II (782-753 BC, but co-regency with Joash from 793 BC). The chronicler barely mentions him (1 Chron. 5:17). The writer of 2 Kings 14 gave Jeroboam II the *thumbs-down* for his religious practices, and then recorded that this king increased Israel's territory as predicted by the Prophet Jonah:

He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of **Hamath** as far as the **Sea of the Arabah**, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant **Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of **Gath-hepher** (2 Ki. 14:25)

Damascus and the Aramean districts were totally subdued by Jeroboam II. There was no known ruler in Damascus during c. 775-750 BC, which is an indication of Jeroboam II's control over the region. Internationally, Assyria was weak and unable to prevent Jeroboam II's expansion.

Samaria Ostraca

Evidence of administrative policy during Jeroboam II's reign comes from 63 potsherds found in excavations at Samaria. The **Samaria Ostraca** were receipts for quantities of wine and oil received by either estate owners or tax officials. They contain person, place and clan names of the descendants of the tribe of Manasseh, some known from the Bible, some not. The ostraca may be evidence of a land-grab by Jeroboam and his cronies in the Northern Kingdom, at the expense of the poor (Amos 4:1). The ostraca also show that Israel preserved its tribal-clan divisions long into the monarchial period (Aharoni 356-369).

5. Uzziah of Judah

Note the *blue arrows* from **Jerusalem** to **Gath**, and then to **Ashdod** and **Yavneh** in Philistia. Then the *blue arrows* from **Jerusalem** to **Beersheba**, **Tamar**, **Kadesh Barnea** and as far south as **Elath**.

READ: 2 CHRONICLES 26

Contemporaneous with Jeroboam II's expansions in the north, Judah under King Uzziah (791-739 including co-regency) also experienced a recovery. Uzziah brought **Gath** and other towns in Philistia (**Ashdod** and **Yavneh**) under Judean hegemony. He built up a strong army in fortresses in **Jerusalem**, the **Wilderness**, the **Shephelah**, the **Plain**, and the **Hill Country**. He developed agriculture in these same regions, "for he loved the soil" (2 Chronicles 26:10). He received tribute from Ammon, subdued the Arabs and Meunites in the south, and developed the all-important port to Africa and the East at **Elath**.

Unfortunately Uzziah's very success and strength contributed to his downfall, for "when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense" (2 Chr. 26:16). Uzziah became a leper for his prideful act, living isolated from the community, and when he died, he was buried in a separate field near the tombs of the kings. His long reign of 52 years (including co-regency) in the end turned sour. Like his grandfather Joash and father Amaziah, Uzziah became the third king in succession in Judah who started well but finished poorly.

6. The Prophets Amos, Hosea, and Jonah

Between the years c. 775-750 BC the borders of Israel and Judah reached near those realized in the days of Solomon. Jeroboam II of Israel had pushed north past Damascus to Hamath. Uzziah of Judah expanded west, east and then south to Elath. However, all this territorial and economic expansion was not accompanied by appropriate moral and spiritual enlightenment. The Lord's merciful bounty was misinterpreted and misused. The prophets **Amos** and **Hosea** were called to tell Israel especially, but also Judah, that in spite of prosperity, all was not well.

Amos was a shepherd from **Tekoa**, just south of Bethlehem in Judah. He prophesied "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam (II) son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1). Amos said Israel would be judged for spiritual and moral failures. Though Israel prospered, he was unfaithful to his covenant with Yahweh, and oppressed the poor in his midst. Amos boldly went from Tekoa in Judah to Israel's high place at **Bethel** and proclaimed "Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile" (Amos 6:11). Israel was like a basket of summer fruit, gathered at the end of the year, ready for consumption. The end was coming (8:1-2). Assyria was at the door.

Hosea (hometown unknown) also prophesied during the days of "Uzziah...and during the days of Jeroboam..." (1:1). His harlot wife epitomized the unfaithfulness of Israel to Yahweh, especially in these days of prosperity. "The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built. As his country improved, he improved his pagan stone pillars. Their heart is false, now they must bear their guilt... **Assyria** will be their king!" (Hosea 10:1-2; 11:5, author's translation). Hosea's prophetic warnings were among the last ones the Northern Kingdom heard. From Israel's prosperity under Jeroboam II (c. 775 BC) to destruction was about 50 years.

As both **Amos** and **Hosea** are filled with historical allusions to events related to the period currently under consideration, it is recommended that you **READ** over these prophetic books at this time. Historical and geographical references will jump off the page. In the midst of the pronounced judgment, do not miss the promises of hope and blessing for Israel, in Yahweh's grace, given at the end of both books.

Jonah also lived and prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II. As mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, Jonah prophesied the successful extension of Israel's borders from Hamath to the Sea of the Aravah (Dead Sea). Undoubtedly the Israelites welcomed that prophesy of Jonah! Jonah's appearance in the historical narrative in 2 Kings is confirmation that he was a real person.

One can understand Jonah's reluctance to preach repentance in Assyria's capital, Nineveh, at this juncture in history. Although Assyria had previously attacked Israel (Map 6-5), Assyria was at a low point in Jonah's day. An Israelite like Jonah would just as soon see Assyria come under Yahweh's judgment and disappear. But as Jonah suspected, his preaching and God's mercy brought repentance in the Gentile nation. Within forty years Assyria would be used as Yahweh's rod of judgment against Israel, taking into captivity the inhabitants of Jonah's own hometown.

Jonah's hometown was **Gath-hepher** in Galilee, located on the same ridge and just two miles north of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. The close proximity of their hometowns is not the only connection between Jesus and Jonah. Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale is a parallel sign to Jesus' three days in the grave. The two also have in common a ministry that changed the hearts of many Gentiles. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but indeed one "greater than Jonah" has come and effected repentance in countless Gentile cities across the world (Matthew 12:39-41).

REVIEW, Map 7-2

1. Aramean pressure which had so pestered Israel and Judah for the previous half century disappeared between c. 800-750 BC. With both **Aram and Assyria weak, Israel and Judah underwent an unprecedented period of territorial expansion**. On his deathbed in c. 800 BC, the prophet **Elisha** predicted that the tide would turn in Israel's favor.
2. While **Joash of Israel** and **Amaziah of Judah** were in power at the initial stages of the Israel-Judah renaissance, it was their sons, **Jeroboam II of Israel** and **Uzziah of Judah**, who presided over the greatest period of growth. Jeroboam II subdued Damascus and extended Israel's border in the north to Hamath. Uzziah, in addition to receiving tribute from Ammon and Edom, campaigned in Philistia and secured Judah's trade routes to the important port city of Elath on the Red Sea. Archaeological fortifications at sites like **Dan, Beersheba, Arad** and **Kadesh Barnea** confirm the extent of the strength of Israel and Judah during this period.
3. There was a series of **three kings in Judah** who started well but finished poorly. **Joash** initially ruled justly, but fell to worshipping Asherah and murdered a prophet of Yahweh. He was sieged in Jerusalem by the Aramean Hazael who raided the Jerusalem temple (Map 7-1). The next Judean king, **Amaziah**, at first "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord," but after a military victory over Edom, adopted the Edomite gods for worship. Amaziah suffered defeat in battle against Joash of Israel at **Beth-shemesh**, and eventually fled to **Lachish** where he was assassinated. Amaziah's son **Uzziah** presided over one of the greatest periods of expansion that Judah had ever known, but in his pride, he intruded upon the Levitical priesthood. He became a leper, ostracized from his people and was buried separately from other Judean kings.

4. While Israel and Judah politically and economically prospered during this period, spiritually and morally they fell short. Prosperity didn't help them. The prophets **Amos** and **Hosea** were called to point out the failures of Israel's (and Judah's) relationship both toward God and man. The prophets warned of looming judgment – the coming of Assyria. Amos was from **Tekoa** in Judah but prophesied against the Northern Kingdom, especially at **Bethel**.
5. **Jonah** lived during this time. He predicted Israel's great expansion, but was then sent to Nineveh, capital of Assyria, at a time when that nation was at a low point. From Jonah's perspective, he would just as soon Nineveh stay weak. But his own preaching caused a repentance that saved Nineveh, and within a generation Assyria was used as the rod of Yahweh's judgment against Jonah's own people, Israel.

7-3 Ahaz of Judah: Lost Territory & the Prophets Isaiah and Micah

Date: c. 735 BC

Introduction

The Ancient Near East changed drastically in c. 750 BC for three reasons. First, the dynasty of Jehu in Israel came to an end. Jeroboam II died in 753 BC. His son Zechariah, the last king of the Jehu dynasty, was assassinated after ruling only six months (2 Kings 15:8-12).

Second, **Rezin of Damascus** (752-734 BC) took advantage of the fall of the house of Jehu and re-established sovereignty in Aram. However, he was destined to be the last independent king of Damascus in the Old Testament period.

Third, and most significant, **Tiglath Pileser III** came to power in **Assyria** in 745 BC. Within 18 years (745-727 BC) he ruled over the huge Neo-Assyrian Empire. After consolidating Assyrian control in the east, Tiglath Pileser (also called Pul in the Bible, 2 Kings 15:19, 2 Chr. 5:26) moved west into the Levant (Map 7-4). In his annals he boasted:

I received tribute from...**Rezin of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria** [cf. 2 Kings 15:19], Hiram of Tyre [followed by a long list of other local rulers]...gold, silver, tin, iron, elephant-hides, ivory, linen garments with multi-colored trimmings, blue-dyed wool, purple-dyed wool, ebony-wood, boxwood-wood, whatever was precious...lamb...wild birds...horses, mules, large and small cattle, (male) camels, female camels with their foals (ANET 283).

There were two options for the small states in the Levant. Either submit and pay heavy tribute to Assyria, or resist. The question caused a mad political scramble for power in Israel. The biblical narrative of the Northern Kingdom between 752-732 BC reads like a mafia history (2 Kings 15:8-31). One king after another was eliminated for either his pro- or anti-Assyrian position. In 740 BC, **Pekah of Israel** (740-732 BC) took the throne by assassination. He represented an anti-Assyrian movement that wanted relief from the tribute-paying policies of Menahem.

Together **Pekah of Israel** and **Rezin of Damascus**, most likely with assurances of help from Egypt, formed an alliance to resist Assyrian hegemony. Other states like Edom and Philistia joined. Judah, however, did not. To bring Judah into the anti-Assyria alliance, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus attacked Ahaz king of Judah.

1. Ahaz of Judah: Lost Territory on All Sides

Note the *green, black and crimson arrows* pressuring Judah from all sides. On the north (#1) **Rezin of Damascus** and **Pekah of Israel**. On the southeast (#2) **from Edom to Elath** and the Negev. On the west (#3) **the Philistines** took cities in the **Shephelah** and **Negev**. Yellow highlight the boxed numbers 1-3.

READ: 2 KINGS 16 & 2 CHRONICLES 28

Ahaz lost territory on all sides. From the north **Rezin of Aram** and **Pekah of Israel** attacked with the intention of bringing Judah into the anti-Assyrian coalition (Isaiah 7:6) by removing Ahaz and placing a non-Davidic king on the throne. Judah sustained huge losses in captured, wounded and dead - but hung on.

2. Edom Takes Territory in the South

In the southeast, Rezin of Aram helped **Edom** break the Judean monopoly (established by Uzziah, Map 7-2) on southern trade routes. The Aram/Edom coalition captured Elath and took Judean captives (2 Kings 16:6; 2 Chronicles 28:17). Archaeological evidence shows Edom attacked other Judean forts in the Negev and Wilderness highlands (e.g., Tamar and Arad).

3. Philistines Invade

On the west, the Philistines perceived Ahaz's weakness:

"the **Philistines** raided the cities of the **Shephelah** and of the **Negev** of Judah, and captured **Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Socoh** with its villages, **Timnah** with its villages, and **Gimzo** with its villages; and they dwelt there" (2 Chron. 28:18, author's translation).

As if Israel and Aram attacking on the north, and Edom revolting in the south was not enough, now the Philistines took possession of the main routes in the Shephelah to Jerusalem. Pressured on all sides, Ahaz thought his only recourse was to turn to the king of Assyria for help.

The biblical narrative gives a clear theological interpretation to the dire straits in which Judah found itself. Ahaz was an idolater of the first degree – "he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord." He worshipped various gods, including Baals and gods of the Northern Kingdom and Damascus.

He burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom, and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. Wherefore, the LORD his God **delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram**; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also **delivered into the hand of the king of Israel**, who inflicted him with heavy casualties (2 Chronicles 28:3-5).

Instead of turning back to Yahweh in his troubles, Ahaz turned to foreign gods, and to Assyria.

4. ISAIAH THE PROPHET

The sixty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah are some of the most fascinating literature ever written. Isaiah began prophesying before the "year that King Uzziah died," 740 BC (Isaiah 6:1). His prophetic ministry spanned some 50 years, years which were all overshadowed by the threat and coming of the mighty nation Assyria. Isaiah saw the Northern Kingdom conquered and exiled. In his days Assyria sieged and almost destroyed Judah. To Isaiah, like to the writers of Kings and Chronicles, history was planned and played out according to the purposes of Yahweh in heaven. Since Yahweh is beyond history, his "salvation endures from generation to generation" (51:6-8). Yahweh even proclaims what will happen before it happens. By this the whole world should know that Yahweh is God, and there is no other (Isaiah 44:6-8, 45:21-25).

To Isaiah, Assyria was merely a tool in Yahweh's hand, the "**rod of the Yahweh's anger**" (10:5). Sure, Yahweh used this rod to discipline Israel and Judah. But does a rod, a piece of wood, lift itself up against the One who wields it? Does an axe boast over the One who chops with it (10:15)? Because of its delusional pride, Assyria was also condemned.

READ: ISAIAH chapters 7, 8, 9 & 10

These chapters are Isaiah's perspective on events when **Rezin of Damascus** and **Pekah of Israel** threatened Ahaz in Judah (#1 above). Isaiah implored Ahaz to trust in Yahweh, but Ahaz preferred to trust idols and the king of Assyria. Isaiah prophesied that Ahaz need not fear since Rezin and Pekah would soon be gone and that Damascus would be destroyed (Isaiah 17:1). His prophecies were fulfilled when Tiglath Pileser, "the king of Assyria, went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried the people of it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death" (2 Kings 16:9, Map 7-4).

As for Pekah in Israel, Tiglath Pileser records:

Israel (lit: "Omri-land")...all its inhabitants (and) their possessions I led to Assyria. They overthrew their king **Pekah** and I placed **Hoshea** as king over them. I received from them...gold...silver as their tribute (ANET 284).

It all happened fast as Isaiah predicted. In 734 BC the Rezin-Pekah coalition threatened Ahaz (Isaiah 7:16, 8:4). Two years later both those kings were dead and Damascus lay in ruins.

But was the king of Assyria to be Judah's savior? Isaiah knew that Tiglath Pileser's attack on Damascus and Israel would have occurred without Ahaz's appeal (Isaiah 17:1-3). Ahaz's appeal to Assyria only replaced one problem with another. The chronicler states that,

Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him. Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the king and of the princes, and gave it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him (2 Chronicles 28:20-21).

Tiglath Pileser was more than happy to keep Judah out of the Damascus-Israel coalition, and at the same time make Judah his tribute-paying vassal.

5. MICAH THE PROPHET

The prophet Micah was a Shephelah boy. His hometown was **Moresheth** (either **Moresheth-gath** or **Maresha** nearby). Micah witnessed the Philistine armies raiding the Shephelah during Ahaz's reign. But according to Micah this was just the beginning of troubles for the cities of the Shephelah. As with his contemporary Isaiah, Micah insisted the bigger threat was Assyria. He told the cities in the Shephelah like **Lachish**, **Moresheth-gath**, **Mareshah** and **Adullam** that their children would be taken into exile (1:13-16).

As with Isaiah, Micah's prophecies of judgment were mixed with hope. In the doom and gloom of judgment, Micah's hope was in a descendant of David (cf. Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-4). Perhaps from his hometown in the Shephelah foothills Micah looked up into the Hill Country of Judah and proclaimed:

But as for you, **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity ... And this One will be peace. When the Assyrian invades our land, And when he tramples on our citadels... (Micah 5:2, 5).

Micah said that for their sins, both the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem would become "a heap of ruins" (1:6, 3:12). Yet, like Isaiah, Micah looked forward to the time when Jerusalem would be

the spiritual center of a world without war (Micah 4:1-2; Isaiah 2:1-4), when a descendant of David would be on its throne.

REVIEW, Map 7-3:

1. During the reign of Ahaz of Judah (735-715 BC) the "good old days" of prosperity under Uzziah were gone. Ahaz was an idolater of the first degree. For his idolatry the biblical record states that Yahweh brought enemies against him on all sides. Rezin of Damascus joined with Pekah of Israel and sieged Jerusalem from the north. Aram joined with Edom and re-conquered Elath and other fortresses in the Negev and Wilderness – breaking Judah's control over southern trade. The Philistines took territory in the west – in the Shephelah and Negev.
2. Politically the attacks upon Ahaz were an attempt to bring Judah into an anti-Assyrian coalition. Small states in the Levant had to decide if they were either for or against Assyria. Damascus and Israel aligned with the hope of confronting the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser. Ahab threw his lot in with Assyria and requested help from Tiglath-Pileser against his local rivals.
3. The main prophet in Judah at this time was **Isaiah**. Isaiah's prophecies were given in the shadow of the great Assyrian threat. Assyria was only Yahweh's instrument to discipline Israel and Judah. But there was hope – not in political alliances. Yahweh was in control of the nations. A descendant of David chosen by Yahweh would yet rule on the throne forever.
4. **Micah** also prophesied during this time. Micah is from **Moreseth** in the **Shephelah**. Like Isaiah, Micah said that Yahweh brought Assyria for judgment on Israel and Judah. But all was not lost – there was yet hope in a descendant from the line of David.

For Map 7-4 Assyrian Empire, read commentary directly from the *Satellite Bible Atlas*.



Above: Relief from palace of Tiglath Peleser III in Nimrud (Calah), c. 730 BC, Map 7-4. The relief shows the siege of Ashtaroth in Bashan, Map 7-5

Left: Detail of Tiglath Peleser in chariot.

7-5 Assyria in Israel: Tiglath Pileser III

Date: c. 734-732 BC

Tiglath Pileser III (also called Pul in the Bible, 2 Kings 15:19, 2 Chr. 5:26) came to the throne in Assyria in 745 BC and ruled for 18 years (745-727 BC). His rise to power changed the political landscape. From Tiglath Pileser III's time Assyria dominated the entire Near East and shaped biblical history for almost 120 years. This map shows his campaigns into the Promised Land and their correlation to biblical history. The biblical writers' perspective was that Assyria was a tool in Yahweh's hand to punish Israel and Judah (2 Chron. 28:19-20; Isa. 7:20, 10:5-6).

Tiglath Pileser III's Campaign During the Reign of Menahem of Israel, c. 743 BC

Note: this campaign is not marked on the map.

READ: 2 KINGS 15:17-20

In annals from Tiglath Pileser's third year (742 BC) he declared that he campaigned against and received tribute from among others, Rezin of Damascus and **Menahem of Israel** (ANET 282-283; Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah is also mentioned). The biblical description parallels the Assyrian annals:

Pul, king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver so that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his rule. Then Menahem exacted the money from Israel, even from all the mighty men of wealth, from each man fifty shekels of silver to pay the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned and did not remain there in the land (2 Kings 15:19-20).

Menahem adopted a policy of submission and payment of tribute to Assyria. Subsequent kings of Israel would not share his submit-and-pay-tribute foreign policy.

1. **734 BC Campaign: Coastal Plain, Philistia, and toward Egypt**

Note the *black/yellow arrow* running along the coast through **Phoenicia**, the **Sharon Plain**, **Philistia**, to **Gezer** and then **Gaza** (**red confrontation markers**) and toward **Egypt**.

Although the chronological record of Tiglath Pileser's campaigns in the Levant is imprecise, it appears that he resumed a series of operations in three successive years starting in 734 BC. The first of these new maneuvers in the Levant was along the **coastal regions** through **Phoenicia** and **Philistia** toward **Egypt**. Tiglath Pileser's intention was to knock the coastal states out of the anti-Assyrian alliance which had formed against him (Map 7-3). By securing the **Way of the Sea**, Tiglath Pileser gained an enormous strategic advantage over Aram and Israel, and also made sure that **Egypt** would not interfere with his coming plans for the Levant.

A pictorial relief found in a palace at Nimrud depicts Tiglath Pileser's attack on the fortified walls of **Gezer** (*Gazari*) with battering rams.

It may have been at this time that **Ahaz of Judah**, against the advice of the prophet Isaiah, anxiously pleaded for Tiglath Pileser to make an alliance with him against Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel (Map 7-3, 2 Kings 16:5-7, Isaiah 7:1-2). Undoubtedly Tiglath Pileser had already targeted Damascus and Samaria, with or without Ahaz's appeal. Ahaz should have followed the advice given by Isaiah: "rest, quietness and confidence" (Isaiah 30:15, 7:4). In any case Tiglath Pileser was pleased to keep Judah out of the anti-Assyria alliance. Receiving Ahaz's tribute of gold from Jerusalem's temple and palace was icing on the cake.

2. 733 BC Campaign: Galilee, Gilead and Samaria

Note the *black/yellow arrows* past **Abel-beth-maacah**, **Hazor**, **Kedesh**, with branches to **LAND OF NAPHTALI**, and **GALILEE OF THE NATIONS** and **GILEAD**

READ: 2 KINGS 15:27-30 & 1 CHRONICLES 5:26

In 733 BC Tiglath Pileser continued his plans for reasserting control in the Promised Land. Leaving Damascus for later¹, Tiglath Pileser advanced through Israel's northern gateway, the **Hulah Valley**. He took **Ijon**, **Abel-beth-maacah**, **Kedesh**, and **Hazor**. Archaeological excavations at Hazor revealed the Israelites' building efforts to oppose the attack, and evidence of the Assyrian conquest. For all practical purposes the Assyrian conquest marks the end of settlement at Tel Hazor. Tiglath Pileser then pressed on into "**Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali**; and he carried them **captive to Assyria**" (2 Kings 15:29).

Tiglath Pileser's conquests brought significant changes upon Israel. Politically, both the Bible and Tiglath Pileser's records note the turmoil in the capital in Samaria:

"**Hoshea** the son of Elah made a conspiracy against **Pekah** the son of Remaliah, and struck him and put him to death and became king in his place" (2 Kings 15:30).

"Israel (Omri-land)...all its inhabitants (and) their possessions I led to Assyria. They overthrew their king **Pekah** and I placed **Hoshea** as king over them" (ANET 284)

Israel's new king Hoshea, for the time being at least, became a vassal to Assyria and paid tribute. He lasted 10 years (732-722 BC) but was the Northern Kingdom's last king (Map 7-6).

Further, there was a massive population exchange. Many of the Israelite inhabitants of the conquered territories were carried "**captive to Assyria**" (2 Kings 15:29). The chronicler points out that Yahweh was behind the forced exile:

So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day (1 Chronicles 5:26).

Geographically, Israel was reduced to the central mountains of Ephraim and Manasseh. The areas that were cut off from Israel were organized into three Assyrian provinces named according to their respective capitals: **Megiddo**, which included the Jezreel Valley and Galilee; **Dor**, including the Sharon Plain; and, **Gilead**, Israel's former territory beyond the Jordan.

The prophet Isaiah alluded to these three Assyrian provinces:

But she who is troubled now will not continually be in the dark. Earlier He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and now lately He has heavily oppressed the **Way of the Sea**, **Beyond the Jordan**, and **Galilee of the nations** (Isaiah 9:1, author's translation).

¹Although see Dubovsky, P. "Tiglath Pileser III's Campaigns in 734-732 BC," *Biblica* 87 (2006): 135-70, for the suggestion that the Damascus campaign came before the Israel campaign. www.biblicalstudies.ru/OT/Dubovsky.pdf

The "**Way of the Sea**" alludes to the Assyrian province of Dor, "**Beyond the Jordan**" was Gilead, and "**Galilee of the nations**" was part of the Megiddo province. The Assyrian conquest had brought darkness and gloom to these territories of Israel, both from a practical but also spiritual standpoint. But Isaiah did not leave the regions conquered by Assyria without hope. Isaiah looked forward to the day when the darkness in these regions would be lifted:

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, light will shine on them (Isaiah 9:2, author's translation).

The New Testament states that the ministry of Jesus in northern regions was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophetic hope (Matthew 4:12-16).

3. 732 BC Conquest of Damascus

Note the *black/yellow arrow* pointing through the *red confrontation markers* at **Damascus** to **Ashtaroth**.

The oracle concerning Damascus. "Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city, And it will become a fallen ruin" (Isaiah 17:1).

"...the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried the people of it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death " (2 Kings 16:9).

Isaiah had told Ahaz in Judah not to worry about threats from Israel and Damascus. Isaiah even gave a sign saying that before a newborn child was able to say "my father or my mother", i.e., within a couple of years, "the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria" (Isaiah 8:4; 7:14-16). Isaiah was right. Within a couple years after his prophecy, Israel had a different king and was a vassal of Assyria. Damascus was a heap of ruins and its former king, Rezin, was dead.

Modern attempts to apply Isaiah 17:1 (quoted above) to an eschatological interpretation of events in the Middle East do injustice to the historical and geographical context in which Isaiah gave his prophecy. Isaiah's prophecy concerning the destruction of Damascus was fulfilled in c. 732 BC, just years after he gave it. Neither Isaiah, nor any writer of the New Testament, put Damascus' destruction into an end-times setting. Understood in their historical context, Isaiah's prophecy and its fulfillment declare the sovereignty of Yahweh. Yahweh proclaims what will happen before it happens, and controls the nations.

The Assyrian dominance in the Levant continued in varying degrees for the next one hundred years. Archaeological evidence of Assyrian administrative palaces and fortresses exists in places like Megiddo and **Bozrah**, ancient Edom's capital (see Isaiah 34, 63:1-4). Politics for local peoples was dominated by the question of submission, or not, to Assyrian hegemony.

REVIEW, Map 7-5:

1. **Assyria** became the **superpower** in the Ancient Near East beginning in c. 745 BC. **Tiglath Pileser III** presided over the resurgence in Assyria, which dominated biblical lands for 120 years, until c. 630 BC.
2. The **biblical perspective concerning the rise of Assyria** is that Yahweh raised up Assyria as "the rod of his anger" to discipline Israel, Judah and other surrounding nations. Assyria was

Yahweh's tool, a razor to humble and shave, a bee summoned to come and sting. But Assyria vaunted itself above its maker, and therefore was judged.

3. Already in c. 742 BC Tiglath Pileser forayed into the Promised Land. **Menahem king of Israel** submitted and paid tribute. **Both the Bible and Assyrian annals** record Tiglath Pileser's assault and Menahem's submission.
4. **Between c. 734-732 BC Tiglath Pileser campaigned three more times** in the Promised Land. These three campaigns are marked on this map (7-5). In the first campaign Tiglath Pileser **secured the Coastal Plain and Way of the Sea**. Coastal states like Phoenicia and Philistia were cut out of the anti-Assyria coalition which was led by Aram and Israel. Further, Aram and Israel were cut off from any help from Egypt. Contrary to the prophet Isaiah's warning, King Ahaz of Judah submitted and paid tribute to Assyria. Ahaz's son, Hezekiah proved that Judah's trust can only be placed in Yahweh, not Assyria or any other nation (Map 7-7).
5. The next campaign (c. 733 BC) **targeted Israel**. Assyria conquered Israel's northern gateway, the Hulah Valley, including the Israelite fortress at **Hazor**. Then **Galilee**, the **Jezreel Valley** and **Gilead** were taken, with many of inhabitants **exiled to Assyria**. In addition to territorial conquests and population exile, both Assyrian annals and the Bible record **Hoshea** replaced **Pekah** as king of Israel.
6. In c. 732 BC Tiglath Pileser **destroyed Damascus** and killed its king, Rezin – fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah (8:4, 17:1). Assyria made further inroads into Bashan/Golan, as is evidenced by Assyrian pictorial reliefs (now in the British Museum) depicting the conquest of Ashtaroth.
7. **Isaiah** is the main prophet in Judah at this time. Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be humbled and Damascus destroyed (Isa. 7-8, 17:1). He counseled King Ahaz of Judah to trust in Yahweh and not in idols or the king of Assyria. Seeing Isaiah's prophecies in their historical context enhances their theological significance.

7-6 Fall of Samaria: Assyrian Expansion Under Shalmaneser V & Sargon II

Date: Late 8th Century (724-712) BC

"So the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah" (2 Kings 17:18).

1. The Fall of Samaria, 722 BC

Note the *black/green arrow* (Assyria) with the names "**Shalmaneser V & Sargon II**" pointing at the city of Samaria (*red box*)

READ: 2 KINGS 17 and 18:9-12

Israel's last king was Hoshea (732-722 BC). Both biblical and Assyrian records show that he came to the throne as an appointee of the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III (Map 7-5). Hoshea was also subject to Assyria's next king, Shalmaneser V. But when Shalmaneser became preoccupied with rebellions in Babylon, Hoshea thought it opportune to throw off the Assyrian yoke. He withheld tribute and appealed to So king of Egypt for help (2 Kings 17:3-4).

Hoshea's plan did not work. Shalmaneser V returned in 725/724 BC to restore order. Hoshea was captured and the city of Samaria besieged. The city withstood a long siege of three years, but fell in 722 BC. There is some uncertainty as to which Assyrian king was responsible for the capture of Samaria since Shalmaneser V died and was replaced by Sargon II in the very same year that Samaria fell, 722 BC. We have no records from Shalmaneser, but Sargon took credit for the conquest even though by the time he came to the throne Samaria may have already fallen:

I besieged and conquered **Samaria, led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it...**I installed over them an officer of mine and imposed upon them the tribute of the former king (ANET 284-285).

Political and Theological Reasons for Israel's Demise

The fall of Samaria is a watershed event in the history of Israel. The Northern Kingdom had lasted some 210 years from 930 to 722 BC. Twenty kings from 10 dynasties had sat on its throne. **Politically**, Israel and other nations in the Levant were too weak to oppose Assyrian expansionist policies and military might. **Theologically**, the prophets and the author of 2 Kings interpreted Israel's downfall as a result of continued sin against Yahweh. They had been unfaithful to their real King (with a capital "K"), Yahweh, who had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt and made a covenant with them at Sinai. The Book of Judges showed the people had become like the Canaanites without a king. By now they had become like Canaanites with a king. Constant warnings from prophets went to no avail. The judgment for unfaithfulness was **exile** from the Land of Promise.

2. DEPORTATIONS

In accordance with Assyrian policy, the population of Samaria was deported to various places throughout the Assyrian Empire. Other conquered peoples were transferred into Samaria. The purpose of these population transfers was to wipe out independence movements among the conquered peoples. Also, deportations created religious confusion since people of the time associated their gods with a geographical location. Nationalist movements were less likely to germinate if unaccompanied with a specific local, religious faith.

Assyrian deportation is the origin for the idea of the "ten lost tribes of Israel." The author of Second Kings mentions three destinations of the deported Israelites: "**Halah, and Habor, on the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes**" (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11, Map 7-4). The chronicler noted similar destinations for the earlier deportations of Israelites from Transjordan (1 Chronicles 5:26). **Habor** is probably the modern Habur River of the upper Euphrates that flows about 60 miles east of ancient Haran, in northern Mesopotamia near the junction of the modern borders of Syria, Turkey and Iraq (Ironically where Abram migrated from – the Israelites were taken right back to where they started). **Gozan** is either a site or region along the Habur River. Halah is unknown, but some locate it in northern (Kurdish) Iraq. The **cities of the Medes** are even further east, beyond the border of modern Iraq into Iran.

The Assyrians likewise transferred peoples into conquered Israelite territory. Isaiah's reference to "**Galilee of the Gentiles**" was coined already from the earlier Assyrian deportations (Isaiah 9:1). People were brought from both Babylon and northern Aram (Avva, Hamath, Sepharvim; 2 Kings 17:24). These foreigners at first did not fear the Lord. But then they perceived, however insufficiently, that attacks from man-eating lions were a result of the displeasure of the local God of the land. The king of Assyria sent an Israelite priest back from exile to **Bethel** to teach the newcomers how to fear the perceived local God, Yahweh. The result was mixed:

They feared the LORD and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile (2 Kings 17:33).

Back in Judah, the prophet **Isaiah** watched these Gentiles being settled in the north. His writings provide evidence that some of these foreigners came to a genuine faith in the God of Abraham:

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from His people."

... the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And holds fast My covenant; ⁷ Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; **For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples** (Isaiah 56:3, 6-7).

These scriptures are evidence that the so-called "second Isaiah" (chapters 40-66) was written in the 8th century BC.

The majority of these mixed-ethnicity newcomers eventually became known as **Samaritans**. As the centuries passed, their religion morphed into a monotheism that more closely resembled that practiced in Jerusalem. Always suspect of ethnic and religious impurities, the Jews to the south for the most part kept the Samaritans at arm's length. With the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the door was opened again for Samaritans to become full children of Abraham (John 4:4-54; Acts 8:4-17).

3. Sargon II's Coastal Campaigns in 720 & 713 BC

Note the *black/green* arrow from Megiddo along the coast to Aphek with branches past Joppa (720 BC, **Ahaz King in Judah**) and **Gibbethon, Ekron, Gath, and Ashdod** (713 BC, **Hezekiah King in Judah**).

In 720 BC a rebellion in the Coastal Plain broke out against Assyrian dominion. Sargon II marched as far as Raphia south of **Gaza**, "tore down its walls and burned it" (ANET 285). This campaign occurred while Ahaz ruled in Judah. Ahaz maintained his pro-Assyrian posture, faithfully paid his tribute, and steered clear of any participation in the rebellion.

In c. 713 BC another rebellion led by the king of **Ashdod** and encouraged by **Egypt**, brought Sargon charging once again down the Coastal Plain. Sargon records:

Azuri, king of **Ashdod**, had schemed not to deliver tribute anymore and sent messages full of hostilities against Assyria to the kings living in his neighborhood...I besieged and conquered the cities of **Ashdod, Gath** and **Asdudimmu** (ANET 286).

The biblical and Assyrian records once again intersect here since the prophet Isaiah referred to Shalmaneser's subjugation of Ashdod. By this time **Hezekiah** (729-686 BC) was the new king in Judah. Isaiah advised Judah (Hezekiah) not to trust in any Egyptian-led rebellion against Assyria.

READ: ISAIAH 20 (cf. **ISAIAH 30:1-5, 31:13**)

Isaiah gave this prophecy and object lesson "in the year that the commander came to **Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and captured it** (Isaiah 20:1). Undoubtedly Ashdod and Egypt wanted the new king in Judah, Hezekiah, to join the anti-Assyrian rebellion. Isaiah counseled Judah against rebellion from Assyria at this time. Giving an object lesson, Isaiah removed his sandals and sackcloth, taking on the appearance of a prisoner ("naked" does not necessarily mean totally exposed, cf. 2 Chronicles 28:15; 1 Samuel 19:24). Most likely Isaiah's action was not done continuously but routinely over a period of three years. Isaiah's prisoner fashion-design was a sign that Egypt and anyone who trusted in Egypt would be led away barefoot and naked as captives of Assyria. Eventually Isaiah did counsel Hezekiah to revolt against Assyria (Map 7-7), not by trusting in support from Egypt, but by trusting in Yahweh alone.

READ: ISAIAH 19:19-25

In contrast to the Assyria-Egypt struggles of his day, often played out on the Way of the Sea, Isaiah envisioned a time when the highway between Assyria and Egypt would not be the setting for battles, but for peaceful cooperation and worship. Israel would be the third party in the middle, with all three – Assyria, Egypt and Israel – blessed by Yahweh. How different from the Assyrian-Egyptian battles of his own day!

4. Assyrian Districts

Note the Assyrian Districts in *black/green capitals* (e.g., MEGIDDO).

By 712 BC all of the Levant was under Assyrian control, with the exception of tiny Judah in the Hill Country. Within another quarter century (c. 675) the Nile Delta in Egypt was

under Assyrian dominion, and then by 650 BC, even the Upper Nile to Thebes. The Assyrian Empire controlled a vast swath of territory from Persia across the Fertile Crescent to Egypt. Judah, as we shall see on Map 7-7, miraculously, maintained independence.

REVIEW, MAP 7-6

1. In **722 BC** the Northern Kingdom of **Israel fell to Assyria**. The Assyrian King **Shalmaneser V** initiated what turned out to be a three year siege of the capital city Samaria. About the time Samaria finally fell, Shalmaneser died. The next Assyria king, **Sargon II**, may have presided over the fall of the city and in his records boasts to that effect.
2. The fall of Samaria is a watershed event in the history of Israel. **Politically**, the Northern Kingdom of Israel lasted for about 200 years (930-722 BC). Instability characterized much of Israel's history through the coming and going of 10 different dynasties. In the end she proved too weak to resist the superpower Assyria.
3. **Spiritually**, Israel's years were dominated by unfaithfulness to the covenant made with Yahweh at Sinai. As Yahweh had said, Israel's unfaithfulness would be judged by **exile from the Land of Promise** (Leviticus 26:31-38; Deuteronomy 4:25-27). 2 Kings 17 especially interprets the Assyrian conquest and population transfers in light of Israel's covenant violations: "This happened *because* the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God...So Israel was taken away from their own land to Assyria..." (2 Kings 17:7, 23, author's translation).
4. Assyria deported Israelites to the north and eastern rim of the Fertile Crescent ("the ten lost tribes"), and brought foreigners into the land of Israel. The prophet Isaiah in Judah recognized the reality of these foreigners within the Promised Land (e.g., Isaiah 9:1; 56:3-7). Isaiah chapter 56 references to foreigners puts this so-called "second Isaiah" firmly within an 8th century BC context. The foreigners eventually became known as the Samaritans.
5. The fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel must have brought great **searching of heart** to Israelite survivors - both to the exiles, and to their cousins yet holding out in Judah (many Israelites undoubtedly fled south and found refuge in Judah). Was Yahweh unable to stop the Assyrian assault? What would become of the exiled tribes? Were they forever abandoned by Yahweh? The Davidic dynasty still held on in Jerusalem, but could it withstand mighty Assyria?
6. A prophecy of Isaiah (chapter 20) was given in the year (c. 713 BC) that Sargon II attacked Ashdod. Since Sargon II also recorded his conquest of Ashdod, we have another overlap of the records of biblical and secular history. Isaiah's message, mostly directed at Judah, was – "do not trust in Egypt or resist Assyria at this time. Egypt will be taken away in shame as a captive to Assyria." The time would come for Hezekiah, with Isaiah's support, to resist Assyrian rule (Map 7-7). At that time Judah's trust would not be in Egypt, but in Yahweh (Isaiah 30:1-5, 31:1-3).

7-7 Resistance of Hezekiah against Sennacherib

Date: 705-701 BC

1. A. Religious Reforms and Revolt of Hezekiah

"Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn away from us." (2 Chr. 29:10).

Judah was in a religious, political and moral slump during the 20 years of Ahaz's reign (735-715 BC, Map 7-3). That all changed when his son **Hezekiah** (715-686 BC) came to the throne. Hezekiah instituted one of the most significant religious reformations Judah ever experienced.

READ: 2 KINGS 18:1-6 (Note that a much fuller description of Hezekiah's reforms are outlined in 2 Chronicles 29, 30, 31)

Hezekiah's reforms included:

The Temple Cleansed, the Covenant with Yahweh Renewed (2 Chronicles 29)

Judah was in a religious, political, and moral slump during the twenty years of Ahaz's reign (735-715 BC, see Map 7-3). That all changed when Ahaz's son, Hezekiah (715-686 BC), came to the throne. Wisely Hezekiah rejected the idolatrous ways of his father. Prophets like Isaiah and Micah must have had a positive influence on the young king. In the first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple, had it purged of every unclean thing, and charged the priests to renew the covenant with Yahweh. After sixteen days of temple cleaning, Hezekiah presided over a rededication ceremony of sacrifices, psalms and rejoicing.

Passover Celebrated (2 Chronicles 30)

Since it was already too late to celebrate **Passover** in the first month as prescribed in the covenant, plans were made to celebrate it in the second month. Messengers were sent out **"from Beersheba even to Dan,"** that is, even to those in the north who remained after the Assyrian invasions, to return to the God of their fathers, and to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Some in the north laughed the invitation to scorn, but others responded. The Passover was celebrated in Jerusalem with such joy that in addition to the traditional seven days of the festival, the people decided to celebrate for another seven days. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel" (30:26)

High Places Removed and Leadership re-organization (2 Chronicles 31)

The reformation spread throughout the land. The people "went out to the cities of Judah, broke the (*sacred*) pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim, and **pulled down the high places and the altars** throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all" (2 Chr. 31:1). There is archaeological evidence of the destruction of the high places and altars at places like **Beersheba** and **Arad** which dates to Hezekiah's purge. Further, Hezekiah presided over a nation-wide reorganization of spiritual leadership and instruction. Tithes were collected in abundance to support the priests, Levites and the temple.

B. Hezekiah Revolts from Assyrian Rule and Prepares for Assyrian Invasion

READ: 2 KINGS 18:7-8 & 2 CHRONICLES 32:1-8, 27-30

Sargon II Succeeded by Sennacherib – Nations Ripe for Revolt

Sargon II had successfully stopped a revolt centered in Ashdod in c.712 BC. As counseled by Isaiah the prophet, Hezekiah of Judah did not participate in that revolt against Assyrian domination (Isaiah 20, Map 7-6). However, when Sargon II died in 705 BC and his son Sennacherib came to the throne, territories in the west and east tried again to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Revolts against Sennacherib by Tyre and Sidon in Phoenicia, and Ashkelon and Ekron in the Coastal Plain, were undoubtedly applauded by Egypt. In the east, Assyria's arch-enemy Merodach-baladan of Babylon revolted. Hezekiah received ambassadors from Merodach-baladan apparently to coordinate revolts against Assyria. The prophet Isaiah roundly condemned Hezekiah's cooperation with Babylon. To Isaiah, the only way for Judah to survive a revolt against Assyria was to trust in Yahweh alone, not in man, even if that man be a king of Babylon or Egypt (Isaiah 39:1-8, 40:10-15, 30:1-5, 31:1-3; 2 Kings 20:12-19).

In any event, Hezekiah in Judah surveyed this international scene and decided that the time was right. He too "**rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him**" (2 Kings 18:7).

Hezekiah's Preparations

Hezekiah took steps in preparation for the revolt against Assyria:

- a) To the biblical writers, the most important of these steps, as discussed above, was returning in faith to the God of the fathers.
- b) Hezekiah's religious reforms spilled over into the political. Participation by the remnants of the northern tribes in Jerusalem's religious observances added political strength to Hezekiah's realm (2 Chronicles 30:11). Any support from the north would help.
- c) Hezekiah strengthened his position in the Coastal Plain by subduing any remaining pro-Assyrian elements in Ekron and "as far as Gaza and its territory" (2 Kings 18:8; ANET 287).
- d) Hezekiah established an administrative system and stores of supplies capable of withstanding a protracted siege (2 Chronicles 32:27-31). Archaeological excavations have unearthed over 2,000 pottery jar-handles, originally part of large storage vessels, stamped with the words "**belonging to the king**" (l' melech). These jar handles date to Hezekiah's reign, come from some 75 different sites in Israel, mostly in Judah, and are evidence of Hezekiah's economic coordination.
- e) Hezekiah built up fortifications at various sites, especially in Jerusalem. Archaeologists believe that Hezekiah was the first king of Judah to fortify the Western Hill of Jerusalem. A section of Hezekiah's fortifications in Jerusalem's Western Hill were excavated in 1970. The wall is 23 feet (7 meters) thick, therefore referred to as the "**Broad Wall**," and may have originally stood to a height well over 30 feet (10 meters). This may be "another outside wall" specifically mentioned in 2 Chronicles 32:5 (cf. Isaiah 22:10-11).
- f) Finally, to secure a safe water source for his capital city, Hezekiah had a 1,750 foot (533 meters) underground channel cut through solid rock. The channel, called the **Siloam Tunnel** or **Hezekiah's Tunnel**, can still be walked through today. It brings water from the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Pool of Siloam on the other side of the City of David (2 Chronicles 32:3-4, 30, 2 Kings 20:20). A six-line inscription (26 x 10 in., 66 x 22 cm., now in the Istanbul Museum) chiseled into the side of the tunnel in Paleo-Hebrew describes how the tunnel was made. It is the largest surviving dedicatory inscription of any king of Judah.

Hezekiah ultimately learned that his own efforts to save himself and Judah were futile. Salvation came from elsewhere.

Sennacherib's Campaign, 701 BC

The *boxed numbers 2-5* on this map represent chronological stages of the Assyrian campaign.

Having successfully suppressed revolts led by Babylon in the eastern sector of his empire, Sennacherib, by 701 BC, was reasserting Assyrian hegemony in the west. Once again there is a remarkable correlation between the biblical record, Assyrian texts, and archaeology.

2. Phoenicia and The Coastal Plain near Joppa

Note the *black/yellow arrows* around ASSYRIA and cities conquered in the triangle between Aphek, Joppa and Lod. Sennacherib boasted of subduing rebellious territories along the coast, including Tyre, Sidon and Acco ("The Annals of Sennacherib," ANET 287-288). He proceeded south and secured a cluster of cities on the Coastal Plain near **Joppa**, including **Beth-dagon**, **Bene-barak** and **Azuru**. This gave him a good hold on the **International Coastal Highway**, and cut off any assistance Hezekiah may have received through the port of Joppa. Ammon, Moab and Edom to the east had already submitted. The Assyrian vise was tightening around Judah.

3. The Shephelah

Note the *black/yellow arrows* pointing toward **Ekron** and **Timnah**, **Gath** and **Azekah**, and **Lachish**.

Sennacherib turned his attention to the Shephelah of Judah. The Shephelah was the last buffer zone protecting the Hill Country of Judah. If the Shephelah fell to Assyria, Jerusalem was next. Sennacherib took **Ekron** and **Timnah** in the Sorek Valley. In the Elah Valley, Sennacherib said that **Azekah** was heavily fortified but that he captured it by means of battering rams, and carried off its spoil (Sennacherib's "Letter to God"). Although fragmentary, the city of **Gath** may be mentioned in the same inscription. Then Sennacherib came to **Lachish**. When the battle was over Sennacherib was so proud of his conquest of Lachish that he decorated a room in his palace in Nineveh with a 70-foot-long (21 meters) relief depicting the siege of the city. The relief is now in the British Museum in London. Sennacherib is depicted seated on a throne, with an inscription above him:

Sennacherib, King of the World, King of Assyria, seated on his throne
while the booty of **Lachish** passes before him.

The stage is set for one of the most dramatic events in the history of the Israelite monarchy. The event's importance is reflected by the fact that it is recorded in three different places in the Bible (2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 32, and Isaiah 36-39). The Isaiah passage is identical to that in 2 Kings, with the exception of Hezekiah's prayer recorded in Isaiah 38. This is evidence that the Books of Kings are a compilation of writings of the biblical prophets (Thiele 193-204).

READ: 2 KINGS 18:13-19:8

Be aware of the geographical elements where the events are played out, including **Lachish** and **Jerusalem**; and also of theological themes such as Hezekiah's faith in Yahweh alone, and the pride and humiliation of Sennacherib.

4. Isaiah 10:28-32, A Threat on Jerusalem from the North

Note the *black/yellow arrow* pointing from **Aiath** to **Nob**, north of Jerusalem.

After Sennacherib's successful stomp through the Coastal Plain and Shephelah, when he had come to **Lachish**, Hezekiah sent him tribute from Jerusalem in an effort to call off the siege (2 Kings 18:14-16). But Sennacherib was not satisfied. Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh from **Lachish** to **Jerusalem**, demanding total surrender.

READ: ISAIAH 10 (pay attention to the geographical details given in verses 28-32).

This description of an Assyrian threat upon Jerusalem from the north is most likely the "large army" (2 Kings 18:17) accompanying the Rabshakeh to demand total surrender from Hezekiah. The Rabshakeh probably mobilized his military forces in Samaria, which was already an Assyrian province. In addition, the north is Jerusalem's most vulnerable side. Apparently to avoid Judean fortresses like Bethel(?) and Mizpah, the Rabshakeh's forces utilized a route that skirted that section of the Central Ridge Route. Isaiah picked up their route at Aiath and Migron, and then gave a detailed geographical description of their approach to Jerusalem. Find the sites in bold text below on the map along the Assyrian approach to Jerusalem:

At **Michmash** he attends to his equipment
 They have crossed **The Pass**, saying
 "We will lodge at **Geba**."
Ramah trembles!
Gibeah of Saul has fled!
 Cry out with your voice, daughter of Gallim.
 Listen Laishah. Poor **Anatoth**!
 Madmenah has fled.
 The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.
 Yet today he will halt at **Nob**,
 He will shake his fist at the mount of the **temple of Zion**,
 the hill of **Jerusalem** (author's translation).

Note especially the use of "**The Pass**" which crosses over the Wadi Suwenit from Michmash to Geba. As soon as the invading army crossed the Pass, the last natural border on Jerusalem's north, the deep Wadi Suwenit, had been bridged. This struck fear into the cities of Ramah and Gibeah. That Isaiah could record the Assyrian approach with such geographical detail suggests that he was both familiar with the local terrain and that he was a contemporary to the event. Also, note that this is the same **Pass** which Jonathan used some 300 years prior to Isaiah's time (1 Samuel 13:23-14:5, Map 5-2).

After the Rabshakeh went from **Michmash** across **The Pass**, he came to **Geba**, and then accessed the Central Ridge Route at **Ramah** to **Gibeah of Saul**. This verse shows that **Ramah** and **Gibeah** are located on the Central Ridge (cf. Judges 19:13). The Rabshakeh then moved south along the Central Ridge, passing by cities like **Anatoth**, until he came to **Nob**, located on the Mt. of Olives just east of Jerusalem. From here he shook his fist threateningly at Jerusalem. But that is about as far as he would get. Yes, Assyria was the rod of Yahweh's anger to punish the nations, including Israel and Judah. But enough was enough. Jerusalem would not be sieged. Assyria would be humbled because of his pride. The Lord Yahweh of Hosts would cut Assyria down like a tall tree with a terrible crash (Isaiah 10:33). Israel's hope, on the other hand, would sprout up like a humble shoot from a stump or root (Isa. 11:1)

5. Egypt: Tirhakah King of Cush

Note the *orange arrow* with text **Egypt: Tirhakah King of Cush** and the battle in the **Plain of Eltekah** southeast of Joppa.

READ: 2 KINGS 19:8-13

The Rabshakeh returned to the Shephelah with news that Hezekiah refused to surrender in Jerusalem. In the meantime Sennacherib had moved from **Lachish** and laid siege to **Libnah** (Tel Bornat?). Then news arrived to Sennacherib that a large army led by Tirhakah king of Egypt/Cush (Ethiopia) was coming against him on the Coastal Plain. Sennacherib relates that he met the Egyptian/Ethiopian assault in the **Plain of Eltekah** (ANET p 287). Eltekah is not mentioned here in the biblical account, but a comparison with Joshua 19:43-46 shows that it is to be found in the Coastal Plain southeast of Joppa. Take another glance at Map 7-7. Tirhakah's objectives were clear. He hoped to cut off Sennacherib's troops in the Shephelah from their base support and supply lines centered at the port of Joppa.

Sennacherib relates that the Egyptian/Ethiopian attack had been coordinated with "**Hezekiah the Jew.**" Sennacherib also boasts that he soundly defeated the Egyptians/Ethiopians in the Plain of Eltekah. As to Hezekiah, if any of his faith had depended on help from the Egyptians – that help was now gone. Hezekiah was in dire straits. In the words of Sennacherib:

As to **Hezekiah, the Jew**, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to **46 of his strong cities**, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered them by means of well-stamped earthen ramps, and battering rams brought thus near to the walls combined with the attack by foot soldiers, using mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered them booty. **Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage** (ANET 288).

The earth siege ramps built by the Assyrians are also mentioned in the Scripture (Isaiah 37:33). Remnants of a siege ramp have been excavated at Lachish. The battering rams are depicted in Sennacherib's pictorial siege of Lachish. This extra-biblical parallel brings into sharp focus Hezekiah's dilemma. Would Hezekiah trust in Yahweh alone? His allies were gone, his own strength and cities decimated. The mighty Assyrian army was free to strike at Jerusalem. Sennacherib knew as much and sent messengers to Hezekiah giving him one more chance to surrender (2 Kings 19:8-13).

READ: 2 KINGS 19:14-37

Hezekiah learned that faith in man was vain and for his prayer of faith Hezekiah was rewarded. Sennacherib had mocked the Holy One of Israel, the one true God. The Lord put a hook in Sennacherib's nose and brought him back to Nineveh.

That night the angel of the LORD went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when Judah arose early in the morning, behold, the Assyrians were all dead bodies (2 Kings 19:35, author's translation).

We can't be certain where this happened - somewhere between the Coastal Plain and Jerusalem (2 Kings 20:32, Isa. 10:16-18). It was an intervention of epic proportions by Yahweh on behalf of Jerusalem through which nations could know that He is God (Psa. 48). Isaiah 10:16-18 suggests that the angel of the Lord struck the Assyrian camp with some sort of sickness.

Sennacherib called off the siege and returned to Nineveh where eventually two of his own sons murdered him. Another son, Esarhaddon, came to the Assyrian throne.

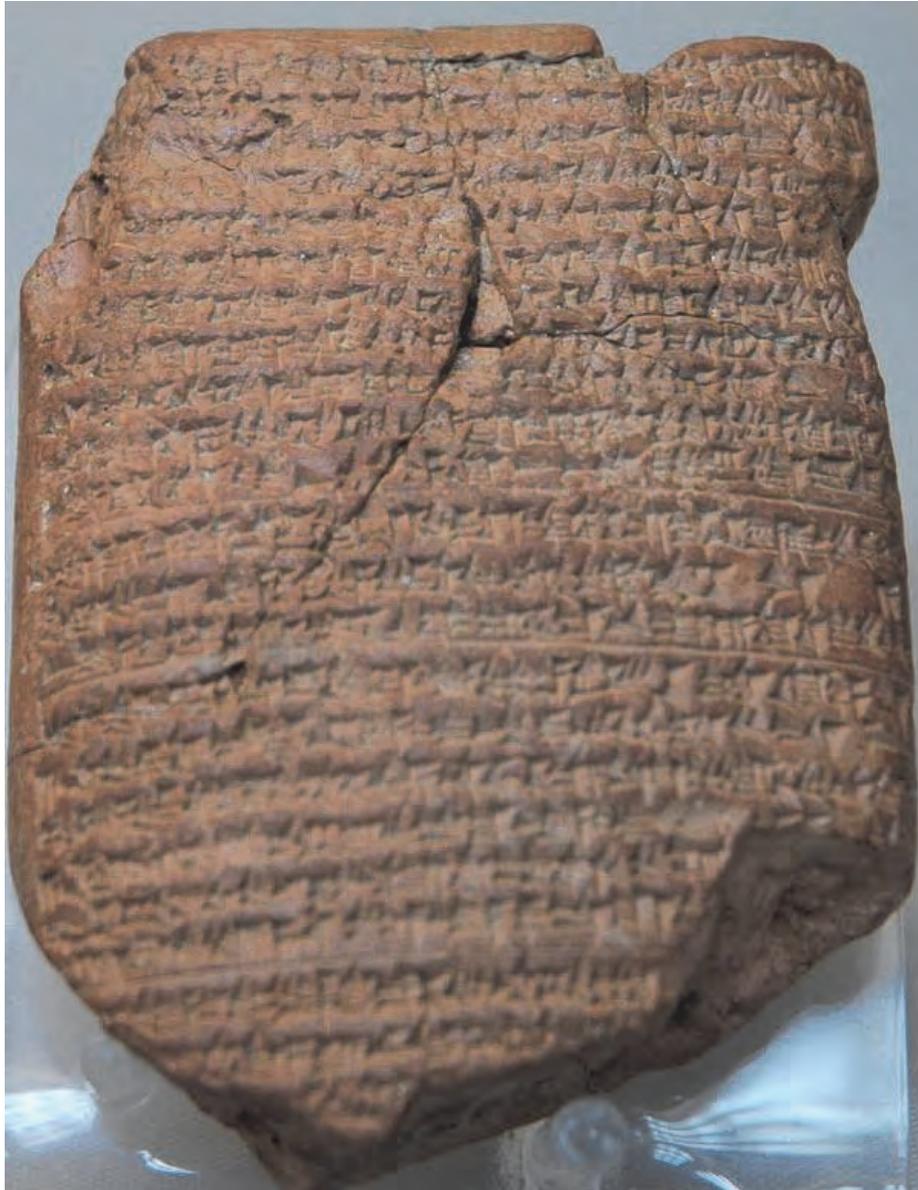
"May all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone, O Yahweh, are God"
The prayer of Hezekiah, 2 Kings 19:19.

REVIEW, Map 7-7:

1. Hezekiah instituted one of the most significant religious reformations that Judah ever experienced. The chronicler dedicated three whole chapters to a description of Hezekiah's reforms, which included the following: 1) a complete cleansing of the temple of any form of idolatry, and re-establishment of temple services as prescribed in the covenant with Yahweh. 2) A celebration of the Passover from Dan to Beer-sheba. 3) Removal of high places and their accoutrements and a re-organization of leadership. Archaeological excavations at places like Arad and Beer-sheba reveal destruction of such high places by Hezekiah.
2. Near Eastern states tested the waters of revolt from Assyria after the death of Sargon II (705 BC). Hezekiah king of Judah revolted from Assyria domination in 701 BC during the rule of Sargon II's son, Sennacherib. A number of archaeological finds, still in existence today some 2,700 years later, confirm Hezekiah's preparations for revolt: 1) the "belonging to the king" stamps on large storage vessels; 2) the "Broad Wall" fortifications in Jerusalem; 3) the Siloam Tunnel, Pool and Inscription. Ultimately Hezekiah learned he could not rely on his own efforts.
3. Sennacherib campaigned along the Coastal Plain to isolate Judah from Egypt and Mediterranean ports. Then he sieged the Shephelah, Jerusalem's buffer on the west. An amazing convergence of biblical and Assyrian texts and archaeological finds are associated with Sennacherib's Shephelah siege. There is no denying that Hezekiah was a real person. Sennacherib said he made Hezekiah the Jew a bird in a cage in Jerusalem. Cities like Ekron, Timnah, Azekah and Lachish all come up in the biblical, Assyrian, and/or archaeological record. Perhaps the most dramatic biblical-Assyrian-archaeological parallel is the 70-foot-long "Lachish Relief" with which Sennacherib decorated a palace room in Nineveh.
4. Isaiah 10:28-32, in detailed geographical specificity, presents an Assyrian army approaching Jerusalem. Isaiah describes the Pass between Michmash and Geba - the same Pass used by Jonathan to attack the Philistines some 300 years before. Isaiah also lists a string of cities along the Road of the Patriarchs north of Jerusalem.
5. King Hezekiah learned that neither his own strength nor human allies could save him. "God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart" (2 Chronicles 32:31). Hezekiah learned that trust in man is vain. When the chips were down, he trusted in Yahweh, the only God, the only One who could save. His faith was not disappointed.

For Map 7-8, Babylonian Empire, read commentary directly from the *Satellite Bible Atlas*.

Below: *Babylonian Chronicle (The Jerusalem Chronicle)* mentioning *Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (597 BC)* when he captured the city and its king (*Jehoiachin*) and set up another king (*Zedekiah*).



7-9 Fall of Jerusalem: the Babylonian Conquest

Date: 586 BC

And the LORD said, "I will remove **Judah** also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off **Jerusalem**, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there'" (2 Kings 23:27).

Map 7-9 marks out one of the most significant events in the history of ancient Israel - the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Yahweh, and the exile of Judah's inhabitants to Babylon. The conquering king from Babylon was **Nebuchadnezzar**. The final king in Judah was **Zedekiah**. The main prophet in Judah during these tumultuous years was **Jeremiah**.

Historical Overview: the 600s BC

Before examining the conquest of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BC, we survey Judah's history during the 600s BC following the Lord's dramatic intervention against Assyria in 701 BC.

Manasseh, King of Judah (696-642 BC)

READ: 2 KINGS 21

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, ruled longer than any other king of Israel or Judah – 55 years (696-642 BC) including his co-regency with Hezekiah. Unfortunately the faith of Hezekiah was not adopted by his son. Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord, so much so that he led Judah into more evil than the Amorites who were in the land before them. He set up altars and images of Baal and Asherah – the Canaanite fertility gods, in the Temple of Yahweh. Manasseh practiced astrology, witchcraft, and "made his son pass through the fire." 2 Chronicles 33:10-17 relates how repentance of the wicked is honored by God. Manasseh repented, and God honored the repentance. But there were consequences for his sin. Manasseh's reign was the last straw for Judah. The punishment would be destruction and exile.

The Fall of Assyria, 626-605 BC

Throughout much of Manasseh's and his son Amon's rule, Judah was a vassal of Assyria. Assyria reached the height of her power in the mid-600s BC. In 671 BC, under Esarhaddon (Sennacherib's son) Assyria successfully reached the Lower Nile in Egypt. Esarhaddon's son, Ashurbanipal (668-627) made it all the way to Thebes on the Upper Nile (ANET 295). But Assyrian power did not last much longer. In 626 BC, Nabopolassar, founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, seized control of the city of Babylon from Assyria. By 612 BC, Nineveh that great city, the capital of Assyria, fell. Some Assyrian forces regrouped at Haran and Carchemish along the northwestern Euphrates, but were snuffed out between 609-605 BC (Jeremiah 46:2, Map 7-8). The knock-out punch at Carchemish was delivered by the crown prince of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. The Assyrian superpower, which had dominated Near Eastern politics for over 100 years, was gone.

The Prophets Nahum and Zephaniah (c. 640 BC)

The prophecy of **Nahum** deals exclusively with Yahweh's judgment upon Assyria. That Nahum gave his prophecy while Assyria was still "strong and many" (1:12) suggests that the prophecy was given sometime around 640 BC (the year that King Josiah ascended the throne in Judah). Nahum affirmed, as Isaiah had said earlier, that powerful and proud Assyria would be cut off and pass away (Isaiah 10:25, 52:7; Nahum 1:12-15). Like Nahum, **Zephaniah** also

prophesied while Assyria was still proud (Zephaniah 2:13-15). Zephaniah said that because of his sin Judah would be devastated on the "Day of the Lord" (1:1-7). But not only Judah, the surrounding nations, including mighty Assyria, would be brought down (chapter 2). Only the humbled remnant of Judah could look forward to restoration and blessing (3:12-20). Both Nahum's and Zephaniah's prophecies must have contributed inspiration and support to the religious and political reforms of Josiah of Judah (Zephaniah 1:1). Reading these prophets in their historical context adds insight and appreciation to their message.

Josiah, King of Judah (640-609 BC)

READ: 2 KINGS 23

Of all the kings of Israel or Judah, it is written that only one – King Josiah – "**turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might**" (2 Kings 23:25; Deuteronomy 6:4). Josiah was just eight years old when he became king. When he was still young, at the age of 16, he began to seek the God of his father David (2 Chronicles 34:3). By the time he was 20 years old he had thoroughly rejected the idolatrous worship of his father Amon and grandfather Manasseh. He initiated dramatic religious and social changes in Judah. Re-confirming the covenant between Yahweh and his people, he cleansed the temple in Jerusalem, and defiled Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom. He purged the high places "**from Geba to Beersheba**," that is, in all of Judah (2 Ki. 23:8). Not stopping there, he destroyed the altar and high place at **Bethel** which Jeroboam had set up, thus fulfilling a prophecy given nearly three hundred years before (1 Kings 13:2; 2 Kings 23:15).

After the religious reformation had been in process for six years (Josiah's 18th year, 622 BC), the priests in the temple found "**Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses**" (2 Chronicles 34:14-15). This is perhaps the Book of Deuteronomy, or even more of the Pentateuch. This "Book of the Law of the Lord" added further motivation for Josiah's religious and cultural reforms. Note: critical/liberal scholars say that Deuteronomy was *written* at this time, considering Deuteronomy a political/religious propaganda attempt by priests and Josiah to centralize authority in Jerusalem. On the contrary, Deuteronomy (all of the Torah) historically fits much better into the context which it claims for itself, namely, God/Moses addressing the 2nd generation of Israelites who had come out of Egypt, ready to enter the Promised Land.

Politically, Josiah was able to take advantage of the rapid demise of Assyria. While Assyria was crumbling to Babylonian forces in the east, Josiah extended Judean influence beyond Bethel into **Samaria** and **Galilee** (2 Chronicles 34:6) and the **Coastal Plain**. A Hebrew letter from this time found at Metsad Hashavyahu, on the coast north of Ashdod (see Map 7-7) mentions a Judean governor dwelling at the site, and attests to Josiah's influence on the Coastal Plain. Key points along the International Highway, like **Megiddo**, were under Josiah's control.

Battle of Carchemish: Josiah's Death, and the End of Assyria, 609-605 BC

In 609 BC, **Pharaoh Neco** of Egypt journeyed through the land of Israel to assist Assyria in battles against Babylon at Haran and Carchemish on the north-western Euphrates (Map 7-8). **Josiah** opposed Neco at **Megiddo**, the strategic choke-point along the International Highway. Josiah probably hoped both to see Assyria finally finished off, but even more importantly to prevent the establishment of Egyptian sovereignty over areas in the political vacuum being created by the Assyrian demise. Not heeding Neco's warning that there was no quarrel between them, Josiah was mortally wounded in the battle at Megiddo, and brought to Jerusalem for burial.

Josiah's thirty-one years (640-609) of rule came to a sudden end. All Judah mourned his tragic death – the mourning was so great it became the standard by which other grief was compared one hundred years later (Zech. 12:11). Jeremiah composed a lament for Josiah (2 Chr. 36:25). No wonder. With Josiah's passing, Judah's religious and political recovery quickly disappeared. The last four kings of Judah after him (three sons and a grandson) all had relatively short reigns and "did evil in the eyes of Yahweh."

For a few years (609-605 BC) while the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance tried to withstand up-and-coming Babylon at Haran and Carchemish, Judah came under the thumb of Pharaoh Neco. Neco quickly deposed Josiah's son **Jehoahaz**, and made another son of Josiah, **Jehoiakim**, responsible for collecting and paying tribute. But in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon dealt the final blow to Assyria in the Battle of Carchemish and quickly expelled the Egyptians forces from all of the Levant, including the land of Israel. Jeremiah 46 describes the Egyptian defeat. Jehoiakim of Judah had a new master, **Nebuchadnezzar**. At this time some youths from noble families in Judah were brought to Babylon for training "in the service of the king," among them a young boy named **Daniel** (Daniel 1:1-7).

READ: 2 KINGS 24

Jehioakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years (605-602 BC), but then rebelled. We can surmise that Egypt was involved – after all, Jehoiakim owed his place on the throne to Pharaoh Neco. King Jehoiakim has the infamous distinction of being the king of Judah that took a knife to **the written prophecy of Jeremiah column by column and tossed it into a fire** (Jeremiah 36). Jehoiakim did not want to hear the prophetic message that Jerusalem would be destroyed. He had already put to death another prophet, Uriah from Kiriath-jearim, for expressing this sentiment (Jeremiah 26:20-23). But the prophets had more political insight than the king. The Babylonian response to Jehoiakim's rebellion was swift. Nebuchadnezzar sent his forces along with troops from other subject regions (Aram/Edom?, Moab and Ammon) to siege Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was humbled. Mystery surrounds his death but undoubtedly it was not pretty (Jeremiah 22:18-19). More of the Jerusalem temple treasures were taken to Babylon as tribute. According to Josephus, the prophet **Ezekiel** was among deportees taken from Judah at this time (*Antiquities* X.6.3; Ezekiel 1:2).

The Prophet Habakkuk

The most logical date for the prophecy of **Habakkuk** is in the early years of the rule of Jehoiakim (609-605 BC). Habakkuk asked the Lord why the wicked of Judah oppressed the righteous (1:1-4). The Lord's answer was that He would bring the mighty army of the Chaldeans/Babylonians against the wicked of Judah (1:5-11). But Habakkuk questioned, "Are not the Babylonians even more wicked and idolatrous than Judah?" (1:12-17). The Lord's answer was that in time Babylon too would be judged (2:1-20). In the meantime, "the righteous will live by his faith" that God is sovereign, and just. "Let all the earth be silent before Him." In the end, God will reward the righteous. Even in the face of great trouble, the righteous can confidently wait for the Lord's salvation (3:1-19).

King Jehoiachin/Coniah

When Jehoiakim died in **597 BC**, his 18 year-old son **Jehoiachin** came to the throne. But his rule in Jerusalem lasted a short three months. **Jerusalem was again put under siege**, and this time Nebuchadnezzar himself came to the city. Jehoiachin quickly surrendered. Along with the mother-load of the Jerusalem temple treasures, Jehioachin and the royal family were deported to Babylon. Jeremiah predicted that no son of Jehoiachin would rule over Judah (Jeremiah 22:24-

30; Jehoiachin was also called Coniah). Jehoiachin was to spend the remainder of his days exiled in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:31-34). Nebuchadnezzar also deported the leading civil and military officials, and important manufacturers.

Nebuchadnezzar set up **Zedekiah** (Jehoiachin's uncle, Josiah's son) as a puppet-ruler in Jerusalem, a fact recorded in the Bible which finds corroboration in the **Babylonian Chronicle known as the "Jerusalem Chronicle."** The Jerusalem Chronicle states that Nebuchadnezzar "besieged the city of Judah...seized the city and captured the king (*Jehoiachin*). He appointed there a king of his own choice (*Zedekiah*), received its heavy tribute and sent *it* to Babylon." (ANET 563-64). The Babylonian Chronicles are missing between c. 594 BC until c. 557 BC. We therefore have no contemporaneous Babylonian corroboration to the Old Testament's description of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah. We are ready to consider the momentous events marked on Map 7-9.

1. Babylonian Siege of Judah – the Shephelah

Note the *red arrows* (**BABYLONIANS – NEBUCHADNEZZAR**) coming along the Coastal Plain, through the Shephelah, pointing to the two sites, **Azekah** and **Lachish**. Yellow HL **Azekah, Lachish, Jerusalem**, and north of Jerusalem, **Anathoth** and **Mizpah**.

READ: 2 KINGS 25:1-2

The playing board looks familiar. The stage is the same as it was 110 years before when Hezekiah opposed the Assyrian onslaught (see Map 7-7). A powerful army from Mesopotamia invaded Judah. Districts in Transjordan having already been subdued, the invading Mesopotamian army - previously it was Assyria, this time Babylon - approached Judah from the west, via the Coastal Plain. Judean fortresses on the western flank in the buffer-zone Shephelah were sieged.

The Prophet Jeremiah

The main prophet in Judah at this time was **Jeremiah**. He was a priest from **Anathoth** (1:1), about four miles northeast of Jerusalem on the edge of the wilderness. Jeremiah's prophetic ministry spanned nearly 70 years, from 627 to 560 BC (from the "thirteenth year of Josiah" to "the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin," Jeremiah 1:2; 25:3; 52:31). Many of his prophecies are dated to the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah (e.g., 1:3, 25:1, 26:1, 27:1, 32:1, 35:1, 46:2). Jeremiah had the unenviable job of telling Judah that they were headed for exile in Babylon as judgment for breaking their covenant with Yahweh. Jerusalem would be destroyed. The temple would be destroyed (e.g., chapters 25-26).

In the temple courts Jeremiah compared Jerusalem's coming destruction to that of Shiloh (textbox, Jer. 7:12). He was sent to a spring (Parat) nearby his home to demonstrate that Judah's pride would be removed (textbox, Jer. 13:1-11).

But Jeremiah's message was not without hope. Yes, discipline and destruction upon his generation were inevitable, but after 70 years Babylon herself would be judged (25:11-13; 29:10; cf. chapters 50-51). Yahweh, in a display of His sovereignty over all the earth, would restore Israel and Judah to their land and make a New Covenant with them (chapters 30-33).

READ: JEREMIAH 34:1-7

When Jeremiah gave this prophecy, the situation in Judah had become dire:

the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against **Jerusalem** and against all the remaining cities of Judah, that is, **Lachish** and **Azekah**, for they alone remained as fortified cities among the cities of Judah (Jeremiah 34:7).

Lachish Letters

Twenty-one clay potsherds with Hebrew writing dating to this period were found in archaeological excavations at **Lachish**. One of these ostraca, Lachish Letter #4, offers a dramatic parallel to Jeremiah's statement that **Lachish** and **Azekah** were the only fortified cities of Judah standing outside of Jerusalem. Lachish Letter #4 corroborates Jeremiah's statement, but goes further: "...we are watching for the signal fires of **Lachish**...for we do not see the signal fires of **Azekah**." The implication is that by the time Letter #4 was written, perhaps from an outpost in the Hill Country where signal fires from both Lachish and Azekah could be seen, Azekah had fallen. Lachish too would capitulate. The Shephelah was falling. Jerusalem was next.

2. Help from Egypt?**READ: JEREMIAH 37:1-10**

As in the days of Hezekiah over one hundred years before (see Map 7-7), Egypt attempted to assist Judah against the invading army from Mesopotamia (*orange arrow*). The Babylonians temporarily lifted the siege against Jerusalem to deal with the Egyptian forces. This gave some Judeans in Jerusalem false hope. But Jeremiah made it clear in no uncertain terms: "**the Chaldeans (Babylonians) will also return and fight against this city, and they will capture it and burn it with fire**" (Jeremiah 37:8).

3. EDOM TAKES ADVANTAGE OF JUDAH'S WEAKNESS

Note the *black arrow* (EDOMITES) pointing at **Arad** and through the **Negev**.

READ: JEREMIAH 49:7-13 & PSALM 137:7

The Edomites took advantage of Judah's weakness and sacked Judean fortresses along the strategic trade routes in the Negev. Archaeological evidence at Arad attests to the Edomite invasion. A letter (ostrakon) was found at Arad, addressed to the commander of the fortress, warning of an Edomite attack.

Obviously Edom had not learned the lesson preached by the prophet Obadiah (1:12) – do not take advantage of your brother's difficulties. But Edom's judgment would come.

4. FALL OF JERUSALEM, 586 BC

Note the *red arrow* pointing at Jerusalem and the *dashed blue flight arrows* from Jerusalem to Jericho.

READ: 2 KINGS 25:1-21 & 2 CHRONICLES 36:11-21

The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem lasted a year and a half, during which time famine and disease took a huge toll. In the summer of 586 BC the city wall was breached, probably on the north side (cf. "Middle Gate," Jeremiah 39:1-5). Zedekiah escaped from the south side of the city near the kings' gardens, and fled east through the Wilderness of Judah. But the Babylonian army caught him near Jericho and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar who was in Riblah of Syria, north of Damascus. Before being taken captive to Babylon, Zedekiah's sons were slain in front of him and his eyes were gouged out.

A month later the **Temple of Yahweh was burned**, along with the king's palace and every other major building in Jerusalem. The defensive walls all around Jerusalem were knocked down. Evidence of the city's destruction and burning has been found in archaeological excavations in Jerusalem's City of David.

Many more Judeans were exiled. Most were settled in villages along the Chebar River near Nippur some 50 miles southeast of Babylon (Map 7-8, Ezek. 1:1; Psa. 137:1; Ezra 2:59). The exiles may have been put to work there on Babylonian irrigation projects associated with the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

Who destroyed the temple? The Babylonians were a tool, but ultimately it was God who destroyed the temple (Jer. 7:1-15, 27:5-6, 2 Kg. 23:27). Jerusalem's destruction and exile exhibit the sovereignty of the God of Israel.

5. GEDALIAH MURDERED AT MIZPAH

READ: 2 KINGS 25:22-30 (cf. Jeremiah 40-41)

The Babylonians had placed a certain **Gedaliah** as governor of Judah at **Mizpah**. But a nationalist group led by Ishmael, of the royal family, murdered Gedaliah in Mizpah. Ishmael escaped to Ammon. Jews in Judah feared further retaliation from the Babylonians for the murder of Gedaliah, and left for Egypt. Jeremiah warned against departing for Egypt, but in the end was forcibly taken there himself (Jer. 43:6-8).

REVIEW, Map 7-9

1. **Jerusalem was conquered in 586 BC by the Babylonians.** The king of Babylon was **Nebuchadnezzar**. The last king of Judah was **Zedekiah**. The main prophet in Judah at the time was **Jeremiah**.
2. Review these historical headlines from the 600s BC which led up to Jerusalem's fall:
 - a. **Manasseh** was king of Judah for 55 years, the first half of the 7th century (600s) BC. His reign was dominated by wickedness which surpassed even the pagan Canaanites. Manasseh introduced Baal and Asherah worship into the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. His repentance shows that nobody is beyond God's merciful reach. But his sin had consequences. His son **Amon** was an idolater, and was assassinated after ruling only two years.
 - b. **Josiah** came to the throne in Judah when he was only 8 years old, but began to seek the Lord diligently at the age of 16. He is the only king of Judah of whom it is written that he sought the Lord with all his heart, soul and mind. Josiah instituted religious and social reforms and enjoyed territorial acquisitions in the Coastal Plain, Samaria and Galilee. The prophets **Nahum** and **Zephaniah** ministered early in Josiah's reign.

Josiah's political expansion corresponded with the demise of Assyria. After 31 years of rule, in 609 BC Josiah was tragically killed at Megiddo, trying to oppose Pharaoh Neco, who was on his way to Carchemish to assist the Assyrians in battles against Babylon.

- c. Assyria experienced a meteoric decline between 626-605 BC. Babylon was the new kid in town. Babylon captured Nineveh in 612 BC, and delivered the final blow to the last Assyrian forces in 605 BC at Carchemish on the Euphrates.
3. The last 20 years of Judah's existence were dominated by the question of submission to Babylon. Refusal to submit brought quick reprisal. Judah was invaded in 605, 601 (Jehoiakim), 597 (Jehoiachin/Coniah) and finally destroyed in 586 BC. There are a number of striking extra-biblical textual and archaeological finds that parallel the biblical account. Be familiar with the following:
 - a. The Babylonian Chronicle ("Jerusalem Chronicle") describes Nebuchadnezzar campaigning in Judah (597 BC), removing one king (Jehoiachin) from Judah, and setting up another king of his own choice (Zedekiah).
 - b. Lachish Letter #4 corroborates with Jeremiah 34:6-7, stating that Lachish and Azekah were the only two fortified cities of Judah outside of Jerusalem withstanding the Babylonian siege.
 - c. Ostraca and other archaeological evidence from Arad confirm that Edom took advantage of Judah's weakness by conquering territory in the Negev.
 - d. Burnt layers and artifacts excavated in the City of David testify to the Babylonian destruction and burning of the city.
 4. **The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is a watershed event in the history of Israel.** It ushered in a time of soul-searching and change for the Jewish people. The glory of Yahweh departed the temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 11:22-23), the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, the people were in exile, the Davidic dynasty was dead or in chains, the priesthood in shambles. Why? The biblical authors, including **the main prophet of the time, Jeremiah**, explained this destruction and exile of Judah as discipline for unfaithfulness to the covenant with Yahweh. Ultimately it was God who destroyed the temple (Jer. 7:1-15). Nebuchadnezzar was only God's servant or tool (Jer. 27:5-6). Though the judgment was harsh, hope was not lost. For those who believed the prophets, Yahweh, sovereign over the nations, would once again restore and bless his people to accomplish his purposes.

For Maps

8-1 Persian Empire

8-2 Return and Restoration

8-3 Alexander the Great

8-4 Maccabean Revolt

8-5 Hasmonean Conquests: Summary

read the commentary directly from the *Satellite Bible Atlas*.

Below: *Alexander the Great in Battle*, from sarcophagus found in Tyre, now in Istanbul museum.



9-1 Herod the Great: Conquest (39-37 BC) and Kingdom (37-4 BC)

Somebody should make a movie about Herod the Great. His life had the elements Hollywood likes – war, violence, romance, sex, intrigue – all with a dramatic end. We have ample record about Herod's life from the Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote more about Herod the Great than of all the Hasmonean rulers combined. Herod ruled over the Land of Israel as Rome's vassal from 37-4 BC. The Roman senate called him the "King of the Jews." Although originally of Idumean (Edomite) stock, Herod's ancestors converted to Judaism in the Hasmonean period. The Romans chose the quasi-Jewish Herod as one who could promote their interests in this religiously and politically volatile region. From a human perspective, the Romans chose wisely. Herod served Roman interests faithfully for 33 years.

On Map 9-1 we have marked Herod's military conquest of the land Israel, the borders of his kingdom, and locations of his major building projects.

1. Herod's First Campaign (39-38 BC)

Note the *orange arrows* and *boxed numbers* (1-9) showing Herod the Great's 39-38 BC wars.

The Romans had asserted their authority over the land of Israel in 63 BC with the conquest by Pompey. From that time, pro-Roman governors were placed over the region. Herod's father, Antipatris, was one of these governors. Antipatris helped Julius Caesar in various battles and was rewarded the position of governor of Judea. By 40 BC Marc Antony confirmed the younger Herod as governor of Galilee and his brother Phasaelis governor of Judea. However, not all Hasmoneans were thrilled that Rome was taking political power. With the help of the Parthians, Rome's great rival to the east, the Hasmoneans of an anti-Roman persuasion successfully re-took Judea. Phasaelis lost his life, but Herod escaped to Rome via Nabatea (#1, on the southeast edge of map).

In Rome, Herod was confirmed by the senate as "King of the Jews." He returned with troops in 39 BC (#2, in the Mediterranean Sea to Ptolemais). After a successful foray into Galilee (#3), Herod secured the Coastal Plain and took Joppa (#4). He proceeded to Masada (#5) where he had left some 800 supporters, including family. While he was able to take some sections of Idumea and Judea, he was unable yet to conquer Jerusalem (#6). Placing his family in Sebaste, he took Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, during a rare snowfall there in the winter of 39-38 BC (#7). He snuffed out resisters that resorted to hiding in caves near the Sea of Galilee at Arbela (#8). Then Herod went off to assist Marc Antony who was fighting the Parthians at the Euphrates River (#9, off the northeast corner of the map).

2. Herod's Second Campaign (38-37 BC)

Note the *brown arrows* and *boxed numbers* (10-12) showing Herod's 38-37 BC conquests:

With the successful conclusion of the battle against the Parthians, Marc Antony put two Roman legions under Herod's command in order to secure Judea and Jerusalem (#10, through the Rift). Herod came to Jericho and then secured the northern approaches to Jerusalem (#11). He sieged and took Jerusalem from the north (#12). Herod convinced Marc Antony to put to death the Hasmonean Antigonus, "thus did the government of the Hasmoneans cease, a hundred and twenty-six years after it was first set up" (*Antiquities* XIV.16.4; Josephus was counting from the Hasmonean purge of the temple in 163 BC to Herod's conquest in 37 BC). Herod's conquest and rule brought many Roman soldiers, a presence seen and felt by the local Jewish population.

3. Building Projects and Borders of Herod's Domain

Note the *dashed black borders* that show the extent of territory over which Herod ruled.

1. The eastern border with **Decapolis** and **Nabatea**.
2. The northwestern border with **Phoenicia**.

With the exception of David and Solomon, unlike any individual before him, or after him, Herod was able to control a significant territory in the region. He controlled large tracts of lands east of the Sea of Galilee in **Golan**, **Trachonitis**, **Auranitis**, and **Batanea (Bethany beyond the Jordan)**. Herod also ruled over **Perea** in Transjordan. Along with the Roman district of the **Decapolis**, these areas were the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire. Herod controlled **Galilee** and the biblical heartland of **Samaria** and **Judea** extending into the Negev.

Between 25-14 BC Herod accomplished a series of building projects, the remains of which are still seen in Israel today. For security reasons he built fortresses in the wilderness like **Alexandrium**, **Hyrkania**, **Machaerus**, **Herodium** and **Masada**. He built cities like **Panias** in Golan, **Caesarea Maritime**, **Antipatris**, **Sebaste**, **Jericho**, and **Jerusalem**. Jerusalem's temple underwent a huge reconstruction project beginning in about 20 BC (cf. John 2:20). What is today called the Western/Wailing Wall was part of the Herodian wall around Jerusalem's temple plaza.

READ: MATTHEW 2:1-20 and LUKE 1:5-13, 39

Herod became a paranoid megalomaniac. He did not hesitate to get rid of any rival. He had married the beautiful Hasmonean princess Mariamne, but as soon as his power was established he had her killed. He killed his two adult sons born to him by Mariamne. Five days before his own death, he killed a son that was to inherit his kingdom.

Yet it was in the midst of this darkness that God became directly involved in man's affairs (Matt. 1:23). Late in Herod's reign the angel Gabriel appeared first in the Jerusalem temple to announce the birth of the promised forerunner (Mal. 3:1) and then in Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to announce Messiah's birth (yellow text boxes). John the Baptist was born in an unknown village in the Hill Country of Judah (Luke 1:39), traditionally placed at modern Ein Kerem just south-west of Jerusalem. God used the worldwide census issued by Caesar Augustus in Rome to bring about the birth of the Messiah in **Bethlehem** of Judah. Joseph, a descendant of King David, journeyed with his wife from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea to be enrolled for the census (Luke 2:1). While they were there the Messiah was born, fulfilling the prophet Micah's prediction of the location of Messiah's birth (Micah 5:2).

There are a number of inconsistencies between the biblical description and modern presentations of the Nativity event:

1. It is **not recorded** that Mary arrived in Bethlehem on a donkey. Also, it is unlikely that Joseph and Mary traveled alone from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
2. There is **no mention** of a late night arrival of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem. The couple had probably been in Bethlehem for some days or weeks and "while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth" (Luke 2:6).
3. There is **no mention** of an inhospitable innkeeper.
4. The scriptures do not really even mention an "inn." "Inn" is a poor translation of the Greek word "kataluma" (κατάλυμα) in Luke 2:7. In the other two places in the New Testament where this word is used (Luke 22:11; Mark 14:14) the translation is "guest room". Luke used the word for "inn" ("pandocheion", πανδοχείου, Lk. 10:34), but not in connection to Jesus' birth.

5. There is **no mention** of a donkey, an ox, cattle, a lamb or any other kind of animal present at the birth of Jesus.
6. The **shepherds** and the **wise men** did not visit Jesus at the same time. While the shepherds saw the Lord sometime soon after his birth, the wise men arrived some time (6-12 months?) after the birth of Jesus.
7. It is not recorded that the shepherds saw a star in connection with the birth of Jesus.
8. It is not recorded that Jesus was born at night, only that the shepherds were in the fields at night when they heard the angelic proclamation.
9. We do not know that there were **three wise men** – there may have been two, or more. "Three" is assumed since three types of gifts were given.

It is one of the ironies of the "fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4) that a descendant of Edom (Herod) ruled over Judea when the Messiah of the Jews was born. The picture that we see of Herod the Great in Matthew 2:1-20 is true to character. When Herod heard that a certain rival had been **born** "King of the Jews", in contrast to Herod's political and military maneuvering to receive that title, he ordered the murder of all male infants in the Bethlehem region. By that time Herod was already an old man approaching death. From historical and astronomical details presented by Josephus, Herod's death can be pinpointed to March-April, 4 BC (*Antiquities* XVII.6.4-5 to XVII.9.3. Jesus was born up to two years before, in 5-6 BC). Herod died of a prolonged painful disease in Jericho, but was buried with pomp in the **Herodium** fortress south of Bethlehem.

In May 2007, archaeologists announced the discovery of what is believed to be the remnants of Herod's tomb at Herodium. Herod's fortress and burial bring into sharp contrast the differences between Herod and Jesus, two claimants to the title "King of the Jews" in the 1st century AD:

Herod	Jesus
Declared King of the Jews by Rome	Born King of the Jews
Gained rule by sword and military might	Kingdom not established by mans' sword
Maneuvered and murdered to keep his power	Made himself low, humble, became a servant, Phil. 2:6-8
Ruled for 33 years	Unending rule (Isaiah 9:7, Luke 1:33)
Buried with great organized pomp, a crown and scepter of gold, and 500 maidservants carrying spices	A crown of thorns, hasty burial with a few women humbly planning to anoint his body with spices.
Dead, tomb eventually robbed, broken, then rediscovered	Resurrection, Alive

REVIEW, Map 9-1:

1. Herod the Great was Rome's designated "King of the Jews" and with Rome's assistance Herod was successful in conquering the Land of Israel. Herod ruled from 37-4 BC over Judea, Samaria, Galilee other districts northeast of the Sea of Galilee. He was an ambitious builder of fortresses, towns and cities. Caesarea became the regional capital in Herod's days.
2. Late during his rule, John the Baptist and Jesus were born in Judea. Matthew 2:1-20 describes how Herod tried to kill the real King of the Jews. There are many contrasts between Herod, called "King of the Jews" and Jesus, the real King of the Jews.
3. Soon after Herod's death, the New Testament refers to the region his sons ruled as "Land of Israel" in Matthew 2:20. The region was not called Palestine then (not until after 135 AD).

9-2 Political Borders at the Time of Jesus (Sons of Herod and Procurators)

Date: 4 BC – AD 66

1. Note the following *regional names* (black capital letters), and names of the rulers of each district:
 - a. **SAMARIA & JUDEA** (Archelaus, then Procurators)
 - b. **PEREA** (Antipas)
 - c. **GALILEE** (Antipas)
 - d. **GAULANITIS** (Philip)
 - e. (Salome) near Azotus and Ascalon

2. Note the *blue boxes* around the following capital or significant cities.
 - a. Jerusalem
 - b. Samaria, Sebaste
 - c. Caesarea (Maritime)
 - d. Sepphoris
 - e. Tiberias
 - f. Caesarea Philippi

Herod the Great killed his son and heir to the kingdom only five days before Herod himself died. This left ascendancy to his realm uncertain. Three other sons of Herod appeared before Caesar Augustus in Rome to make a claim to their father's throne: Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip. Instead of giving the territory to only one of them, Augustus divided the kingdom between the three.

Judea and Samaria – Archelaus then Procurators

READ: MATTHEW 2:19-23

The heartland of Judea and Samaria was assigned to Herod's son **Archelaus** (Matthew 2:22). Archelaus ruled for only ten years (4 BC- AD 6) before he was exiled. Therefore in AD 6 Rome brought in procurators (governors) to rule Judea and Samaria. The procurators had no Jewish-ness about them. Their headquarters were in Caesarea Maritime. Their responsibilities in the main were two: collect the taxes and keep the peace. Doing so required a strong military presence, inevitably resented by local Jewish populations with nationalistic hopes. The procurator in charge during the ministry of Jesus was Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36).

Northeast Districts, Gaulan, etc. – Herod Philip

READ: MATTHEW 16:13-23

Herod's son **Philip** (4 BC – AD 34) was given territory to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee. He rebuilt the city of **Panias** at the foot of Mount Hermon, calling it **Caesarea Philippi**. Jesus was in this district when he began to teach the disciples that he would suffer and die.

Galilee and Perea – Herod Antipas

READ: MATTHEW 14:1-12; Luke 13:31-33; Luke 23:1-12

Herod's son **Antipas** (4 BC – AD 39) ruled the predominantly Jewish territories of **Galilee** and **Perea**. Antipas divorced his Nabatean wife in order to marry Herodias. Likewise Herodias divorced her husband in order to marry Antipas. John the Baptist, whose ministry along the Jordan was in Antipas' territory, accused Antipas of adultery. The Jewish historian Josephus' accounts of John the Baptist's association with Herod Antipas are an interesting parallel to the New Testament (*War* VII.6.1-2; *Antiquities* XVII.5.2). Josephus relates that Antipas felt politically threatened by the multitude of John's disciples, so he imprisoned and killed the Baptist at the fortress called Machaerus opposite the Dead Sea. The New Testament relates how Antipas thought Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected (Matthew 14:1-2). When Antipas threatened Jesus, Jesus called him a "fox" (Lk. 13:32). Herod Antipas finally met Jesus face to face on the day that Jesus was crucified. Jesus said absolutely nothing to him (Luke 23:8-12). Eventually Antipas was removed from power and exiled to Gaul in AD 39. His territory was given to his nephew, Herod Agrippa I.

3. Find these regional names
 - a. DECAPOLIS
 - b. PHOENICIA
 - c. IDUMEA
 - d. NABATEA

The **Decapolis** (Ten Cities) was established originally by Pompey in 63 BC as the Roman Empire's eastern frontier. Decapolis territory extended from the southeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cities of Hippus and Gadara) and east of Perea to the borders of Nabatea in the south. Scythopolis (Bethshan) was the only city of the Decapolis west of the Jordan River. Probably because the inhabitants of the Decapolis were predominantly Gentile, Jesus seldom ventured into the region. However, when he did, the results were significant (Maps 9-5, 9-6).

Phoenicia and its cities Tyre and Sidon were Gentile territory to the northwest of Galilee.

To the southeast was **Nabatea**. The Nabateans were Arabic peoples that displaced the ancient Edomites from the high plateau in southern Transjordan. The Nabateans vied for control of trade routes in Transjordan and the Negev Highlands. Their capital was at Petra. Rome was not able to subdue Nabatea until 107 AD.

The **Idumeans** were the remnants of Esau-Edom. Displaced from the territory of ancient Edom around 200 BC by the Nabateans, the Idumeans settled in southern Judah. They converted to Judaism under Hasmonean rule. Their most famous son, of course, was Herod the Great.

READ: Mark 3:7-8; 4:25; 5:20; 7:24-32, noting the impact of Jesus' ministry on people in the regions mentioned above.

READ: Luke 3:1-3 (Chronology)

The public ministry of Jesus on earth (c. 29-32 AD) occurred during Emperor Tiberius' reign. Luke dates the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry to the "fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar," which is approximately AD 28 (Tiberius ruled from AD 14-36). Luke pinpoints the date of the beginning of John's ministry further: "...**Pontius Pilate** being governor of Judea, **Herod** being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother **Philip** tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis..." None of these political rulers perceived the work of God unfolding right under their noses (Luke 7:30).

Messianic Expectation, John the Baptist and Jesus

The political situation and territorial borders in Jesus' day are reasons why there was a great deal of messianic expectation at this time (Lk. 3:15). Many Jews were unhappy with the complicated political arrangements of foreign Roman dominion, and hoped for something better. Into this scene appeared the Levitical priest, Yohanan ben Zachariah, also known as John the Baptist. John was a man who pulled no punches, who, unlike the politicians and priests of his day, was a man to be believed. After some 400 years without a prophetic witness, a true prophet had been sent from God. John the Baptist's ministry was two-fold: 1) call people to repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah, a call that included a warning against coming judgment; and 2) witness and testify of the Messiah when He physically appeared on the scene (Luke 3:3-17; John 1:26-34). The One to whom John bore witness was Yeshua (Jesus) from Nazareth.

REVIEW, Map 9-2:

1. As the backdrop for the ministry of Jesus, know the layout of the political borders of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis and Perea. Review which sons of Herod ruled in which territories, and accounts of each in the New Testament.

2. Rome brought procurators to rule Judea and Samaria in AD 6. Can you see why there was potential for tension between the procurators who ruled Judea and Samaria, and Herod Antipas who ruled in Galilee and Perea (cf. Luke 23:12)?
3. John the Baptist began his ministry, and by implication Jesus ministry occurred, when Tiberius was Caesar in Rome, "...Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod (Antipas) being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis..." (Luke 3:1-3).
4. Judea and Galilee, where many Jews lived during the time of Jesus, were surrounded by Gentile regions including Phoenicia, Decapolis, Nabatea and Idumea.

9-3 Early Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist

Date: c. AD 29-30 (The first year)

The *blue arrows* with *boxed numbers* and associated text on Map 9-3 indicate events during the first year of the ministry of Jesus. John the Baptist contemporaneously ministered during this first year, testifying and directing people to Jesus. Students should be familiar with the chronological sequence and geographical locations of the events marked on this map.

READ: Mark 1:1-8; John 1:31, 34

John the Baptist was of a Levitical priestly family. In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (c. AD 28), John the Baptist began his ministry (Luke 3:1-3). Tiberius' reign began in AD 14. Counting his year of accession, Tiberius' 15th year was AD 28. We assume that Jesus was baptized soon after John started his ministry, placing Jesus' three-year public ministry in c. 29-32 AD. Some prefer counting the 15th year of Tiberius from AD 11 when Tiberius began co-regency with Augustus. We cannot be certain from which accession date (AD 11 or 14) Luke is counting, and therefore suggested dates for the beginning of John's and by implication Jesus' ministry vary by three years. Other dates suggested for Jesus' ministry are AD 26-29, 27-30, and 30-33.

John the Baptist's ministry was two-fold: 1) to call people to repentance from sin in preparation for the coming of Messiah. That call to repentance included a warning against coming judgment; and, 2) to witness and testify of the Messiah when He physically appeared on the scene (Luke 3:3-17; John 1:31, 34). From both the New Testament and Josephus' record (*War* VII.6.1-2; *Antiquities* XVII.5.2), John the Baptist was a man to be believed. After 400 years of no prophets, once again God interrupted Israel's affairs by sending a prophet who spoke the truth.

1. **BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN** (Find the following numbers and associated events on Map 9-3.)

READ: Mark 1:9-11. Find **Nazareth** on the map, north of the Jezreel Valley. Jesus left Nazareth and went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. We do not know exactly where in the Jordan River Jesus was baptized. The Bible says only "in the Jordan." Any attempt to identify a specific site for Jesus' baptism is only a guess. The statement in Mark 1:5 that people from Judea and Jerusalem went out to John may suggest Jesus' baptism occurred in the Judean part of the Lower Jordan River. At the baptism, the heavens were rent open not to initiate God's judgment upon the world (Isa. 63:19; Psa. 18:9), but to show the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father. The Spirit came upon Jesus in the form of a dove and the Father testified, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." John the Baptist was chief witness to these events. From this time forward, John's testimony changed from "Get ready, He is coming!" to "He is here!"

2. **TEMPTATION**

READ: Mark 1:12-13. Immediately after Jesus' baptism he was driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. We do not know the exact wilderness where this occurred. Tradition holds that the Judean Wilderness was the location, but east of the Jordan cannot be ruled out. In any event, God was taking the initiative, not Satan. God, through Jesus, took the battle into enemy territory, and the result was victory. Matthew's and Luke's descriptions center on Satan tempting Jesus to take a kingdom without the cross. Mark's description focuses on Jesus being the second Adam. While the first Adam had everything he needed in a lush river-watered garden, he sinned and both he and the earth were cursed as a result. In comparison, the second Adam, Jesus (in a wilderness - a result of the first Adam's sin) overcame temptation and began to break the effects of the curse which resulted from the first Adam's failure. As evidence that the curse was breaking, Jesus experienced a restoration of the proper relationship between man and animals, and between man and angels.

3. WITH JOHN THE BAPTIST & FIVE DISCIPLES at Bethany beyond the Jordan.

READ: John 1:19-28. After baptizing Jesus, John moved from the Jordan River and came to preach and baptize at **Bethany beyond the Jordan**. Bethany beyond the Jordan was a *region* east of the Sea of Galilee in Herod Philip's territory, not, as some have suggested, a site across the Jordan River opposite Jericho. Efforts to equate Bethany beyond the Jordan with a site opposite Jericho are often accompanied by the incorrect assumption that Jesus was baptized at Bethany (for example, BAR Jan/Feb 2005, pp. 34-43).

Some New Testament Greek texts read "Bethabara" instead of "Bethany" in John 1:28. But the reading "Bethabara" dates only to the church father Origen (185-254 AD, *Commentary on John*, section 24). Origen acknowledged that "Bethany" was the original reading, but rejected it – mainly because he was ignorant of the region of Bethany beyond the Jordan, east of the Sea of Galilee. The region of Batanea (Bethany) is described by Josephus as Herodian territory on the other side of the Jordan, east of the Sea of Galilee (*Antiquities* XVII.2.1; XVII.11.4; XX.7.1).

While John ministered in Bethany beyond the Jordan, religious leaders in Jerusalem sent a contingent to interrogate him. John told them he was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, but that he was a voice saying, "Get ready, the One coming after me is in your midst."

READ: John 1:29-34. The Gospel of John begins a day-by-day account of the first week of Jesus' public ministry. The day after the interrogation by the priests and Levites from Jerusalem, the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him...I have seen and have born witness that this is the Son of God." Note that the baptism event *did not* occur in Bethany beyond the Jordan. Rather, here in Bethany more than 40 days *after* the baptism, the Baptist *recalled* the baptism event as he testified about who Jesus was. The following is a chronological summary of events in the life of Jesus at this time:

1. Baptism: probably somewhere in the Lower Jordan River (Mark 1:4-8)
2. Temptation. While Jesus was in the wilderness, John the Baptist moved to Bethany beyond the Jordan.
3. The Baptist's Testimony at Bethany beyond the Jordan. More than 40 days after the baptism of Jesus, John recalled the baptism event as he gave testimony about Jesus (John 1:19-34).
4. The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry. Immediately following John's testimony in Bethany beyond the Jordan, Jesus began to gather disciples, and only a few days later was at a wedding in Cana (i.e., not in the wilderness being tempted).

READ: John 1:35-42. The next day, still in **Bethany beyond the Jordan**, the Baptist directed two of his disciples toward Jesus. The occasion was so momentous that the unnamed disciple (most likely John the Apostle) remembered the very hour of the day. One of the Baptist's followers, Andrew, went and found his brother Peter and said, "We have found the Messiah!" Andrew could be so sure since he had complete confidence in John the Baptist's testimony.

READ: John 1:43-51. The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. The text is ambiguous if Jesus found Philip in Bethany or in Bethsaida, Philip's hometown. Find **Bethsaida** on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida is a one-day journey from Bethany. Philip told Nathaniel that "we have found the Messiah promised by Moses and the prophets". Nathaniel was at first skeptical but a face-to-face meeting with Jesus quickly changed his mind (John the Baptist's testimony undoubtedly carried weight). The five disciples known to be in Jesus' company by this time are: Andrew, John (the un-named disciple), Peter, Philip and Nathaniel.

4. **WATER TO WINE** (note **Cana** north of Nazareth and **Capernaum** by the Sea of Galilee)

READ: John 2:1-12. Three days after Jesus decided to go to Galilee (John 1:43; 2:1) he came with his disciples to a wedding in **Cana**. There are two candidate locations for ancient Cana. "Cana il-Jalil" (Cana of Galilee, also called "Hirbet Cana") where we have marked the event on our map is a ruin some nine miles north of Nazareth opposite the broad Netofa Valley. The other candidate, Kefar Kanna (Village of Kanna), is about four miles northeast of Nazareth on the road to Tiberius. Both sites have Roman and Byzantine period ruins, but linguistic considerations and references in Josephus (*Life* 16-17, 41) seem to favor identifying Cana il-Jalil with the Cana of the Gospels.

At Cana Jesus performed the first of his signs. Instead of a grand act to be seen and wondered at by all, his glory was made known by an amazing deed done modestly in the sight of only a few. Even the organizer of the wedding feast did not know what had happened. The miracle in Cana manifested his glory and concluded the first week of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus went and stayed for a few days in **Capernaum**, the town from which he would later base his Galilean ministry.

5. **EARLY JUDEAN MINISTRY – TEMPLE CLEANSED**

READ: John 2:13-25 and find **Jerusalem**, and near Beth-shan, **Salim** and **Aenon**.

After a brief stay at Capernaum, Jesus made a bold messianic claim by cleansing the temple in Jerusalem during the Passover season. Three Passovers (in March-April) are mentioned in the Gospel of John (2:13, 6:4, 12:1). These festivals along with the un-named festival in John 5:1 imply a three-year duration of Jesus' public ministry.

By cleansing the temple, Jesus chastised the religious-political leaders in Jerusalem. The deed made Jesus a hero in the eyes of the multitude (2:23) but at the same time Jesus knew he was setting into motion forces that would eventually put him to death (2:18-19). The term "Jews" (2:18 and elsewhere) in John's Gospel refers to Jewish people in Judea, especially the leadership, who opposed Jesus. The many who believed in Jesus at this time were also Jews (2:23), so the term obviously is not inclusive of all Jews.

To Jesus, taking control over the temple was child's play compared to the infinitely more important task for which he came, namely, to die and rise from the dead (John 2:19-22). After speaking with Nicodemus about the spiritual requirement for entering the Kingdom of God (John 3), Jesus continued to minister in **Judea** (John 3:22). In Judea, Jesus was gathering a multitude of followers while John the Baptist ministered at **Aenon** near **Salim**. There may have been some confusion among the people over the simultaneous ministries of the Baptist and Jesus, but John understood the relationship perfectly: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:22-30). Jesus was gaining even more disciples than the Baptist (John 4:1). Undoubtedly part of the reason for this was that the Baptist's ministry at this time focused on directing people to Jesus (John 3:25-30). Altogether Jesus' early ministry in Judea must have lasted several months.

6. **THROUGH SAMARIA** (yellow HL "**Sychar**" and "**Jacob's Well**")

READ: Matthew 4:12 & John 4:1-6. The political and religious tensions associated with the imprisonment of John the Baptist caused Jesus to leave Judea and return to Galilee. He traveled on the Central Ridge Route through Samaria and stopped at **Sychar** near ancient Shechem. Here he spoke to a Samaritan woman and made an open claim to be the Messiah (John 4:25-26). Neither war nor diplomacy over hundreds of years was able to break down the barriers between Jews and Samaritans. The Gospel of Jesus Christ did. Many Samaritans in the city believed in him (John 4:39-42).

7. RETURN TO GALILEE

READ: John 4:43-54; Matthew 4:12; Luke 4:14-15; Mark 1:14-15. A cursory reading of the Synoptic Gospels may leave the impression that Jesus went immediately from the temptation to his Great Galilean ministry. However, the Gospel of John describes events (#2 through #6 on this map) that occurred chronologically between the temptation and the start of Jesus' Great Galilean Ministry. A careful reading of Matthew 4:12, Luke 4:14-15 and Mark 1:16 shows the Synoptic writers knew about this early period of Jesus ministry in Judea, but simply did not record it.

Jesus was not an unknown figure when he returned to Galilee. In addition to hearing about the water-to-wine miracle in Cana, many Galileans had seen what Jesus did at the Passover in Jerusalem. John the Baptist's ministry added thousands to the multitudes following Jesus. When an official from **Capernaum** heard that Jesus had returned to Galilee, he came up to **Cana** to plead with Jesus to heal his son. With a word Jesus healed the boy from some 18 miles away. This is the second miracle that Jesus performed in Galilee, both being associated with the site of Cana. The event begins what we call Jesus' Great Galilean Ministry.

REVIEW, Map 9-3:

1. This map marks out events described mainly in the Gospel of John, which occurred approximately in the first year of Jesus' adult ministry.
2. Bethany beyond the Jordan is **not** a site near the Jordan River, but a region east of the Sea of Galilee.
3. Jesus was **not** baptized at Bethany (or Bethabara) beyond the Jordan. Rather, it was at Bethany beyond the Jordan that John the Baptist recalled the baptism event in witnessing about Jesus.
4. The Gospel of John is our main source for the first year of Jesus' ministry. The Synoptic Gospels skip from the temptation to the beginning of the Galilean Ministry.
5. Political/religious pressures associated with the imprisonment of John the Baptist caused Jesus to leave Judea and return to Galilee. Jesus "home country" mentioned in John 4:43-45 was Judea, because he was a descendant of David (and Judah) and was born in Judea.
6. When Jesus came back to Galilee from Judea, he was not an unknown figure. After returning to Galilee, what miracle did Jesus perform, and where did he perform it?

9-4 Jesus' Move from Nazareth to Capernaum

Date: c. AD 30

Jesus' Great Public Galilean Ministry is marked on Maps 9-4 and 9-5, divided into six phases. The first phase is marked here on Map 9-4. The next five phases are marked on Map 9-5. The Great Public Galilean Ministry lasted approximately 18 months. Combining his Public and Private Galilean (Map 9-6) ministries, Jesus ministered in Galilee for about two years total.

1. Note the following geographical elements associated with the *blue arrow* from Nazareth to Capernaum
 - a. The **International Highway (Way of the Sea?) in yellow** from **Legio (Megiddo)** through the **Jezreel Valley**. One branch passes by **Nain** near the **Hill of Moreh**, and then north around **Mt. Tabor**. Another branch goes north of the **Nazareth Ridge** past **Sepphoris**, then joins with the first branch before descending through the **Arbel Pass**, to **Capernaum**, past **Bethsaida** and then off the north edge of the map. Note how the routes avoid but enclose the Nazareth Ridge.
 - b. Note the location of these cities: **Nazareth, Sepphoris, Cana, Capernaum**.
 - c. Note the tribal allotments (blue capital text)
 1. **ZEBULUN** (west of Nazareth)
 2. **NAPHTALI** (north of Capernaum)

2. READ: Luke 4:14-31 & Matthew 4:12-17

After ministering for some months in Judea (Map 9-3), Jesus returned to Galilee. He healed a Capernaum official's son with a word from **Cana** (*text box*), and then came to **Nazareth** where he had grown up. In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy from the Book of Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-2). His exposition included a discussion of God's work among the humble and toward Gentiles. This touched a raw nerve and resulted in an effort to throw him off a cliff, the precursor to death by stoning. Recent Muslim tradition claims that Jesus escaped by jumping off a cliff and landed safely below (giving the label "Mount of Jumping" to a prominent hill near Nazareth). However, the New Testament never records Jesus performing a miracle for his own personal safety. Jesus simply "passed through their midst, and went his way." The best assumption is that he said something that calmed the crowd and walked away.

Following this episode, Jesus moved from **Nazareth** to **Capernaum** where he would base his public ministry in Galilee over the next two years. There are practical reasons for this move:

1. Hospitality was lacking in Nazareth.
2. A number of disciples following Jesus were from the Capernaum area. Peter and Andrew had a house there (Mark 1:29).
3. A glance at Map 9-4 shows that Nazareth is on a ridge (1400 ft. elevation) that the **International Highway** avoids. On the other hand, **Capernaum** sits on the International Highway. From Capernaum, news of the words and deeds of Jesus would spread with travelers. Jesus made his ministry much more public with his move to Capernaum. Apparently Jesus had previously planned this move to Capernaum (John 2:12).

Jesus' Galilean Ministry as a Fulfillment of Prophecy

In addition to the practical reasons for Jesus' move from Nazareth to Capernaum, the Gospel of Matthew shows how the move played a role in the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Religious leaders in Jerusalem may have disdainfully referred to the fact that Jesus ministered in Galilee (John 7:52). But Matthew sees Jesus' ministry in **Nazareth** and **Capernaum**, and in the whole **Galilee** region, as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

*The land of **Zebulun** and the land of **Naphtali**,
by the **Way of the Sea**, and **Beyond the Jordan**,
Galilee of the Gentiles;*

The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light,
And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death,
Upon them a light dawned (Matthew 4:12-16; Isaiah 9:1-2).

Neither **Nazareth** nor **Capernaum** is mentioned in the Old Testament – since both these cities were originally settled after the Old Testament period. However, **Nazareth** sits in the land allotted to the tribe of **Zebulun**, and **Capernaum** sits in the land allotted to the tribe of **Naphtali**. Matthew makes clear that the ministry of Jesus in these districts is a very specific fulfillment of the Messianic prediction of the prophet Isaiah. In addition to the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali, Jesus ministered along the international route (the **Way of the Sea**), and in the Decapolis and Perea (**Beyond the Jordan**). Indeed, the people in **Galilee of the Gentiles** have seen a great light.

REVIEW, Map 9-4:

1. Know the locations of Nazareth and Capernaum.
2. Nazareth sits in the tribal allotment of Zebulun, and Capernaum sits in the allotment of Naphtali.
3. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah said that the Galilee districts, for which there seemed to be no hope, would see a great light. The Gospel writer Matthew says that the great light is Jesus' ministry in Galilee.
4. Jesus' move from Nazareth to Capernaum is the first of six phases of Jesus' Great Public Galilean Ministry. The next five phases are marked on Map 9-5.

1. JESUS' MOVE FROM NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM

The Public Galilean Ministry of Jesus lasted some 18 months. Our analysis of Jesus' Public Galilean Ministry is broken down into six phases. The first phase is marked on map 9-4 (Jesus' move from Nazareth to Capernaum). Stages 2-6 are marked here on map 9-5.

2. 1st GALILEAN PREACHING TOUR, Mark 1:14-39

Soon after his arrival in Capernaum, Jesus called four of his disciples to follow him, and to become fishers of men. This is not the first time these disciples had met Jesus. These men had months before been directed to Jesus by John the Baptist in **Bethany beyond the Jordan** (Map 9-3). They had been with Jesus at the Cana wedding and during Jesus' early ministry in Judea. The call of the disciples was a progression over time.

Jesus went into the **Capernaum** synagogue on Shabbat (Sabbath, Saturday). He cast the demon out of a man and astonished the people with his teaching. At Peter's home Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and then many other sick that evening. The next morning the whole town was astir, but could not find Jesus. Peter finally found Jesus praying in the countryside. Jesus told him "Let us go into the next towns, **that I may preach** there also, because for this is the purpose I have come forth" (Mark 1:38). When the people of Capernaum sought Jesus only for a miracle, he left them. He wanted people to pay attention to what he preached. While a miracle could heal the body, his message could save the soul. "And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, **preaching** and casting out the demons" (Mark 1:39; Matthew 4:18-25).

We do not know specifically where Jesus traveled on this journey. Most likely he ministered in villages like **Corazim** and **Bethsaida** on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. Perhaps, as our *dashed blue arrow* is marked, he even journeyed to the Jewish villages in Upper Galilee.

READ: Luke 5:1-11 & Mark 1:40-2:17

The Gospels describe several events that closed this first Galilean preaching tour. Focusing on Peter, Jesus again called the disciples from their fishing business (Luke 5:1-11). This "call" is separate from the one described earlier (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). Many differences in the descriptions show that these are two distinct episodes. Apparently at some point during the preaching tour the disciples had come back to oversee affairs of their fishing business. The call of the disciples involved multiple contacts with Jesus while their relationship progressed. As with the Prophet Isaiah's encounter with the divine (Isa. 6), Peter's encounter with Jesus caused him to realize and confess his sinfulness. Also like Isaiah, Peter received a divine commission.

The healing of a leper caused much excitement. When the crowds learned that Jesus had returned "home" to Capernaum, they pressed to see him. A lame man was let down through the roof of a house to reach Jesus. Jesus healed the man to cause people to hear and understand that "**the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**" After this event, Jesus called the tax collector Levi (Matthew) to follow him (Mark 2:13-17)

3. TO JERUSALEM FOR JOHN 5 FESTIVAL (SPRING).

Yellow HL box #3. Note the *tan arrow* pointing from south off the map.

READ: John 5:1-46

Jesus interrupted his Galilean Ministry with a trip to Jerusalem for an unnamed festival. The festival is most likely a springtime festival, perhaps Passover but more likely Shavuot (Pentecost). The description of this festival in John 5 combined with the three Passovers of John 2:13, John 6:1-4, and John 12:1 implies that Jesus' ministry lasted more than three years.

At the festival Jesus healed a man at the Pools of Bethesda on the north side of the temple. These pools have been uncovered by archaeological excavations. Once again the healing was done – this time on a Sabbath - to draw attention to Jesus words. And how astounding were his words! Jesus

called God his Father, "**making himself equal with God**" (5:17-18). Jesus also **claimed to have the power to raise the dead** (5:25), a claim which he was soon to demonstrate when he returned to Galilee (Luke 7:11-16). For such claims and deeds, the religious leaders in Jerusalem began making plans to put him to death (5:18).

4. SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Yellow HL box #4. Follow the *yellow arrow* from near to **Capernaum** all the way to **Nain**.

READ: Mark 2:23-3:12 - More Sabbath Controversies and Hardened Opposition to Jesus

Controversies over the Sabbath continued. Jesus' disciples picked grain on the Sabbath. Wheat is harvested in Israel in the springtime, especially at the time of Pentecost/Shavuot. This is one reason to view the unnamed feast of John 5 as a spring festival. Sabbath controversies were the focus especially at this period in Jesus' ministry. After returning to Galilee Jesus healed a man with a withered hand in a synagogue on the Sabbath. The multitudes rejoiced at his deeds, but Pharisees in Galilee followed the lead of religious leaders in Jerusalem (John 5:18) and met with government officials concerning ways to get rid of Jesus (Mark 3:6).

The next events in Jesus' life, including his selection of twelve apostles and the Sermon on the Mount, must be understood within the context of the religious authorities' desire to see Jesus dead.

READ: Luke 6:12-26 & Matthew 5:1-20 - Choosing of the Twelve and Sermon on the Mount

This is the only time the Gospels record that Jesus spent a whole night in prayer. The following day was to be a momentous one in which Jesus chose twelve apostles and then preached the Sermon on the Mount. The choosing of twelve and the Sermon on the Mount are related one to another. In the backdrop of the evil intentions of the religious leadership toward him, Jesus took steps to deliberately separate himself and his followers from that leadership. He chose twelve apostles. The number is not coincidental but reflects the number of the sons of Jacob, the original twelve tribes of Israel. The Sermon on the Mount parallels the giving of the Law to Israel at Sinai. With his new apostolic base, Jesus went up on a mountain and claimed to fulfill the Law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). He also claimed ultimate authority for interpreting the Law (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 33-34, etc.). He made himself the focus of a New Community that would experience temporary difficulties, but would in the end be blessed (Matthew 5:1-11, 7:23-24, etc.)

We are unsure of the exact location where Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount. It was near Capernaum (Luke 7:1) on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. The traditional location, marked by a Catholic church dating only to the 1930s, does fit the geographical details given in the New Testament. Jesus could have been on the level Heptapagon (Tabga) plain where crowds gathered and he healed many (Luke 6:17-19). Then he went higher up the hill slope where he taught (Matthew 5:1-2).

READ: Luke 7:1-17

The events following the Sermon on the Mount contrast the differences between misinterpretations of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant which Jesus established. His healing of the Gentile centurion's servant in Capernaum was a sign that, in comparison to the Law of Moses and misinterpretations of it, Gentiles would participate in the New Covenant community. "Many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 7:1-10; Matthew 8:10-11, NKJV translation). The arbiter of the New Covenant has the power to raise the dead. To show this, Jesus for the first time raised a dead person – the son of a widow from Nain – confirming a claim given in Jerusalem not long before (Luke 7:11-17; John 5:25). Further, even repentant harlots could find a way to God's mercy under the New Covenant (Luke 7:36-50).

Note: The Gospel of Matthew is the least chronologically ordered of all the Gospels. While keeping a general chronology, Matthew has reorganized some events for thematic reasons. For emphasis, Matthew has brought the Sermon on the Mount toward the front of his book. Therefore in Matthew we find events that chronologically *occurred before* the Sermon on the Mount *recorded after* the Sermon (e.g., healing of the leper, healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and the paralytic, Matthew 8-9).

5. THE "LONG DAY" & PARABLES

Yellow HL boxes #5a (north side of Sea of Galilee) *and #5b* (southeast side of Sea of Galilee). Note the *red arrow* from **Capernaum** across the sea to the **Harbor of Gadara**, and the *red arrow* which shows the return to Capernaum.

READ: Matthew 12:22-32; 13:1-11

We come to a significant turning point in the Galilean Ministry of Jesus. The turning point is called the Long Day since so much happened on this day. Jesus healed a blind and dumb man possessed of a demon. The crowds were amazed and asked "Can this be the Son of David?" Jesus' opponents made their opposition public here, and tried to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people. First the antagonistic leaders claimed that Jesus was able to cast out demons because he was in league with the prince of demons. Jesus explained the absurdity of their claim and showed that such a claim sprang from evil motivations (Matthew 12:22-37). Next the leaders demanded to see a sign, to which Jesus answered that the only sign given them would be like that of Jonah, whose experience paralleled Jesus' death and resurrection.

On that same day Jesus began to teach in parables (Matthew 13). Those willing to hear and understand the nature of the kingdom of God could do so. Those unwilling to understand would not. Two elements emphasized in these first parables of Jesus are: 1) good and evil would co-exist for an indefinite period on earth, followed by a cataclysmic separation of the two (Matthew 13:18-30; 36-42; 47-50), and 2) the message of the kingdom, though starting out small like a mustard seed, would undergo fantastic growth with far-reaching effects (Matthew 13:31-34). The message of the kingdom started with One Man and his band of followers in sandals on the hills of Galilee – yet the message has reached beyond oceans and continents.

READ: Mark 4:35-41 - Calming of the Sea

On the evening of the Long Day, Jesus got into a boat and instructed his disciples to cross to the other side. A great storm came up while Jesus was sleeping and the disciples feared they would drown. Would all this talk about the Kingdom of God earlier that day end up as an accident statistic on the bottom of the sea that night? No way. The Son of Man has authority over nature. Even the wind and waves obey him.

READ: Mark 5:1-20 - The Gadarene Demoniac – The Son of Man's authority over Satan

Jesus and the disciples landed on the eastern side of the shore in the **Decapolis** territory of **Gadara**. There is considerable confusion as to the location of this event. Most of the confusion stems from the writings of the "church father" Origen (185-254 AD). In Origen's *Commentary on John* (commenting on Jn. 1:28) he rejected the readings "Gadarenes" and "Gerasenes" in the New Testament Greek manuscripts and inserted Gergasenes (Gergesa). Subsequent manuscripts influenced by Origen have the Gergesenses reading. Origen felt that neither Gadarenes nor Gerasenes was correct since neither is on the sea. Both cities of the Decapolis - Gadara is six miles and Gerasa (modern Jerash) is twenty-five miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. However, the 1st century Jewish historian, Josephus, states that Gadara's territory extended to the Sea of Galilee (*War* III.1.1), as has been confirmed archaeologically by the discovery of the largest Roman/Byzantine harbor on the Sea of Galilee near modern Kibbutz Ha On. The original texts of Luke and Mark were probably "Gerasenes" - using a more general geographical location that would have been familiar to a non-local audience. A contemporary parallel would be for a person to say he is from Los Angeles instead of Santa Clarita. Matthew used the more geographically specific

"Gadarenes." The event may have occurred as far north as Kursi (Origin's so-called Gergesa) where later tradition places the event because the hillside slopes down close to the lake there. However, this location seems to make "Gadarenes" and "Gerasenes" in the texts inexplicable, since Kursi was in the territory of the city of the Decapolis called Hippus.

This is the first and one of only a few times that Jesus came to a Gentile district. Here Jesus ministered not to the mayor or businessmen of the city, but to two men in obvious need – possessed by multitude demons, naked, chained and living in tombs. But the power of Jesus is greater than a legion of demons. While Matthew records that two men were freed, Mark and Luke focus on one of the men, probably because he was the man that went and told throughout the **Decapolis** what Jesus had done for him.

READ: Mark 5:21-43 - A Woman Healed and a Girl Raised from the Dead – The Son of Man's authority over sickness and death

Jesus returned to **Capernaum**. At this time he healed a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, and then raised from death a twelve year old girl. Are these the works of a man in league with Satan? Two blind men did not go for that explanation of Jesus' power and shouted "Son of David, have mercy on us!" (Matthew 9:27-31). Even taking into consideration the likes of Moses or Elijah, never had anything like this been seen in Israel (Matthew 9:33).

6. 2nd REJECTION IN NAZARETH, COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE, DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST & FEEDING 5000

Yellow HL box #6a and note the *branching crimson arrows* which start from Nazareth.

Yellow HL box #6b and note the *white arrow* which starts south of **Bethsaida**, crosses the sea to **Gennesaret** and then to **Capernaum**.

READ: Mark 6

Commission of the Twelve, and the Death of John the Baptist

The last stage of Jesus' 18-month Public Galilean Ministry began when he was rejected for a second time in Nazareth. Seeing the people as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus **commissioned the 12 apostles** and sent them out to preach with authority over demons and to heal. Then **John the Baptist was put to death by Herod Antipas**. John had been in prison for the 18 months of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Matthew 4:12; 14:1-13). To Jesus, John's death was a portent of his own impending death (Matthew 17:12-13). When Jesus heard about John's death, he began to close down his public Galilean Ministry. He would soon switch the focus of his ministry to privately teaching the Twelve about his own death and resurrection.

Feeding of the 5000 and Walking on Water

Hearing of John's death, Jesus withdrew with his disciples to an unpopulated area on the east side of the Sea of Galilee near **Bethsaida** (Luke 9:10). But crowds saw him and followed by foot on land. Here around Passover time (John 6:1-4), one year before the Passover at which he would die, Jesus **miraculously fed over 5000 people**. The people wanted to make Jesus king (John 6:14-15). However, the miracle was a sign that his death would provide life for others (John 6:33, 50-51). After dismissing the apostles and the crowds, Jesus came to his apostles out on the sea, **walking on water**. The close association of one event chronologically to the other suggests an association of meaning. If the feeding of the 5000 is a symbol of Jesus' death, walking on water symbolizes his resurrection to a body not limited to what we consider normal laws of physics. The parallels in attitude and language between the walking on the water incident with a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus also suggest that the walking on water was a symbol of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Mark 6:49-50 and Luke 24:37-38).

READ: John 6:22-71 - Sermon in the Capernaum Synagogue

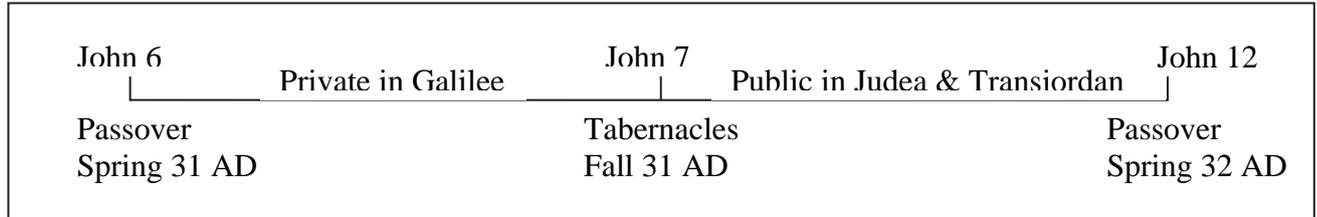
The next day Jesus arrived in **Capernaum** where in the synagogue he gave the great sermon interpreting the Feeding of the 5000. The teaching that one man's sacrificial death was necessary for all was too hard for even many disciples to accept (John 6:66). But Peter knew there was nowhere else to turn. Jesus alone had the words of eternal life (John 6:68-69).

The John 6 sermon in the **Capernaum** synagogue for all practical purposes ended Jesus' 18-month Public Galilean Ministry. The next six months Jesus changed his focus and sought privacy to teach the Twelve about his impending death and resurrection.

9-6 Private Galilean Ministry: the Training of the Twelve

Date: Passover to Tabernacles (Spring to Fall), c. 31 AD

Jesus' Private Galilean Ministry covered a period of about 6 months - the first half of the last year of the days of his flesh. It was the summer between Passover and Tabernacles (John 6-7). For these six months Jesus sought seclusion in order to teach his disciples privately, that he would suffer, die and rise from the dead. Then, for the final six months, beginning with the Festival of Tabernacles, Jesus once again ministered publicly; however, not in Galilee but in Judea and Transjordan (Map 9-8).



During the six-month Training of the Twelve period, Jesus made two journeys into northern districts with his disciples. As he sought privacy, both journeys went into predominantly Gentile lands. During the first of the journeys Jesus and his apostles traveled to **Tyre** and **Sidon** in **Phoenicia**, and then swung through the **Decapolis** back to the Sea of Galilee (*blue arrows* on Map 9-6). On the second journey Jesus took his apostles to the district of **Caesarea Philippi** (*yellow arrows*). Near Caesarea Philippi a series of events occurred which can be considered the apex of the Training of the Twelve. Immediately after a great confession by Peter that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus for the first time began to clearly teach his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to die and rise again. Six days later Jesus was transfigured before three of the apostles.

1. JOURNEY TO TYRE AND SIDON

Find the *dashed blue arrow* pointing from **Capernaum** to **Tyre**. *Yellow HL box #1*.

READ: Mark 7:1-30

Either near Capernaum or Gennesaret (Mark 6:53) Jesus was confronted by religious authorities from Jerusalem over keeping the traditions of the elders. The essence of the Pharisees' argument is used against Jesus to this day: "How can he be the Jewish Messiah if he breaks with traditional Jewish practice, if he breaks with our leaders and if our leaders do not accept him?"

Jesus sought private time with his disciples in a house in the Gentile district of Tyre. But he could not be hidden. A Gentile woman heard about Jesus and pleaded for help for her demon-possessed daughter. This woman had, from a Jewish perspective, every negative ethnic trait that was possible to package into one person. First, she was Greek - the people who had desecrated the temple and tried to wipe out Judaism in 165 BC. She was Syrophenician - the people from whom Jezebel came, the corrupter of Israelite worship with Baalism. Finally she was Canaanite (Matthew 15:22) - the ancient people that Joshua and the Israelites were instructed to disinherit. Yet, the woman knew her place and she knew that the king from the House of David would be a blessing for Gentiles, too. She pleaded, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy..." (Matthew 15:22). Her wisdom and humility struck Jesus, and he healed her daughter.

2. FROM TYRE AND SIDON THROUGH DECAPOLIS

Find the *blue arrows* going west from **Tyre**, and in Transjordan through **Decapolis** to the **Sea of Galilee**. *Yellow HL box #2*.

READ: Matthew 15:29-31 & Mark 7:1-30

Leaving Phoenicia Jesus traveled all the way to the east side of the Sea of Galilee into the **Decapolis**. We cannot be certain of the route he took. Though he was seeking solitude, somehow the people in these Gentile regions heard about him and sought him. Mark relates one episode. A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to Jesus. When Jesus was done the man could hear and speak. Additional lame, maimed, and blind were brought to Jesus, and he healed them. The people's reaction was astonishment beyond measure. The statement that these Gentiles "glorified the God of Israel" (Matthew 15:31) should not be taken lightly. A Jewish man journeyed into Gentile territories of Phoenicia, and Decapolis (modern Lebanon, Syria and Jordan) – and by the end of his journey the Gentiles in these regions were glorifying the God of Israel! As the Apostle Paul later explained, one purpose for Messiah's coming was "that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy" (Romans 15:8-9).

3. FEEDING OF 4000

Yellow HL box #3 on the east side of the Sea of Galilee.

READ: Mark 8:1-10

The crowd of 4,000 was predominantly **Gentiles** who had been following Jesus for three days in the **Decapolis**. Previously Jesus had miraculously fed a crowd of 5,000. The people in that crowd were predominantly Jewish. Jesus interpreted the Feeding of the 5,000 to his Jewish audience as a symbol of his own sacrificial death as a provision for life (John 6:26-58). Likewise, the Feeding of the 4,000 showed that Jesus' sacrificial death would benefit Gentiles.

After the Feeding of 4000 Jesus returned to the western side of Sea of Galilee. This ended the first of two journeys he took during the Training of the Twelve. The journey provided Jesus' first extended contact with Gentiles, and the response of the Gentiles was to give glory to the God of Israel. Jesus had started the journey seeking solitude in a private house but finished by ministering to thousands of Gentiles in the open air. The disciples were witnesses to the results of Jesus' ministry here – this was training ground for their ministry among Gentiles in future years.

4. SEEKING A SIGN

Yellow HL box #4 and note the *yellow arrow* from **Dalmanutha** to **Bethsaida**.

READ: Matthew 15:39 – 16:12

Jesus returned to Jewish territory at **Dalmanutha** or **Magdala** - "Magadan" in Matthew 15:39 but some texts of Mark 8:10 have Dalmanutha, an Aramaic word probably meaning "harbor". Dalmanutha is possibly the harbor area near seven springs (Tabga in Arabic), an excellent fishing area near Capernaum. Pharisees and Sadducees found him quickly enough and tried to discredit him with their tactic of asking for a sign (cf. John 2:18, Matthew 12:38). Jesus answered that they were able to predict the weather from the appearance of the sky, but that they could not interpret the signs of the times – that Messiah was in their midst. By referring to Jonah, Jesus reiterated that the ultimate sign to pay attention to was his own death and resurrection.

Jesus began the second journey of the Training-of-the-Twelve period by crossing the sea. In the boat heading for Bethsaida, Jesus warned the disciples to beware of the leaven (teaching, Matt. 16:12) of

the Pharisees and Sadducees. This most likely referred to the popularly held concepts of who and what Messiah should be. We know little about Sadducean views of Messiah. Most likely the Sadducean view differed from the Pharisaic. The Sadducees apparently tended to be rationalistic, denying the miraculous intervention of God in man's affairs. The Pharisees on the other hand emphasized the triumphant, nationalistic, conquering views of Messiah. By referring to the Feedings of the 5,000 and 4,000, Jesus drew the disciples' attention to the central teaching of those miracles – namely, that Messiah would die a sacrificial death for the benefit of many.

5. BLIND MAN

Yellow HL box #5 near **Bethsaida**.

READ: Mark 8:22-26

Arriving in **Bethsaida**, a blind man was brought to Jesus. Curiously, Jesus healed the man in stages. The best explanation for this is that Jesus wanted to be sure the man would not broadcast the miracle. At this phase in his ministry Jesus wanted private time with his disciples. He did not want crowds to gather which could frustrate his plans for private teaching. Even so, Jesus could make the blind see.

6. "THE MESSIAH MUST DIE AND RISE AGAIN"

Yellow HL box #6 near **Caesarea Philippi**.

READ: Matthew 16:13-28

In the days of Jesus, **Caesarea Philippi** was a metropolis dominated by multiple pagan temples built near a powerful spring of water at the foot of **Mt. Hermon**. There was a temple here for the centaur nature-god Pan for whom the site was formerly named (Panias). Herod Philip made the place his regional capital, added a temple for worship of Augustus Caesar, and named the city **Caesarea Philippi**. Although Jesus probably did not come into the city, he came into this region to find solitude with his disciples.

Jesus asked the disciples "who do men say that the Son of Man is?" and "who do you say that I am?" After providing a list of other people's opinions, Peter proclaimed, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." "Peter" said Jesus, "you are absolutely correct, and you are going to be a foundation of the new covenant community ("church") that I am building. I will be gone, but you disciples will be the foundation of the new covenant community." While Jesus had previously made allusions to his death (John 2:19, 6:51), **at this point for the first time he explicitly began to teach his disciples that as Messiah he would go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and on the third day be raised**. Peter did not understand. Thinking from a human point of view – how could Messiah be put to death? How then could he conquer and rule?

7. TRANSFIGURATION

Yellow HL box #7 on **Mt. Hermon**

READ: Matthew 17:1-13

Six days later Jesus took three disciples to a high mountain and was transfigured before them. Luke's "about eight days" (9:28) is inclusive of the days on which both Peter's confession and the Transfiguration occurred. Most likely the high mountain was one of the slopes of Mt. Hermon. Some Christian tradition places the event on Mt. Tabor, but this is unlikely since there were settlements on Mt. Tabor in the Greek and Roman periods (Polibius, *Historiarum Reliquiae*, V, 70; Strabo, *Geographica*, XVI, II, 3; Josephus, *War* II.20.6; IV.1.8). Further, Mt. Tabor is not in a

remote location, and a journey from Caesarea Philippi to Mt. Tabor would entail travel through multiple Jewish villages, defeating Jesus' intentions for privacy.

At the Transfiguration three apostles were allowed a glimpse of Jesus' glory and heard testimony from three reliable witnesses. The event would reassure the apostles' faith on the heels of Jesus' declaration that he would suffer and die. Here were Moses and Elijah giving testimony concerning Jesus. Any opposition to Jesus from contemporary religious or political leadership would pale in comparison to the favorable witness of Moses and Elijah. Adding to Moses and Elijah's testimony, a voice from the glory cloud declared, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

8. PRIVATELY THROUGH GALILEE TO CAPERNAUM

Yellow HL box #8 and note the *dashed yellow line* from **Mt. Hermon** to **Capernaum**.

READ: Matthew 17:22-24; 18:15-17 & Mark 9:30-32

Following the Transfiguration, Jesus cured a demon-possessed boy, and then traveled privately through Galilee. We cannot be certain which routes Jesus traveled on here – the New Testament text states simply "through Galilee." Jesus emphasized once more that he would go to Jerusalem, suffer, die and be raised. Jesus added here the information that he would be betrayed or delivered to the authorities.

It should be noted that during the Training-of-the-Twelve period Jesus taught about specific elements concerning the "church," or the "called-out community" (ἐκκλησία, Matthew 16:18; all of Matthew 18, specifically 18:17). Jesus was teaching the disciples that while he would die, resurrect and physically be gone, human beings are his "called-out community" (church) through which he works.

The six months of Private Preparation ministry drew to a close. Following this period Jesus once again made a grand public appeal to the people. However, not in Galilee but in Judea and on the other side of the Jordan.

REVIEW, Map 9-6:

1. The Private Galilean Ministry (Preparation of the Twelve) lasted for approximately **the first six months of the last year** of Jesus life on earth (the summer between Passover and Tabernacles).
2. The Private Galilean Ministry consisted of **two journeys** into Gentile districts (separately represented on Map 9-6 by blue and yellow arrows) at which time Jesus was seeking **private time** to teach his disciples that he **would suffer, die and rise from death**.
3. On the first journey Jesus traveled to **Tyre, Sidon** and **Decapolis**. On the first journey the mercy of God toward Gentiles was revealed through Jesus. Jesus healed a demon-possessed daughter of a Syro-Phoenician, Greek, Canaanite woman in Tyre. Then Jesus ministered to crowds in the Decapolis, including a deaf man with a speech impediment. The end result was that the Gentiles in these districts praised the God of Israel. Four thousand Gentiles were miraculously fed as additional evidence that Jesus' life and death benefit many.
4. On the second journey Jesus traveled to the region of **Caesarea Philippi**. Events on the second journey can be considered the apex of the Private Preparation period – Peter's great confession, then Jesus' first clear teaching about his impending death and resurrection, and the Transfiguration.
5. Jesus' teaching about the church, the "called-out community," were given during the period of the Private Preparation in Galilee. Jesus was teaching the apostles that he would depart, and that the "called-out community" would be the body through which he worked on earth.

9-8: Later Ministry in Judea and Perea

Date: The last six months of Jesus' ministry: Tabernacles (31 AD?) to Passover (32 AD?)

Jesus had spent the first six months of the last year of his ministry privately teaching his disciples in Galilee (Map 9-6). However, at the fall Feast of Tabernacles Jesus once again shifted into a public mode. This final public appeal also lasted for approximately six months – from Tabernacles to Passover. Whereas a previous 18-month public appeal had focused in Galilee, this time Jesus focused his ministry in Judea and Perea (from the Greek word πέραν, "beyond" the Jordan). As might be expected, some of the teaching Jesus gave during these two distinct Galilean and Judean/Perean public ministries is similar (cf. Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4 teaching on how to pray) even though given at different times and places. An itinerant preacher uses the same sermon, perhaps with some changes, at different locations.

The Later Ministry in Judea and Perea is described in the Gospels of Luke and John. Matthew and Mark sum up this period in just a verse or two (Matthew 19:1-2 and Mark 10:1). The period consisted of a series of journeys by Jesus to and from Jerusalem. While Luke described the journeys ("The Lukan Travel Narratives," Luke 9:51–18:31), John's Gospel focused on what happened when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem.

1. TABERNACLES

READ: John 7:1-17; 37-41 - Yellow HL box #1 near Jerusalem.

Jesus had spent the previous six months avoiding crowds. He had not come to Jerusalem for the last Passover. People were wondering "What is going on? Where is he?" Even Jesus' brothers said, in a skeptical tone, "Why all the secrecy? Go to Judea for the Tabernacles festival...show yourself to the world." Jesus went up to the festival, but not on their terms. He went privately, not publicly.

One cannot appreciate John chapters 7-9 without some understanding of what life was like in Jerusalem during the pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Pentecost/Shavuot and Tabernacles/Succot; Exodus 23:14-17). Thousands of pilgrims crowded into the city from both the Land of Israel and abroad. Accompanying all the activities, national and religious fervor ran high. Modern Jewish festivals in Jerusalem have a similar dynamic. In the middle of the seven-day Tabernacles festival Jesus appeared publicly again, teaching in the temple. The crowds were astonished by his teaching. No man ever spoke like this man (John 7:14-15, 46).

At Tabernacles, at the end of the long dry summer in which no rain falls, prayers for rain are offered to God. Also during the festival, water was ceremonially poured out around the temple altar, asking and acknowledging that God gives this provision for life. On the last day of the festival, the great day (Hoshanah Rabbah?), during the peak of water libation ceremonies, Jesus boldly stood up and shouted, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!" (John 7:37). This was a not-so-veiled claim to his oneness with the Father.

The next day, probably Simchat Torah (Rejoicing over the Law), Jesus dealt with a woman caught in adultery (John 8:11). At Tabernacles additional candelabras had lit up the temple precincts. But the day after the festival they were dark when Jesus said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12, 9:5). Backing up his claim, Jesus sent a man born blind to the Pool of Siloam (archaeological excavations in 2004-2006 uncovered more of the ancient Pool of Siloam). The man came back seeing. Since the world began it was unheard of that anyone could open the eyes of one who was born blind.

2. LUKE 9:51

Yellow HL box #2. Note the *dashed-crimson* arrow pointing at **Ginae** in the Jezreel Valley, and from **Ginae** to **Jerusalem**.

READ: Luke 9:51 - 10:12

We do not know which city of Samaria it was that would not receive Jesus. We place it on the map at Ginae (modern Jenin) since Josephus mentions inhabitants of this town killing Jewish Galileans on their way to Jerusalem for a festival (*Antiquities* XX.6.1). Also, we do not know the route that Jesus took from that city to Jerusalem. We have marked it on our map through Samaria, but Jesus may have traveled in the Jordan Rift Valley after being refused passage at the Samaritan city (Luke 10:25-42 may suggest a Rift Valley journey through Jericho).

While it is impossible to be dogmatic about which journeys to Jerusalem described in Luke align with appearances by Jesus in Jerusalem described in John's gospel – it is clear that the journey described here is a public one. Therefore, this journey was not Jesus' private trip to Tabernacles. It was not until the middle of the festival of Tabernacles that Jesus "went public" again. The trip of Luke 9:51 is better understood as the trip to Jerusalem for Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication) by which time he had once again been ministering publicly.

Luke 9:51-13:11 describes events and teachings given perhaps before and after Hanukkah. The public nature of Jesus' ministry can especially be seen in the sending out of the seventy (Luke 10:1-12). Many towns in Judea must have heard the Gospel at this time. Note also the story of a man along the road between **Jerusalem** and **Jericho** (Luke 10:25-37).

3. John 10:22 – HANUKKAH

Yellow HL box #3.

READ: John 10:22-42

Jesus came again into the courts of the Jerusalem temple during the winter Festival of Dedication, also known as Hanukkah. Jesus was specifically in the Porticoes of Solomon, colonnades that lined the east side of the Temple Mount (Maps 9-9 & 11-2). The Hanukkah festival commemorates the purge of pagan Greeks from Jerusalem and the re-dedication of the altar/temple by the Hasmoneans in 164 BC. In another emotionally-charged atmosphere, certain Judeans asked Jesus, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly!" Jesus answered that he had already told them, but if they could not believe his words, they should examine the testimony offered by his miraculous works. He then went so far as to say "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Jewish leaders wanted to stone him, or at least arrest him. But Jesus escaped and went beyond the Jordan. The opposition toward Jesus in Jerusalem was intense. Although he would later come to nearby Bethany, Jesus did not set foot in Jerusalem again until the Passover when he was killed.

4. PEREA

READ: John 10:40-42 and Luke 16:19-31 - *Yellow HL box #4.*

Jesus went "**across the Jordan**" after Hanukkah. This is most likely not Bethany beyond the Jordan in Herod Philip's territory, but rather **Perea** which was under Herod Antipas' domain. John the Baptist "at first baptized" in regions along the Jordan River. Only later did the Baptist move to the region of Bethany beyond the Jordan. Unlike the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem many Jews beyond the Jordan believed in Jesus. The Baptist's testimony provided fertile ground for the people's growing belief in Jesus. The bulk of the events and teachings recorded in Luke 13:22-17:10 may have occurred at this time. Jesus would have spent the winter months

of 31-32 AD in Perea. The next time he came to Judea was to raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11). The name "Lazarus" and the lesson of Jesus teaching in Luke 16:19-31 are not coincidental. A certain poor man Lazarus died, but found himself in Abraham's presence. A rich man of this age also died but found himself in torment. Would it help if someone came back from the dead with a warning? No, Jesus said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

5. LAZARUS RAISED

Yellow HL box #5 and note the *orange arrow* from **Perea** to **Bethany** near **Jerusalem**.

READ: John 11

Jesus was in **Perea** when he heard that Lazarus was sick. He stayed two more days before he decided to go into Judea again. Thomas knew going to Judea would be a dangerous proposition as "the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

To reach **Bethany**, Jesus would have traveled up the road that connects Jericho to Jerusalem. The Old Testament calls this road "**the Ascent of Adummim**" ("the Red Ascent", Joshua 15:7, 18:17). **Bethany** is about two miles from Jerusalem (Jn. 11:18) on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives. Here Jesus called out and raised Lazarus who had been dead for four days. The reaction to the miracle was mixed. On the one hand was jubilation, excitement and belief (John 11:45; 12:17-18). On the other hand the leaders already had their hearts set against Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees gathered together a council.

The "council" is the Sanhedrin, or at least a cabinet of high ranking members of the Sanhedrin. The high priests were Sadducees (Acts 5:17) but the Sanhedrin, the 71-member Jewish high court, was made up of both Sadducees and Pharisees. The high priest Sadducees did not necessarily have a majority in the Sanhedrin. While the Pharisaic domain was mainly in the synagogues, the Sadducees controlled the Jerusalem temple system. Jesus spent most of his ministry on Pharisaic turf, but had done enough in Jerusalem to stir up the ire of the Sadducees. The last straw for the Sadducees was a man raised from the dead on the outskirts of Jerusalem. A dead man come alive was too much of a threat to Sadducean theology and politics (cf. Acts 5:17; 23:8). After Lazarus was raised, both groups, Pharisees and Sadducees, normally at odds, officially united in their plans to put Jesus to death (John 11:53). The high priest Caiaphas, concerned for the political status quo, and in truthful irony unknown to him, declared that it was expedient that one man should die for the people (John 11:49-52).

The raising of Lazarus was one miracle which Jesus deliberately made more spectacular than it might have been. Here there was no admonition to "tell no one." Jesus intentionally waited until Lazarus was dead. He came to a village on the outskirts of Jerusalem and with many witnesses present, shouted for the man to come out of the tomb. News of the incredible deed spread throughout Jerusalem (John 11:17-18). By raising Lazarus in this spectacular way Jesus not only gave a grand public display of his power, but also set up his ministry in Jerusalem for the coming Passover. On the one hand Jesus had ignited the fascination of the people, which provided the protection he wanted for his final week in Jerusalem (John 12:19; Luke 22:6; Matthew 21:46; Mark 12:12). On the other hand, Jesus knew he was to die in Jerusalem. By raising Lazarus, Jesus set into motion the plans of those who at the Passover would put him to death. He was in control of the circumstances in ways that are beyond normal human understanding.

6. SECLUSION John 11:54

Yellow HL box #6 and note the *orange arrow* that goes from **Bethany**, bypassing Jerusalem, to **Ephraim**.

READ: John 11:53-57

Knowing the evil designs of the Judean religious leadership, and knowing his time had not yet come, Jesus found seclusion at the village of **Ephraim** some 12 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jesus probably crossed "the Pass" between Geba and Michmash enroute to Ephraim.

Jesus raised Lazarus some 4-8 weeks before Passover. Now after raising a dead man, Jesus left the Jerusalem environs in a fever-pitch state of excitement. "Where is he now? Will he come to the Passover?" The tone of John 11:55-57 suggests that the people may have expected a showdown between Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus' answer to the question, "Will he come to the Passover?" was given loud and clear by the next miracle he performed.

7. 10 LEPERS

Yellow HL box #7 in the **Harod Valley** between **Samaria** and **Galilee** along the *blue arrow*.

READ: Luke 17:11-19

After raising Lazarus, Jesus found seclusion for a short while in **Ephraim**. Suddenly Jesus appeared on his way to **Jerusalem** "between **Samaria** and **Galilee**." The route between Samaria and Galilee travels in the Jezreel and Harod Valleys. Jesus probably joined other Passover pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. The crowds were Jesus' way of protecting himself from the animosity of the religious leaders.

People had been wondering if he would come to the Passover festival or not. Jesus sent his answer via ten lepers: "Go, and show yourselves to the priest. And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed" (Lk. 17:14). News of this miracle would spread like wildfire. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for the Passover.

8. FINAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Yellow HL box #8 and note the *blue arrow* through the Jordan Rift Valley to **Jericho**.

READ: Matthew 19:1-3 & Luke 18:15-30

One cannot overstate both the excitement and tension that accompanied Jesus on his way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Every question, every word, was loaded. Skeptical Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would appear. Jesus told them the kingdom of God was standing right in front of them! He then turned to his disciples and explained that there would be an interval between his presence now and his coming suddenly in glory (Luke 17:20-37). But first Jesus would "suffer many things and be rejected by this generation" (Luke 17:25). Then some Pharisees thought they could both diminish Jesus' popular following and get Him into trouble with Herod Antipas by asking a question about divorce. Jesus gave them a clear answer concerning God's view on marriage and divorce (Matthew and Mark rejoin the narrative here on this last journey to Jerusalem: Matthew 19:1-3 & Mark 10:1-2). Divorce and re-marriage is adultery. Then Jesus proclaimed that a child-like faith is required to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:15-17) while riches create an impossible obstacle (Luke 18:18-30).

Geographically, this journey was made in the Jordan Rift Valley on the east side of the Jordan. The pilgrim caravans preferred the eastern side since it went through "Jewish" Perea, and water was more accessible in rivers and streams coming down from ancient Gilead.

9. **BARTIMAEUS & ZACHAEUS**

Yellow HL box #9 near **Jericho**. Note the *blue arrow* that points from **Jericho** to **Bethany**.

READ: Luke 18:31 – 19:10

Jesus traveled south through the Jordan Rift Valley and probably forded the Jordan somewhere opposite Jericho. Before arriving in **Jericho** He once again taught clearly that He was on his way to Jerusalem to die and rise from the dead – this time adding that Gentiles would put him to death by crucifixion (Matthew 20:18-19).

Jericho's residential and municipal areas were separated by a distance of about 1.5 miles (cf. Map 1-9 for detail). The residential area grew near the fresh-water spring, while the municipal section was built up by the Hasmonians and then Herod the Great, 1.5 miles to the southwest. At first glance there appears to be a contradiction between the Gospel records concerning the location of the healing of these blind men. But closer examination shows the Gospel records to be a careful recording of facts presented from different eye-witness perspectives. The blind men were sitting on a road connecting the two Jericho districts. Jesus was "leaving" (Matthew 20:29; Mark 10:46) residential Jericho but "approaching" (Luke 18:35) municipal Jericho.

These blind beggars, sitting at a strategic spot between the Jericho districts, kept calling Jesus the Son of David. They could have proven to be an embarrassment to Jesus. The crowd felt Jesus had more important things to do in Jerusalem. He should not be delayed by blind beggars! What could he do for them? Have a couple of coins tossed into their cup? Jesus stopped and gave them sight. The blind men, one named Bartimaeus, followed Him praising God. Then in the municipal center of Jericho, Jesus, who not only has the power to give sight, but to change lives, changed the life of the tax collector Zachaeus.

Jesus had set the stage for his last week of ministry in Jerusalem with a combination of authoritative teaching and recently performed miracles (the raising of Lazarus, the healing of ten lepers, and giving sight to two blind men). These events heightened the anticipation and excitement of the people. His popularity among the crowds temporarily frustrated the treacherous designs of the Judean leadership. Even though religious leaders were determined to kill Jesus they had decided "not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people" (Matthew 26:4-5). However, Jesus knew better than the leaders did. He earnestly desired to minister one more week in Jerusalem (about one third of the Gospel records deal with this final week), and was enabled to do so through protection offered by the crowds. But He knew that by the end of the week He would be put to death (Luke 22:15; Matthew 26:1-2; 20:17-19).

For the last time, Jesus climbed the **Jericho to Jerusalem** road (Ascent of Adummim) arriving in **Bethany** six days before the Passover.

REVIEW, Map 9-8:

1. The last six months of Jesus' ministry between Tabernacles and Passover was a public ministry in Judea and Perea.

2. The Later Ministry in Judea and Perea is described mainly in the Gospels of Luke and John. The Lukan Travel narratives describe teaching and events on journeys to and from Judea, while John mainly describes what happens in Judea.
3. Four events (Tabernacles, Hanukkah, Raising of Lazarus, Passover) described in the Gospel of John in which Jesus came into Jerusalem (or vicinity) occurred during this period. Review what happened in Jerusalem during each of the festivals.
4. Review the geographical features described in the Gospels for this period. Why was Jesus stopped at one point in Samaria? When and why did he go "beyond the Jordan" where John at first baptized? What happened there? When and why did Jesus go to "Ephraim near the wilderness"? What happened as He traveled "between Samaria and Galilee"? Was Jesus "leaving" (Matthew 20:29; Mark 10:46) or "approaching" (Luke 18:35) Jericho when he gave sight to Bartimaeus?
5. Matthew and Mark sum up the bulk of this six-month period in a verse or two, and then re-join the narrative for the final journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. Review events and teachings which occurred during the final journey to Jerusalem.
6. During this period (especially from the raising of Lazarus and following), Jesus was setting the stage for His last week of ministry in Jerusalem.

Jesus' visits to Jerusalem before Passion Week are marked with letters A through H (*green*). Six out of eight events which the Gospels describe occurred on the Temple Mount. Events during the Passion Week, i.e., the week leading to His crucifixion and resurrection, are marked by numbers 1-12 (*white*).

JESUS IN JERUSALEM BEFORE PASSION WEEK

- A. Blessings of Simeon and Anna, Temple Mount, Luke 2:22-38
After the infant Jesus was 40 days old, He was brought from Bethlehem to the Jerusalem temple for the presentation of the first-born (Exod. 13:2, 6; Lev. 12:2-6). Devout Jews, Simeon and Anna, rejoiced at the salvation this child, the Messiah, would bring.
- B. Discussion with Rabbis, Temple Mount, Luke 2:41-52
At 12 years of age, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem after the Passover festival. His parents found Him on the temple, in discussion with religious teachers. Jesus' response to His parents shows He was already conscious of His Messianic mission.
- C. Temptation, Luke 4:9-13
Before Jesus began His public ministry, He was tempted to prove His relationship to the Father through a miraculous jump from the temple.
- D. First Cleansing of Temple, John 2:13-25
Early in Jesus' ministry, at Passover, He came to Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. The deed, aimed at corrupt politico-religious leadership, gained Him a following among the common people. Taking over the temple mount was no small task, but it was still finger-play compared to the work Jesus really came to do – namely, die and rise from the dead.
- E. Bethesda Pools, John 5
Jesus interrupted His ministry in Galilee (Map 11-5) when He came to Jerusalem for an unnamed festival. On a Sabbath at the Pools of Bethesda, Jesus healed a man who had been lame for 38 years. These pools have been uncovered by archaeological excavations. The man had ineffectually waited for a superstitious healing, perhaps associated with Jewish mysticism, or even the Roman god of healing, Asclepius. The description in some Greek manuscripts in John 5:3b-4 of an angel of the Lord stirring the waters is an incorrect 4th century AD addition. After the miracle, Jesus claimed to not only have the power to heal, but to raise the dead.
- F. Tabernacles, John 7-9, Temple Mount
Following a period of months of private ministry to His apostles, Jesus began the last six months of the days of His flesh with teachings and a miracle in Jerusalem (Map 11-7). During the Festival of Tabernacles, water libations were made on the temple in acknowledgment of God's provision of rain. Jesus called out, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink". The day after the festival ended, religious leaders brought an adulterous woman to Jesus on the temple. In the end, no one was willing to condemn her. Then Jesus claimed to be the light of the world (John 8:11; 10:5), and backed up the claim by sending a blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man went, washed, and came back seeing.
- G. Solomon's Porticos, Hanukah, John 10:22-39
In the winter, some four months before his death and resurrection, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Festival of Dedication, or Hanukah, which commemorated the Hasmonean purge of the Greeks from the temple. He was in the colonnades along the east side of the temple called Solomon's Porticoes (cf. Acts 3:11; 5:12). Certain Jews said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus

responded that He had already clearly told them, and additionally that His works and words were further clear evidence.

H. Bethany, raising of Lazarus, John 11

Between Hanukah and Passover of Passion Week, Jesus came to Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives. He raised Lazarus from the dead. The scene was set for Passion Week. On the one hand, the people were in expectation. On the other hand, religious leaders were united against Him and set upon His destruction (Map 11-7).

PASSION WEEK

1. Bethany on the Mt. of Olives, John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived in the village Bethany on the Mount of Olives. In the same village, only weeks before, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. A supper was prepared at the home of Simon the leper. Mary, Lazarus' sister, honored Jesus by anointing his feet with a precious ointment. Judas Iscariot protested her gesture, but Jesus defended her, saying she had done a noble deed.

2. Triumphal Entry from Bethphage, John 12:9-19

Religious and political expectations among the people soared when they heard that Jesus was in the outskirts of Jerusalem for the Passover season. The presence of Lazarus, resurrected, added to the excitement. Jesus' ride from Bethphage (near Bethany) into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilled an ancient Israelite prophetic hope that Israel's king would come to Jerusalem humbly (Zech. 9:9). While the multitudes gave Jesus a king's welcome, most of the religious leaders reacted with disdain and jealousy.

3. Mt. of Olives and Temple Mount, Luke 19:41-44

From the Mt. of Olives, Jesus looked upon Jerusalem and wept for the coming judgment the city would experience. He entered the temple, most likely from the southern Hulda Gates.

4. Return to Bethany, Mark 11:11

In the temple Jesus looked all around, and then returned to Bethany with the twelve "since it was already late."

5. Temple Mount, Mark 11:15-18

For the next two days (Monday and Tuesday?) of Passion Week, Jesus took control over the temple. For the second time, Jesus cleansed the temple courts of buyers, sellers and money changers, claiming justification for the act from Israel's ancient prophets Isaiah (56:7) and Jeremiah (7:11). Like with the cleansing of the temple three years previously (John 2), Jesus' deed and teaching were excitedly received by the common people. On the other hand, the reaction of the religious leadership, now including the priestly temple warden Sadducees, was fear and jealousy. They planned to destroy Him.

The religious leaders didn't arrest Jesus since they feared the reaction of the people (Matt. 21:46; Luke 19:48). Instead the leaders tried to discredit Jesus with verbal arguments. In answer to a question about His authority, Jesus stumped the chief priests, scribes and elders with a question about John the Baptist. He then told three parables which further condemned the priests (Sadducees) and Pharisees (Matt. 21:28-46). Then some Pharisees teamed up with Herodians in an effort to get Jesus in trouble with the Roman government. They asked about paying taxes. Jesus statement, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" left the listeners in amazement. To the Sadducees' mockery of resurrection, Jesus replied that the Scriptures proclaim, and that God is capable, of raising the dead. After answering a

question about which commandment is the greatest (love God and love your neighbor), no one else dared step in the verbal-sparring ring. All comers were bested (Luke 20:40; Mark 12:34). Jesus went on the offensive with a question about the relationship of Messiah to King David, and then taught concerning the hypocrisy of the religious establishment (Matt. 22:41-23:36). Most likely toward evening Jesus made his way out to the Mt. of Olives. In the presence of four of his disciples (Mark 13:3) he gave the Olivet Discourse. Here Jesus explained what the world will be like just prior to, and at the very moment of, his return. When he returns there will be no deliberation. No one will be able to ask “Is this the Messiah or not?” He will come with unquestionable power, separating the righteous from the unrighteous (Matt. 24).

6. Upper Room, Luke 22:1-38

In order to keep Judas from knowing the location of the Passover meal, Jesus pre-arranged for two disciples to meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Perhaps the meeting took place at the Pool of Siloam. The traditional location of the room where Jesus infused further meaning into the Passover celebration is on Jerusalem’s Western Hill, today marked by a building dating to the Crusader Period.

7. Gethsemane, Matt. 26:36-56

On the way from the Passover Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus taught the disciples, and prayed, concerning his soon departure (John 14:31-17:36). Then he crossed the Kidron Valley and came to Gethsemane (John 18:1), where he confirmed his commitment to the Father’s will. Judas led a band of officers from the chief priests. Jesus was arrested and the disciples scattered.

8. Annas and Caiaphas’ House, John 18:12-27; Matt. 26:57-68

Jesus was led bound to Annas, former high priest and father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. Annas tried intimidating Jesus with questions about His disciples and teaching. Then Jesus was brought before a group of scribes and priests, among them the high priest Caiaphas. Jesus testified that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that eventually He would be seen “sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” The religious leaders condemned Him for blasphemy worthy of death. In the meantime, Peter was in a courtyard of the high priest’s house, denying Jesus.

9. Chamber of Hewn Stone, Temple Mount, Luke 22:66-71

Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin, which probably met in the Chamber of Hewn Stone on the Temple Mount (Mishnah, Middot 5.4). Once again Jesus testified that He was Messiah, the Son of God. Judas, who saw that Jesus had been condemned, felt remorse, and threw the 30 pieces of silver into the temple.

10. Praetorium with Pilate, John 18-28-38

Instead of carrying out the sentence themselves, the religious leaders brought Jesus before Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea. There are two main possible locations for where Pilate was staying: 1) the Antonia fortress on the north side of the temple mount. Crusader tradition starts the “Via Dolorosa” here; or 2) the Citadel, Herod the Great’s palace/fortress that dominated the Western Hill. After conducting an interview with Jesus about kingship and truth, Pilate declared Jesus innocent. When Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean, he sought to get rid of the case by sending Jesus to Herod Antipas, Ethnarch of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival.

11. Herod Antipas House, Luke 23:6-12

We don’t know where Herod Antipas was staying – perhaps in a private house or hotel in the wealthy quarters on the Western Hill. It is unlikely that Antipas had access to the Citadel fortress

built by his father, Herod the Great. Antipas asked Jesus many questions, and wanted to see Jesus perform some sign. Jesus remained silent. Antipas mockingly sent Jesus clothed in a purple robe, back to Pilate.

12. Praetorium with Pilate, John 18:39-19:16

Pilate failed to free Jesus in a prisoner-release gesture. Beating Jesus also failed to secure Jesus' release. The crowd at the Praetorium that morning was not the same crowd that welcomed Jesus into the city earlier that week. This crowd at Pilate's doorstep was probably made up of two parts: 1) a crowd organized by the high priests, and 2) activists who came early in the morning to request the release of a political prisoner like Barabbas. The high priests had arrested Jesus at night, in secret, to avoid conflict with Jesus' many supporters. Jerusalem's inhabitants were for the most part unaware that Jesus was being held a prisoner. By around 6:00 in the morning, before Jerusalem was astir, Pilate had turned Jesus over to be crucified.

13. Golgotha, John 19:17-42

After additional mockery and beating from Roman soldiers, Jesus was led to Golgotha. Golgotha is Aramaic, and "Calvary" is Latin, for "skull". The name was probably derived from the shape of the place, a rocky crag (quarry remnant?) that looked like a skull. Both the way leading there and its location are uncertain. The modern "Via Dolorosa" dates only to Crusader times. Scripture indicates that the place was near but outside the city (John 19:20; Heb. 13:12). John 19:41 mentions that there was a garden and grave near the place. Two Jerusalem localities are suggested as the original site. Gordon's Calvary (Garden Tomb) tradition dates only to the 1880s, and the tomb is part of a complex of Old Testament period tombs, so it couldn't be a newly hewn tomb at the time of Jesus. Also, the channel in front of the Garden Tomb was not for a rolling stone, but was a water channel. The other candidate is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Tradition from around 325 AD places Jesus' tomb here. There are archaeological evidences, including Jewish tombs, which show this area was outside the walled city in the time of Jesus.

Jesus was on the cross by 9:00 am, and died at 3:00 pm after quoting Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:46). What appeared to be defeat in death was three days later shown to be God's power over death. Salvation was wrought in Zion –"for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life forever" (Psalm 133:3).

10-1 Acts of the Apostles in Israel

Date: Mid 1st century AD (ca. AD 35-60)

Jesus told the disciples that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). Maps 10-1 to 10-5 show some of the fulfillment of that promise.

1. PHILIP, PETER, JOHN - the *green arrow* from Jerusalem to Samaria.

READ: Acts 8:4-25

The schism between Samaritan and Jew dated back to at least the 10th century BC when Jeroboam I set up the Northern Kingdom independent of Judah. The Assyrian conquest in the 8th century BC complicated matters with the introduction of non-Jewish people into the region. The Samaritans had built their own temple by 330 BC, only to have it destroyed by the Hasmoneans some 200 years later.

The Gospel did what the force of arms and all other diplomatic efforts had not been able to do; namely, **break down the wall of separation between Samaritan and Jew**. The people of **Samaria** responded to Philip's preaching of the Messiah. The two-stage process in which the Gospel came to Samaria must be seen in its unique historical context. Peter and John's involvement gave apostolic confirmation that the Samaritans were accepted on equal footing into the faith.

2. PHILIP - the *brown arrow* from Jerusalem toward Gaza, to Azotus and north.

Philip continued his evangelistic witness (Acts 8:26-40). He interpreted a passage from the Book of Isaiah for an Ethiopian official who was returning to Africa. The Ethiopian believed in Jesus and was baptized. From there Philip moved along preaching the Gospel in towns along the coast from Azotus to Caesarea. Philip is found in Caesarea again in Acts 21:8-9.

3. SAUL'S CONVERSION, Acts 9:1-31

On a road leading through Gaulanitis to Damascus (*red arrow*), Saul was transformed from Jesus' persecutor to his greatest proponent.

4. PETER - the *blue arrow* from Jerusalem to Lydda, to Joppa, to Caesarea.

READ: Acts 9:32-43

About the same time that Saul/Paul came to believe in Jesus (c. AD 36) Peter came preaching the Gospel in the **Coastal Plain** region. Aeneas, a man lame for eight years, was healed in **Lydda** (Old Testament and modern Lod, near Israel's Ben Gurion International airport). The miracle caused residents of **Lydda** and the **Sharon Plain** to turn to the Lord. From Lydda, Peter was called to **Joppa** to see if there was anything he could do for a recently deceased woman named Tabitha. Incredibly Peter raised her from the dead, the result being that "many believed in the Lord." Peter stayed many days in Joppa in the house of Simon the tanner.

READ: Acts 10

Unknown to Peter, the Lord was about to use him in the next foundational phase of the spread of the Gospel. The Gospel would be preached and believed among Gentiles. A divine vision and leading was necessary to prepare Peter. Under divine guidance Peter traveled from **Joppa**

to **Caesarea**. The journey of about 35 miles over the Sharon Plain took two days (Acts 10:23-24). As Peter was preaching the good news about Jesus at Caesarea, in a thoroughly recognizable way the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentile household of Cornelius. To Peter and other Jewish believers there was no denying that "God has granted **to the Gentiles** also the repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18).

The mustard seed was growing and birds of the air were beginning to make their nest in it. From one man with 12 disciples in the frontier province of Galilee, to Judea, to Samaria, to the Coastal Plain – and now to a Gentile, a first fruit of the multitude harvest in the uttermost parts of the earth. The bringing of multitudes of Gentiles to the God of Scripture is facts-on-the-ground evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.

5. DEATH OF JAMES, BROTHER OF JOHN

Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, Rome's "king" in Israel in AD 41-44, persecuted the Gospel. In AD 44, Agrippa I killed the apostle, James the brother of John, and intended to kill the Apostle Peter. The New Testament and Josephus give parallel accounts of Agrippa I's gruesome death (Acts 12; *Antiquities* XIX.8.2). "But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied" (Acts 12:24). Rome and its representatives could not stop the Gospel.

The death of James and imprisonment of Peter is a historical event that may have been involved in the formation of a written record of the life of Jesus. Liberal scholarship of the last couple hundred years has theorized that historical circumstances of the mid 60s AD (Neronic persecutions) or later are responsible for the formation of the written records known as the Gospels. However, this theory overlooks an abundance of historical circumstances of the decades immediately following the life of Jesus that would have contributed to the formation of a written historical record, such as:

1. Since study of God's word was essential to Jews of the 1st century – men like Peter, Matthew, Mark and the other disciples were literate. The unique events and teachings of Jesus would motivate a written notation or record within days of their occurrence.
2. In the late 30s and early 40s AD, there was a scattering of the disciples following the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1; 11:19-26). Disciples went, for example, to Antioch of Syria. Diaspora Jews and even many Gentiles were coming to the faith. Such evangelistic activity could generate, or be accompanied by, a written narrative of the life of Jesus.
3. The event under discussion, in AD 44, is when James the brother of John was murdered, and Peter was put in prison, on the verge of being murdered (Acts 12). Disciples of Jesus would have realized that these eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, leading apostles, could die or be killed. This realization would have been a huge motivator to interview and record what apostles like Peter had seen and heard while he was with Jesus.
4. In AD 45, a year after James' martyrdom, Paul started on his first missionary journey (Acts 13). Written literature often accompanies evangelistic endeavor. This may be the reason why Paul and Barnabas took Mark with them. There is evidence that Paul had access to a written Gospel account during his first journey (Acts 13:25 quotes Luke 3:16, cf. Mark 1:7; 1 Cor. 11:24 quotes Luke 22:19; 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes from Luke 10:7; 1 Tim 6:3, etc.).
5. The Gospels historical and geographical detail is evidence of authorship by someone who had first-hand, first-century experience with the land of Israel.
6. Luke wrote Acts in the early 60s AD, before Nero's persecutions in AD 64-65. The Gospel of Luke would have been written before that.

6. **PAUL A PRISONER** - the *orange arrow* which points from **Jerusalem** to **Antipatris**, to **Caesarea** and into the Mediterranean Sea to Rome.

READ: Acts 23:23-35

Peter's preaching to Cornelius in Caesarea (the *blue arrow*) is separated from Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (the *orange arrow*) by over twenty years (from ca. AD 36 to AD 58). In the meantime the Gospel had spread west from Judea into the Roman Empire mainly through the missionary efforts of Paul (Maps 10-2, 3, 4). After his third major missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem for the festival of Shavuot/Pentecost (Acts 20:16). His enemies falsely accused him of bringing a Gentile into the temple. A riot started and Paul was taken into custody by the Roman tribune (Acts 21-22). When news of a plot to take Paul's life came to the ears of the Roman tribune, Paul was sent under heavy armed guard via **Antipatris** to **Caesarea**.

READ: Acts 24:22-24 - **The Procurator Felix**

While imprisoned in Caesarea, Paul preached the gospel to the Roman Procurator Felix (governed c. AD 52-60) and his wife Drusilla. Drusilla, known for her beauty, was a great-granddaughter of Herod the Great and the Hasmonean Mariamne. Drusilla was Herod Agrippa II's sister. She had divorced her first husband in order to marry Felix (*Antiquities* XX.7.2). No wonder Felix was alarmed when Paul spoke to him about justice, self-control and future judgment (Acts 24:25). Felix kept Paul confined in Caesarea for two years. Some believe the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians) were written during this time, from Caesarea. However, it is more likely that these epistles were written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30).

It is of interest to note that at this time the Roman procurators that we meet in Acts 24-26 had their hands full with political-religious tensions between Jews and Gentiles. This is ca. AD 60, only six years before the Jewish Revolt against Rome broke out in earnest. Concerning Felix, Josephus relates:

And now it was that a great sedition arose between the Jews that inhabited Caesarea, and the Syrians who dwelt there also, concerning their equal right to the privileges belonging to citizens... But when Felix saw that this quarrel was become a kind of war, he came upon them on the sudden, and desired the Jews to desist; and when they refused so to do, he armed his soldiers, and sent them out upon them, and slew many of them, and took more of them alive, and permitted his soldiers to plunder some of the houses of the citizens, which were full of riches (*Antiquities* XX.8.7).

Felix was recalled to Rome for an appraisal of his handling of affairs. He left Paul in prison in an effort to court the favor of the Jewish leadership.

The religious and political tensions continued into Festus' procuratorial rule (c. AD 60-62):

Upon Festus's coming into Judea, it happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them. And then it was that the sicarii, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous (*Antiquities* XX.8.10).

READ: Acts 25-26 - **The Procurator Festus and Herod Agrippa II**

Paul witnessed to the newly-arrived Festus. Festus could not understand the hullabaloo "about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts 25:19). While Paul appealed to Caesar rather than face a mock trial in Jerusalem, Festus called for advice from

Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. Making a ceremony out of the affair, Agrippa and Bernice, great-grandchildren of Herod the Great and Mariamne, appeared with much pomp. The Apostle Paul testified in chains about the Messiah Jesus.

Festus died in office in AD 62. Josephus relates that after Festus' death a high priest, Ananus, put to death James "**the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ**" (*Antiquities* XX.9.1). This event, besides being an extra-biblical reference to Jesus, illustrates the animosity of a segment of religious leaders toward Jewish believers in Jesus. Paul knew there could be no fair trial for him in Jerusalem (Acts 25:9-11).

From **Caesarea** Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome where he spent two more years preaching under house arrest – in the capital of the Roman empire (Acts 28:30-31). What God had said about Paul had come to pass: "...for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

7. DEATH OF JAMES, BROTHER OF JESUS

In AD 62, when the procurator Festus died, and before a new procurator arrived, the Sadducean high priest Ananus convened the Sanhedrin and put to death James the brother of Jesus (*Antiquities* XX.9.1). As mentioned above, the event occasioned an extra-biblical reference to Jesus. Josephus recorded that Ananus put to death James "**the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ**" The deed was not a popular one, and Ananus was removed from the high priesthood because of it.

REVIEW, Map 10-1:

1. Arrows #1 (green) and #4 (blue) represent foundational periods in the spread of the Gospel to Samaritans and Gentiles. Philip, John, and especially Peter were involved in the spread of the Gospel during these foundational periods.
2. Review geographical locations connected with events on this map. What happened at Samaria, on the road to Gaza, in Lydda, at Joppa and in Caesarea?
3. Following his missionary journeys the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years (ca. AD 58-60). The Apostle Paul testified in Caesarea before Rome's representatives - Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II.
4. The Jewish historian Josephus provides historical background concerning a number of persons and events mentioned in the Book of Acts, including Agrippa I, the Roman representatives before whom Paul testified in Caesarea, and James the brother of Jesus.

NOTE: Commentary for the remainder of the maps (10-2 through 10-7) can be read directly from the *Satellite Bible Atlas*. There is no expanded commentary for these maps.