

“SEE THE GOOD LAND”

Atlantic Ocean

ITALY
GREECE
Mediterranean Sea (Great Sea)
SPAIN (TARSHISH)

Black Sea
Caspian Sea
ASIA MINOR
ASSYRIA
MEDIA
BABYLONIA
PERSIA
ARABIA
PERSIAN GULF
EGYPT
ETHIOPIA
SHEBA
Nile River
Euphrates River
Tigris River
Red Sea
Arabian Sea

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THE LANDS OF THE BIBLE

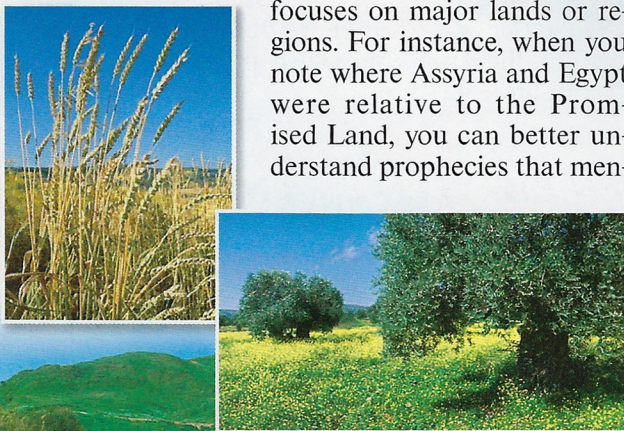
AS ISRAEL prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses expressed to God his deep desire: “Let me pass over, please, and see the good land that is across the Jordan, this good mountainous region.”—De 3:25.

For Moses, that was not to be, but he did ascend a mountain facing Jericho and see the land—“Gilead as far as Dan and the land of Judah as far as the western sea and the Negeb and the Jordan valley.” (De 3:27; 34:1-4) Have you heard those names? Do you know their locations?

Few of Jehovah’s people today can visit the many places they read about in the Bible. They are not able to do what God said he would have Abraham do, travel the length and breadth of the Promised Land. (Ge 13:14-17) Still, true Christians are keen to know about Bible locations and to see how they relate, one to the other.

“See the Good Land” is a tool that you can use to expand your understanding of the Scriptures. It contains photographs of actual locations, such as Gilead, shown on the cover. Even more informative are the maps, which can greatly deepen your knowledge of Bible sites.

The map on pages 2 and 3 focuses on major lands or regions. For instance, when you note where Assyria and Egypt were relative to the Promised Land, you can better understand prophecies that men-



tion those lands. (Isa 7:18; 27:13; Ho 11:11; Mic 7:12) The small strip called the Promised Land was an ancient crossroads, and other nations sought to dominate its rich grain fields, vineyards, and olive groves.—De 8:8; Jg 15:5.

Sometimes you will want to compare maps. For instance, Jonah was assigned to the capital of Assyria, but he sailed off for Tarshish. (Jon 1:1-3) Do you find those areas on that first map? But Tarshish is not to be mistaken for Tarsus, where the apostle Paul was born. You will find Tarsus and other notable cities on the map here.

Think of the length and route of Abraham’s trip as you pick out Ur, Haran, and Jerusalem. After Jehovah called him from Ur, he resided in Haran and then moved to the Promised Land. (Ge 11:28–12:1; Ac 7:2-5) Abraham’s trip will come more alive as you study “The World of the Patriarchs,” on pages 6-7.

The first map and the one here are not time specific. After those two, the maps are basically in historical order. Cities or details on a map relate to events of a certain period. While the Index (pages 34-5) does not include every site named on the maps, it can usually help you to find which maps relate to the point you are currently researching.

The map in the center spread (pages 18-19) has the largest collection of towns and cities in the Promised Land. The Map Legend will help you to find the Levite cities and the six cities of refuge as well as to know whether a place was



mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Greek Scriptures, or both.

The locations of some Biblical sites are presently unknown, so most of those names are not on that center map. Also, it was not possible to fit on it every city and town, such as all in the lists of tribal boundaries. (Jos, chaps. 15-19) Yet, that map usually includes nearby cities, thus enabling you to approximate the location. Some geographic features (mountains, rivers, and torrent valleys) are marked, and elevation and terrain are indicated by colors. Such details can help you to visualize aspects of Bible events.

More information about Bible locations is available in the encyclopedia *Insight on the Scrip-*

tures, which is available in many languages.* As you use that and other Bible study aids, keep “See the Good Land” at hand. Consult it as you study all the Scriptures, which are so beneficial in your life.—2Ti 3:16, 17.

* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

BIBLE BOOKS WERE WRITTEN IN

Babylon	Macedonia
Caesarea	Moab
Corinth	Patmos
Egypt	Promised Land
Ephesus	Rome
Jerusalem	Shushan



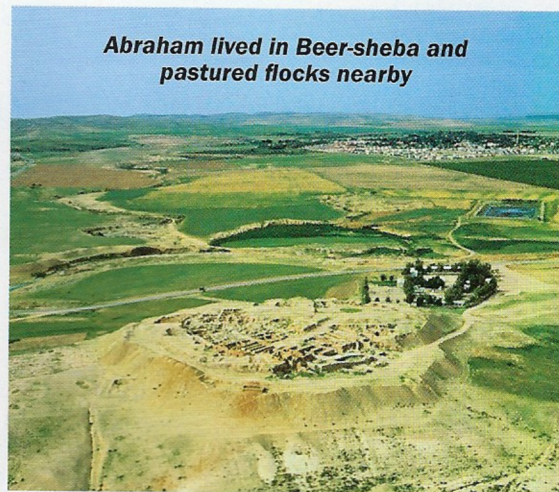
THE WORLD OF THE PATRIARCHS

STEPHEN began a famous speech with some geographic facts: “[Jehovah] appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he took up residence in Haran, and he said to him, ‘Go . . . into the land I shall show you.’” (Ac 7:1-4) This laid a basis for key events in the Promised Land involving Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, events linked to God’s purpose to bless mankind.—Ge 12:1-3; Jos 24:3.

God called Abraham (or, Abram) from Ur of the Chaldeans, a prosperous city then located on the east bank of the Euphrates River. What route would Abraham take? From Chaldea, a region also called Sumer or Shinar, it might seem easy to go due west. Why go way up to Haran?

Ur lay near the eastern end of the Fertile Crescent, a semicircle extending from Palestine to the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This area may formerly have had a more moderate climate. Below the curve of the crescent lay the Syro-Arabian Desert, marked by limestone hills and sandy plains. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says that it was “a nearly impenetrable barrier” between the Mediterranean Coast and Mesopotamia. Some caravans might cross from the Euphrates to Tadmor and then to Damascus, but Abraham did not lead his family and herds through such a wilderness.

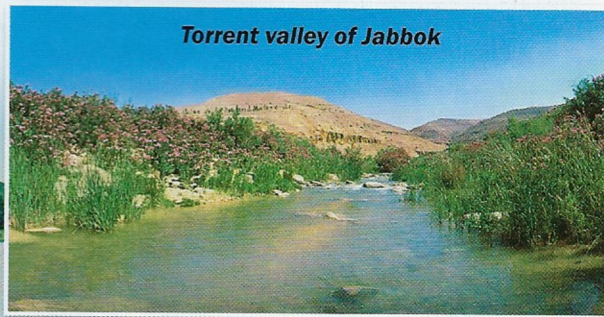
Rather, Abraham went up the Euphrates River valley to Haran. From there he could follow a trade route to a ford at Carchemish and then head south by Damascus and on to what came to be called the Sea



Abraham lived in Beer-sheba and pastured flocks nearby

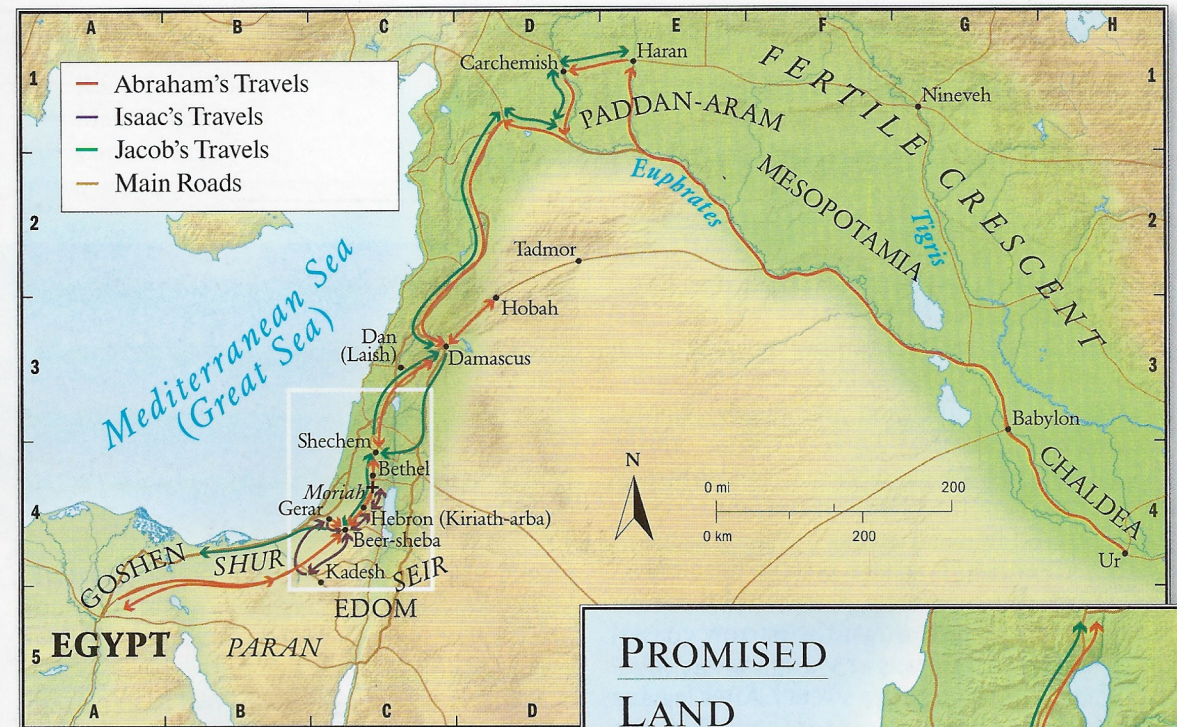
of Galilee. The Via Maris, or “The Way of the Sea,” ran by Megiddo and on to Egypt. However, Abraham traveled through the mountains of Samaria, finally tenting at Shechem. In time, he continued down that highland route. Follow him as you read Genesis 12:8–13:4. Note other places that were part of his varied experience: Dan, Damascus, Hobah, Mamre, Sodom, Gerar, Beer-sheba, and Moriah (Jerusalem).—Ge 14:14-16; 18:1-16; 20:1-18; 21:25-34; 22:1-19.

Understanding some of the geography illuminates events in the lives of Isaac and Jacob. For instance, while Abraham was in Beer-sheba, where did he send his servant to find a wife for



Torrent valley of Jabbok

Euphrates River near Babylon



Isaac? Way up to Mesopotamia (meaning, “Land Between Rivers”) to Paddan-aram. Then imagine Rebekah’s strenuous trip by camel to the Negeb, perhaps near Kadesh, to meet Isaac.—Ge 24:10, 62-64.

Later their son Jacob (Israel) made a similar long trip to marry a worshiper of Jehovah. Jacob took a somewhat different route back to his land. After he forded the Jabbok near Penuel, Jacob wrestled with an angel. (Ge 31:21-25; 32:2, 22-30) Esau met him in that area, and then each went to reside in a different region.—Ge 33:1, 15-20.

After Jacob’s daughter Dinah was raped at Shechem, Jacob moved to Bethel. Can you envision, though, how far Jacob’s sons went to pasture his flock and where Joseph eventually found them? This map (and pages 18-19) may help you to see the distance between Bethel and Dothan. (Ge 35:1-8; 37:12-17) Joseph’s brothers sold him to traders headed to Egypt. What route do you think they were taking in an event that set the stage for the Israelites’ move to Egypt and for the Exodus? —Ge 37:25-28.





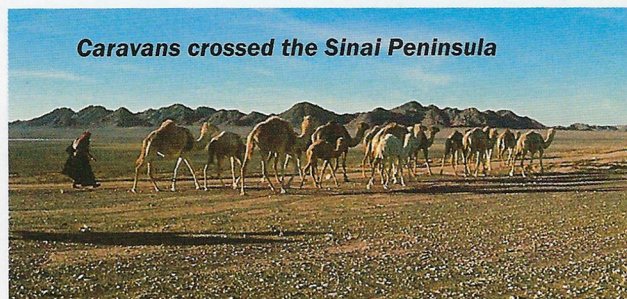
FROM EGYPT TO THE PROMISED LAND

PEOPLE everywhere know of the Exodus from Egypt. But what awaited Moses and God's people after they crossed the Red Sea? Where did they head, and how did they reach the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land?

Their goal was the land of Canaan, yet Moses did not take the shortest route—about 250 miles along the sandy coast—which would have led straight through Philistia, enemy territory. Nor did he head across the vast center of the Sinai Peninsula, where intense heat baked the gravel and limestone plateau. No, Moses led the people south, down the narrow coastal plain. The first camp was at Marah, where Jehovah made bitter water turn sweet.* After leaving Elim, the people murmured for food; God sent quail and then manna. At Rephidim, water was again an issue, attacking Amalekites were vanquished, and Moses' father-in-law urged him to get help from capable men.—Ex, chaps. 15-18.

Moses then led Israel toward the mountains farther south, camping at Mount Sinai. There God's people received the Law, built the tabernacle, and offered sacrifices. In the second year, they went north through a "great and fear-inspiring wilderness," the journey to the area of Kadesh (Kadesh-barnea) apparently taking 11 days. (De 1:1, 2, 19; 8:15) Because of becoming fearful over a negative report from ten spies, the

* The exact location of most encampments is not known.

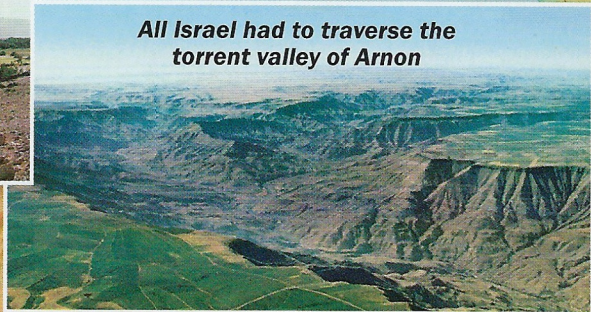
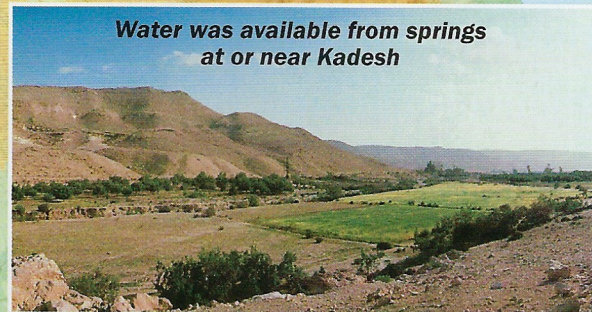
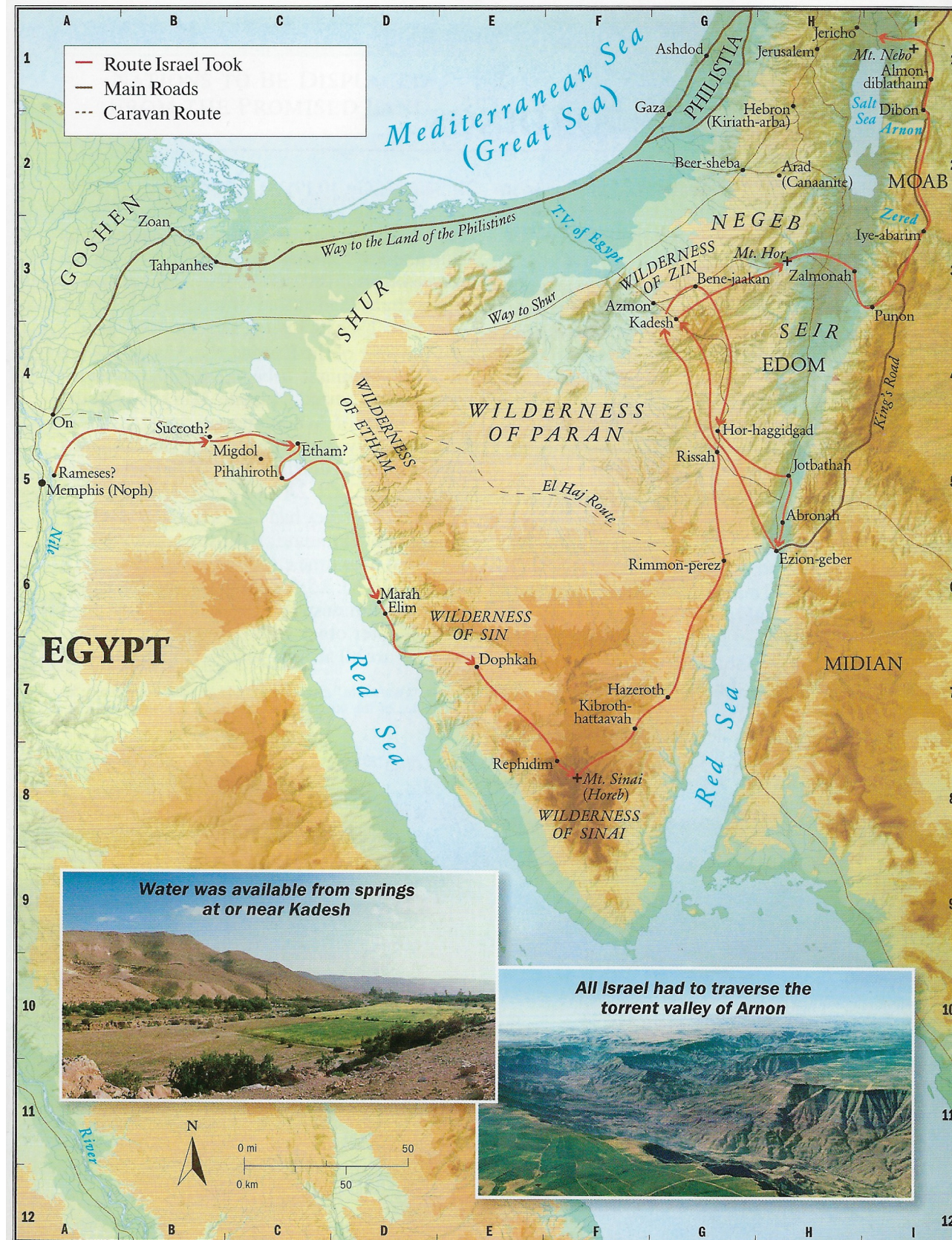


people had to wander for 38 years. (Nu 13:1-14:34) Among their stops were Abroah and Ezion-geber, and then they went back to Kadesh.—Nu 33:33-36.

When it was finally time for Israel to approach the Promised Land, the Israelites did not move due north. Their route took them around Edom's heartland and up "the king's road," the King's Highway. (Nu 21:22; De 2:1-8) It was not easy for a whole nation—with children, animals, and tents—to move over this trail. They had to wind down into and climb back out of formidable gorges—the Zered and the Arnon (nearly 1,700 feet deep).—De 2:13, 14, 24.

Finally, the Israelites reached Mount Nebo. Miriam had died at Kadesh, and Aaron, at Mount Hor. Moses now died in sight of the land he had desired to enter. (De 32:48-52; 34:1-5) It fell to Joshua to lead Israel into the land, ending a journey begun 40 years earlier.—Jos 1:1-4.

Israel camped before Mount Sinai



BIBLE BOOKS FROM THIS PERIOD:	
Genesis	Deuteronomy
Exodus	Job
Leviticus	Psalms (part)
Numbers	



ISRAEL IN ITS SURROUNDINGS

JEHOVAH told Abraham: 'Go from Ur in Mesopotamia to the country that I shall show you.' That country was inhabited and surrounded by other nations.—Ge 12:1-3; 15:17-21.

As God's people moved away from Egypt, they knew that they might face resistance from enemies, such as "the despots of Moab." (Ex 15:14, 15) The Amalekites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Amorites were on Israel's route to the Promised Land. (Nu 21:11-13; De 2:17-33; 23: 3, 4) And the Israelites would encounter other enemy nations in the land that God had promised them.

God said that Israel was to "clear away" seven "populous nations"—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—that merited destruction. They were morally degraded and religiously corrupt. Their gods included Baal (noted for phallic stone pillars), Molech (object of child sacrifice), and the fertility goddess Ashtoreth (Astarte).—De 7: 1-4; 12:31; Ex 23:23; Le 18:21-25; 20:2-5; Jg 2:11-14; Ps 106:37, 38.

Sometimes the whole area that God was giving to Israel was called "Canaan," from north of Sidon to "the torrent valley of Egypt." (Nu 13:2,

21; 34:2-12; Ge 10:19) At other times the Bible names various nations, city-states, or peoples in that land. Some had distinct locales, such as the Philistines on the coast and the Jebusites in the mountains near Jerusalem. (Nu 13:29; Jos 13:3) Others changed locations or territory over time.—Ge 34:1, 2; 49:30; Jos 1:4; 11:3; Jg 1:16, 23-26.

At the time of the Exodus, the Amorites were likely the dominant tribe.* (De 1:19-21; Jos 24: 15) They had seized Moabite land down to the torrent valley of Arnon, though the area across from Jericho was still called "the desert plains of Moab." Amorite kings also ruled Bashan and Gilead.—Nu 21:21-23, 33-35; 22:1; 33:46-51.

Even though they had God's backing, the Israelites did not eliminate all those condemned nations, who over time ensnared Israel. (Nu 33:55; Jos 23:13; Jg 2:3; 3:5, 6; 2Ki 21:11) Yes, the Israelites fell victim despite the warning: "You must not walk after other gods, any gods of the peoples who are all around you."—De 6:14; 13:7.

* Like "Canaanite," "Amorite" could be used collectively for the peoples of the land or could be listed separately.—Ge 15: 16; 48:22.

Right: Amorite King Og ruled Bashan, noted for its bulls and sheep
Below: Moab, looking across the Salt Sea to the wilderness of Judah





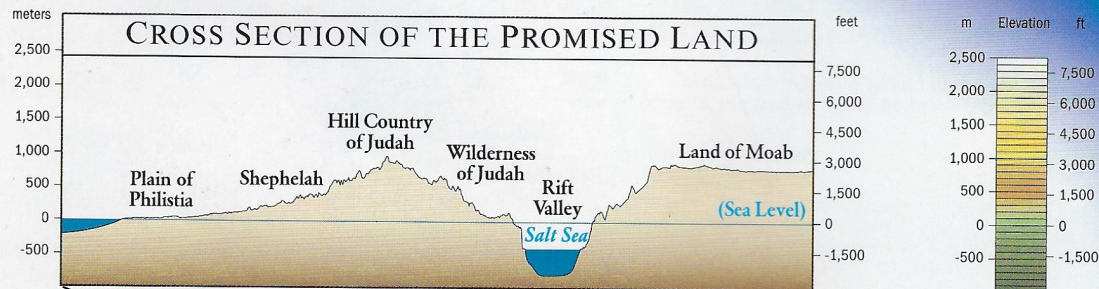
"A LAND GOOD AND SPACIOUS"

AT THE burning bush, God told Moses that He would "deliver [His people] out of the hand of the Egyptians and . . . bring them . . . to a land good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey."—Ex 3:8.

These two digital models may help you to grasp the variety of natural regions and terrains of the Promised Land. (Elevations are visually enhanced to emphasize the scale.) Consult the colored graph to see the altitudes relative to sea level.

The chart offers one way of listing natural regions of the land. You can find a description with Bible references of the regions in "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial" (Study 1, pages 270-8) and in *Insight on the Scriptures* (Volume 2, pages 568-71).*

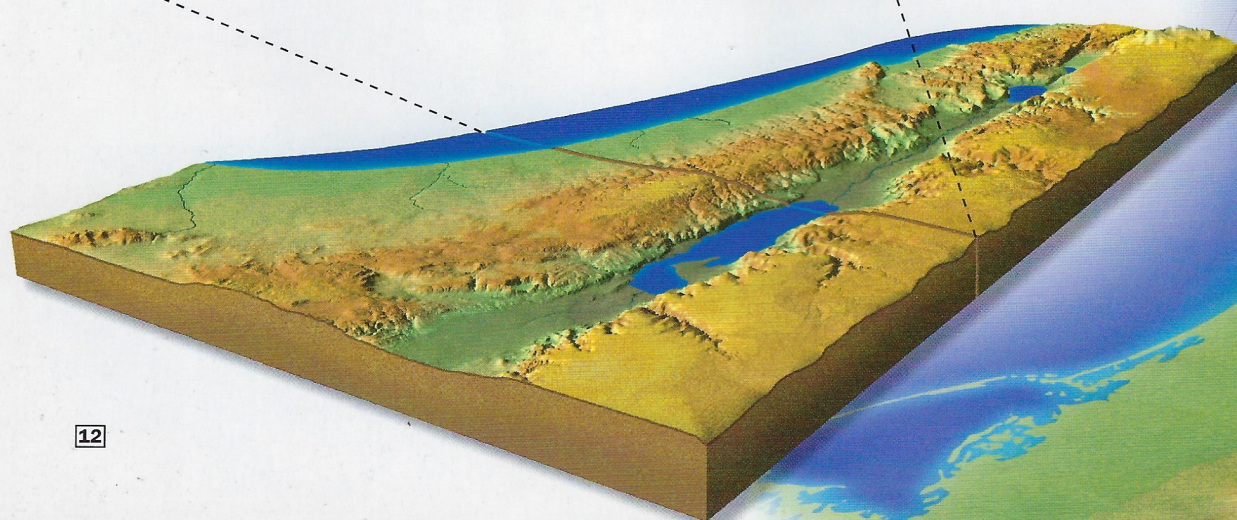
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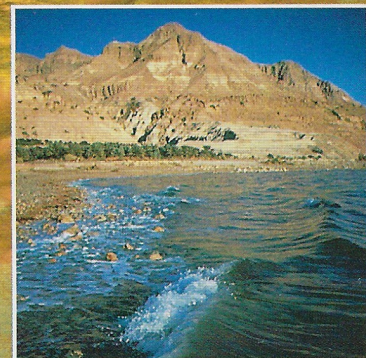
Mt. Hermon (2,814 m; 9,232 ft)

CHART OF NATURAL REGIONS

- A. Coast of Great Sea**
- B. Plains West of Jordan**
 - 1. Plain of Asher
 - 2. Coastal Strip of Dor
 - 3. Pasture Grounds of Sharon
 - 4. Plain of Philistia
 - 5. Central East-West Valley
 - a. Plain of Megiddo
 - b. Low Plain of Jezreel
- C. Mountains West of Jordan**
 - 1. Hills of Galilee
 - 2. Hills of Carmel
 - 3. Hills of Samaria
 - 4. Shephelah (low hills)
 - 5. Hill Country of Judah
- D. Arabah (Rift Valley)**
 - 1. Hula Basin
 - 2. Area of Sea of Galilee
 - 3. Jordan Valley
 - 4. Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
 - 5. Arabah (south of Salt Sea)
- E. Mountains/Tablelands East of Jordan**
 - 1. Bashan
 - 2. Gilead
 - 3. Ammon and Moab
 - 4. Mountain Plateau of Edom
- F. Mountains of Lebanon**
 - 6. Wilderness of Judah
 - 7. Negeb
 - 8. Wilderness of Paran



Shore of Salt Sea; lowest spot on earth (about 400 m, 1,300 ft, below sea level)





'WHEN JEHOVAH RAISED UP JUDGES'

YOU can readily find Mount Tabor (F4) on the map—southwest of the Sea of Galilee, in the Valley of Jezreel. Try to visualize an army of 10,000 assembled on top of the mountain. Jehovah used Judge Barak and the prophetess Deborah to rally Israel against Canaanite King Jabin, who had oppressed the people for 20 years. Under army chief Sisera, Jabin's 900 chariots equipped with menacing iron scythes came from Harosheth to the dry bed of the Kishon, between Megiddo and Mount Tabor.

Judge Barak led the men of Israel down into the valley to engage Sisera's forces. Jehovah ensured victory by sending a flash flood that bogged down Sisera's chariots, which panicked the Canaanites. (Jg 4:1-5:31) That was just one of the many victories that God granted Israel during the period of the Judges.

After the conquest of Canaan, the land was apportioned to the tribes of Israel. Note where various non-Levite tribes settled. The small tribe of Simeon received cities in Judah's territory. Following Joshua's death, the nation fell into spiritual and moral decline. Israel "got to be in very sore straits," oppressed by enemies. Responding compassionately, 'Jehovah raised

up judges'—12 men of faith and courage—who delivered Israel in the course of three centuries.—Jg 2:15, 16, 19.

Judge Gideon used only 300 lightly armed but mobile soldiers to rout 135,000 Midianite warriors. The battlefield was between Mount Gilboa and Moreh. After an initial victory, Gideon chased the enemy to the east, into the desert.—Jg 6:1-8:32.

Jephthah, a Gileadite of the tribe of Manasseh, freed Israelite towns east of the Jordan from the Ammonite oppressors. To achieve his victory, Jephthah likely traveled on the King's Road, which linked Ramoth-gilead and the area of Aroer.—Jg 11:1-12:7.

Samson's exploits against the Philistines centered on the coastal area around Gaza and Ashkelon. Gaza lies in a well-watered region famous for agriculture. Samson used 300 foxes to set fire to the Philistines' grainfields, vineyards, and olive groves.—Jg 15:4, 5.

As evident from the Biblical account or as suggested by their tribe, the judges were active across the Promised Land. Wherever the scene of action, Jehovah took good care of his repentant people in times of crisis.

Mount Tabor, in Issachar's territory, rises over the Valley of Jezreel



The flooding Kishon bogged down Sisera's chariots





ISRAEL IN THE DAYS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON

GOD promised to give Abram's seed the land "from the river of Egypt to . . . the river Euphrates." (Ge 15:18; Ex 23:31; De 1:7, 8; 11:24) After Joshua entered Canaan, it was some four centuries before the Promised Land reached those limits.

King David overthrew the Aramaean kingdom of Zobah, which reached the Euphrates in northern Syria.* To the south, David's success against the Philistines brought him to Egypt's border.—2Sa 8:3; 1Ch 18:1-3; 20:4-8; 2Ch 9:26.

Solomon then ruled "from the River [Euphrates] to the land of the Philistines and to the boundary of Egypt," foreshadowing the Messiah's peaceful rule. (1Ki 4:21-25; 8:65; 1Ch 13:5; Ps 72:8; Zec 9:10) Still, the area that Israel occupied was normally said to extend "from Dan to Beer-sheba."—2Sa 3:10; 2Ch 30:5.

Disobeying God, King Solomon accumulated horses and chariots. (De 17:16; 2Ch 9:25) He could move these over a network of roads and highways. (Jos 2:22; 1Ki 11:29; Isa 7:3; Mt 8:28) We have a detailed route of only a few of these, such as "the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem and toward the south of Lebonah."—Jg 5:6; 21:19.

* Reubenite territory reached into the Syrian Desert, the eastern edge of which was the Euphrates.—1Ch 5:9, 10.

Right: Valley of Elah, looking eastward to the hills of Judah

Below: A network of roads permitted travel in the Promised Land

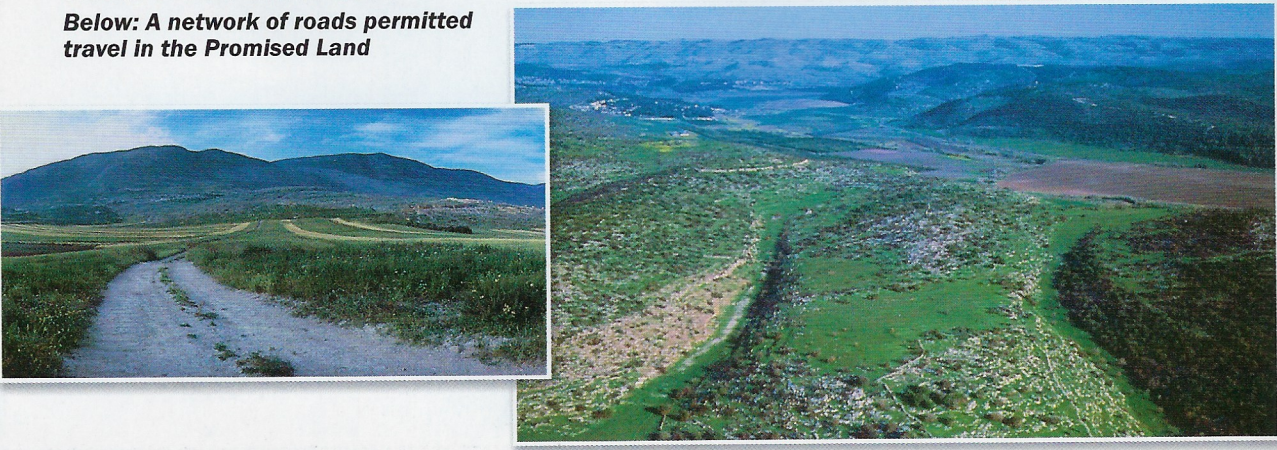
BIBLE BOOKS FROM THIS PERIOD:

1 and 2 Samuel	Song of Solomon
Psalms (part)	Ecclesiastes
Proverbs (part)	

The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel notes: "The most obvious difficulty in investigating ancient Israel's road network is the fact that no clearly identifiable physical traces of the country's roads from the Old Testament period have survived, because roads were not paved during [that period]." Yet, topography and the excavated remains of cities indicate the course of many of the roads.

Roads often influenced troop movements. (1Sa 13:17, 18; 2Ki 3:5-8) To attack Israel, the Philistines marched from Ekron and Gath to the area "between Socoh and Azekah." Saul's army met them there "in the low plain of Elah." After David slew Goliath, the Philistines fled back to Gath and Ekron, and David went up to Jerusalem.—1Sa 17:1-54.

Lachish (D10), Azekah (D9), and Bethshemesh (D9) sat astride natural routes through the Shephelah and toward the Judean hills. Thus these cities were keys to blocking enemies on the Via Maris from coming into Israel's heartland.—1Sa 6:9, 12; 2Ki 18:13-17.



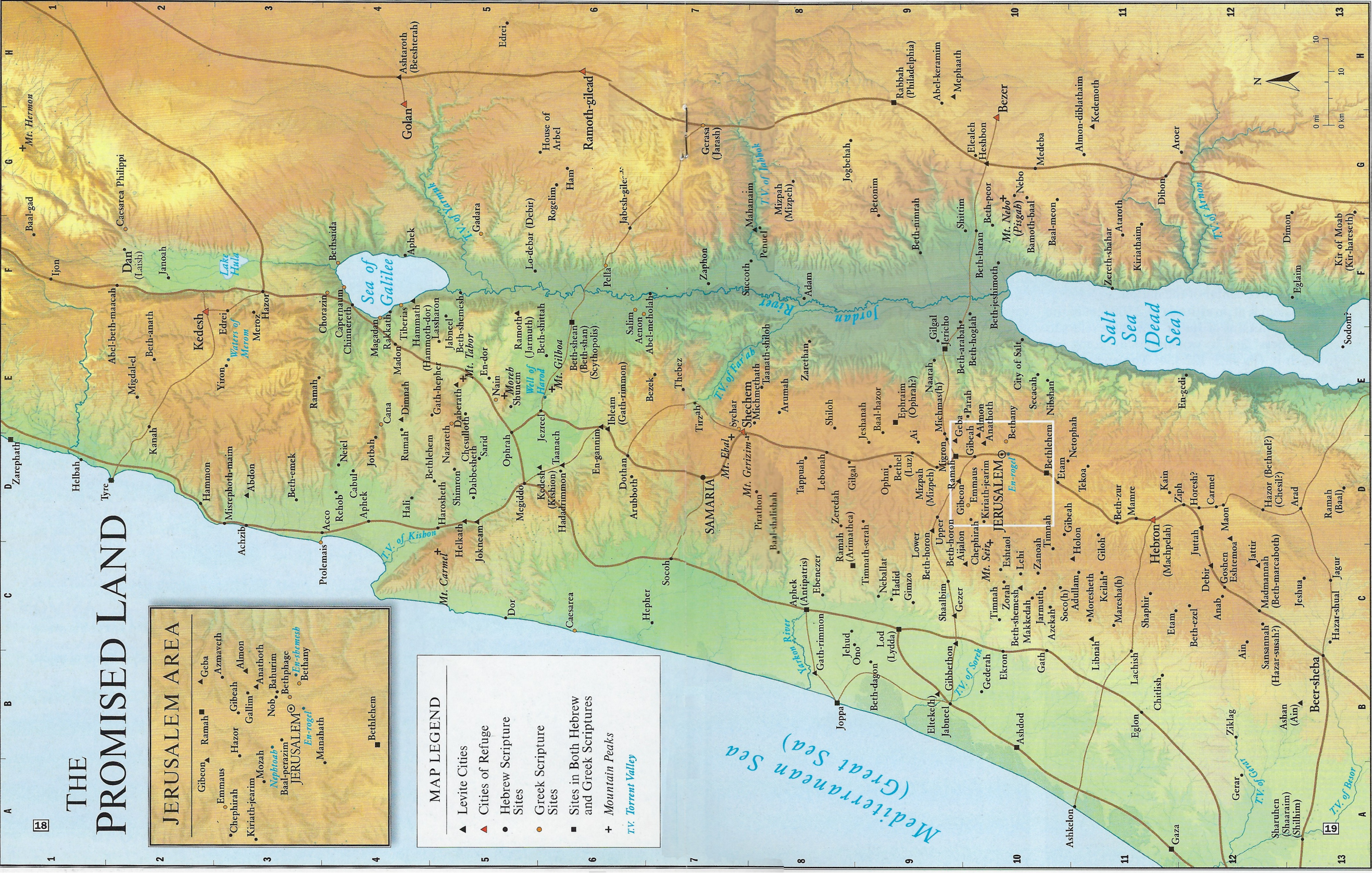
THE PROMISED LAND

JERUSALEM AREA

- Gibeon ▲ Ramah ■ ▲ Geba
- Emmaus ● Azmaveth
- Chephurah ● Hazor ● Gibeah
- Kiriath-jearim ● Mozah ● Gallim ▲ Anathoth
- Nophath ● Nob ● Bahurim
- Baal-perazim ● Bethphage
- JERUSALEM ● ● *En-rogel*
- Manahath ● Bethany
- Bethlehem ■

MAP LEGEND

- ▲ Levite Cities
- ▲ Cities of Refuge
- Hebrew Scripture Sites
- Greek Scripture Sites
- Sites in Both Hebrew and Greek Scriptures
- + Mountain Peaks
- T.V. Torrent Valley*





JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

IT WAS called “the perfection of prettiness” and “the town of the grand King.” (Ps 48:2; 50:2; La 2:15) Jerusalem was the capital of God’s nation. (Ps 76:2) After David seized the city from the Jebusites and made it his capital, it was called “the City of David,” or just “Zion.” —2Sa 5:7.

While not enjoying a very strategic location, Jerusalem gained fame because God placed his name there. (De 26:2) It was the religious and administrative center of the nation.

Jerusalem is at an altitude of 2,500 feet in the central mountains of Judea. The Bible refers to its “loftiness” and to worshipers as ‘going up’ to reach it. (Ps 48:2; 122:3, 4) The ancient city was surrounded by valleys: the Valley of Hinnom on the west and south and the torrent valley of Kidron on the east. (2Ki 23:10; Jer 31:40) The spring of Gihon* in the Kidron Valley

* King Hezekiah stopped up this spring and built a tunnel to a pool on the west side.—2Ch 32:4, 30.

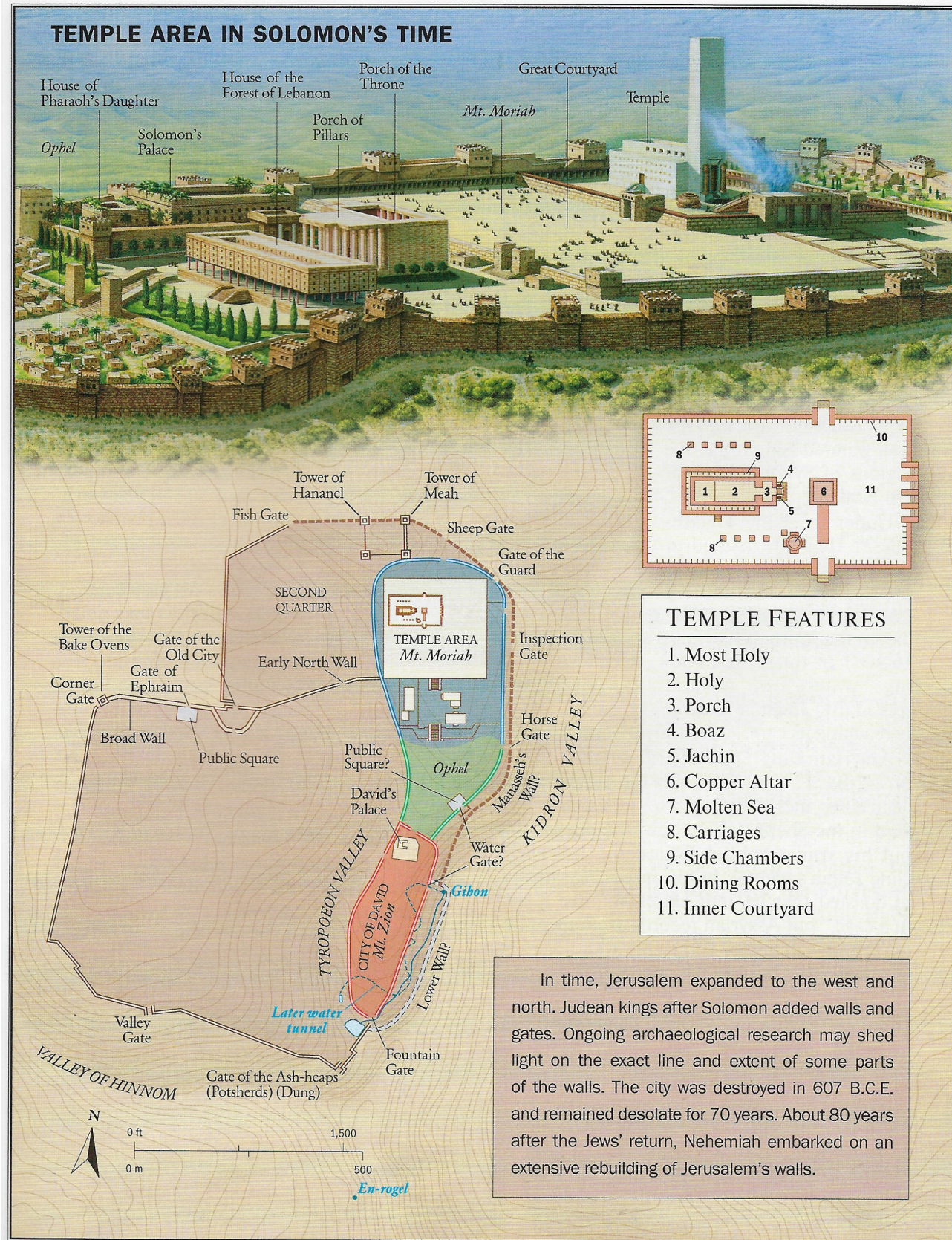
Foreground area is where “the City of David” was located. The temple was in the flat area (background)

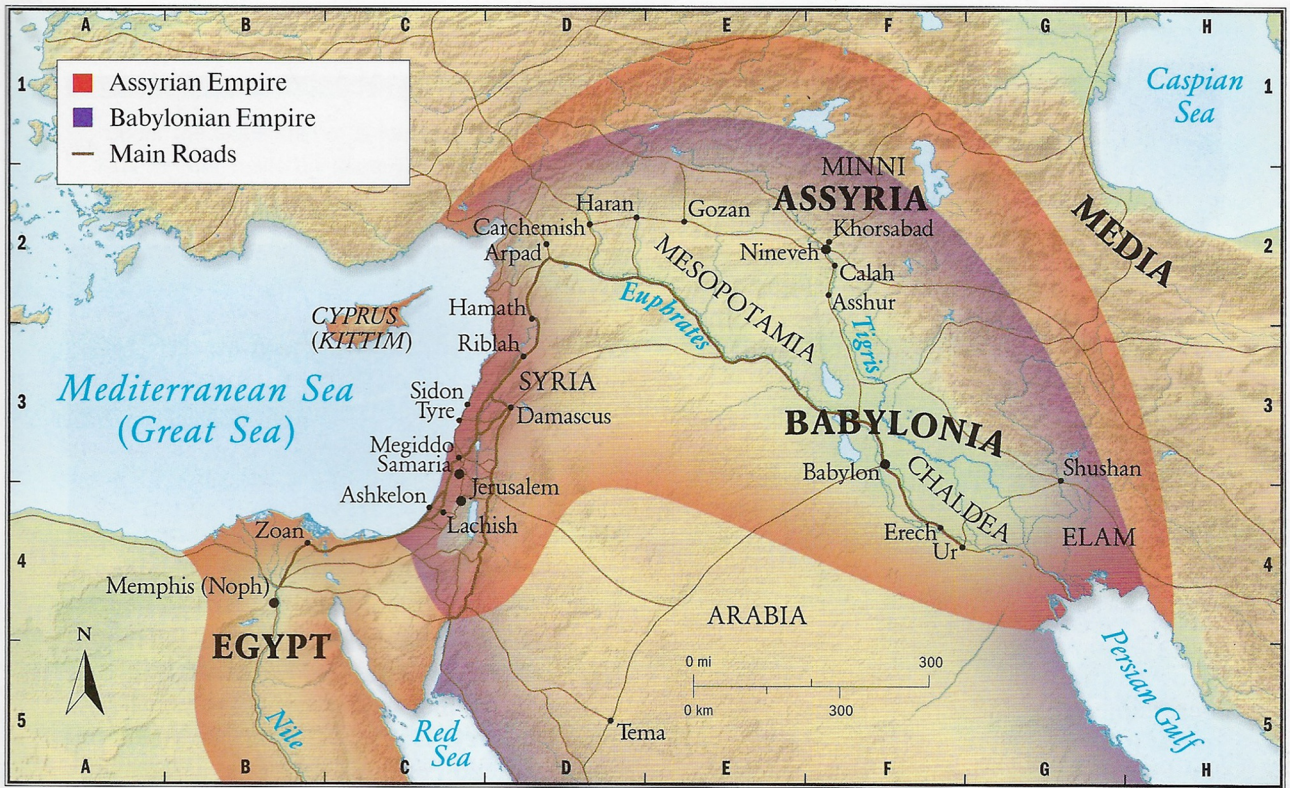
and En-rogel to the south supplied fresh water, especially vital during enemy attacks.—2Sa 17:17.

On the diagram on page 21, the City of David is in red. During the reigns of David and Solomon, the city extended northward to include Ophel (green) and Mount Moriah (blue). (2Sa 5:7-9; 24:16-25) Solomon built a magnificent temple to Jehovah on that higher spur. Imagine throngs of worshipers streaming up to “the mountain of Jehovah” for the annual festivals! (Zec 8:3) The road network represented on page 17 facilitated such travel.

Solomon’s temple, decorated with gold and precious stones, was one of the costliest buildings ever constructed. Significantly, Jehovah provided its architectural plan. As you see from the painting, the temple was flanked by large courtyards and administrative buildings. Its details are worthy of your study.—1Ki 6:1-7:51; 1Ch 28:11-19; Heb 9:23, 24.

Computer rendering of the ancient “City of David” and the temple of Solomon





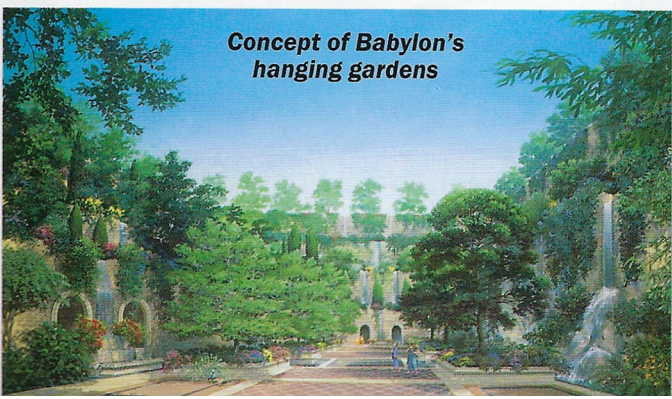
The Babylonians developed trade routes across the rocky desert of northern Arabia. At one point, King Nabonidus resided at Tema, leaving Belshazzar to rule in Babylon.

Babylon invaded Canaan three times. After Nebuchadnezzar routed the Egyptians at Carchemish in 625 B.C.E., the Babylonians pushed south to Hamath, where they again defeated the retreating Egyptians. The Babylonians then swept down the coast to the torrent valley of Egypt, destroying Ashkelon on the way. (2Ki 24:7; Jer 47:5-7) During this campaign, Judah became a vassal of Babylon.—2Ki 24:1.

BIBLE BOOKS FROM THIS PERIOD:

Hosea	Habakkuk
Isaiah	Lamentations
Micah	Obadiah
Proverbs (part)	Ezekiel
Zephaniah	1 and 2 Kings
Nahum	Jeremiah

King Jehoiakim of Judah rebelled in 618 B.C.E. Babylon then sent the armies of nearby nations against Judah, and Babylon's own troops besieged and subjugated Jerusalem. Before long, by allying his kingdom with Egypt, King Zedekiah aroused the Babylonians to climactic fury against Judah. They invaded again and began to destroy the cities of Judah. (Jer 34:7) Finally, Nebuchadnezzar turned his army's attention to Jerusalem, conquering it in 607 B.C.E.—2Ch 36:17-21; Jer 39:10.



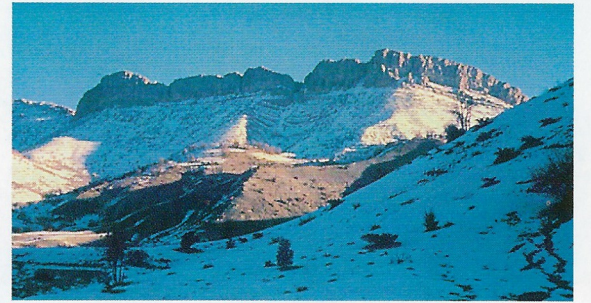
Concept of Babylon's hanging gardens



GOD'S PEOPLE RETURN TO THEIR LAND

TWO notable mountain ranges rim the plateau of modern Iran—the Elburz (south of the Caspian Sea) and the Zagros (southeast toward the Persian Gulf). They are broken by long, fertile valleys with tree-covered slopes. The valleys enjoy a temperate climate, but the higher, arid, windswept plains are frigid in winter. Nearby is the sparsely populated desert of the plateau. In this general region, east of Mesopotamia, the Medo-Persian Empire arose.

The Medes were centered on the northern part of the plateau, although they later spread into Armenia and Cilicia. The Persians, though, were centered on the southwestern part of the plateau, east of the Tigris Valley. Under Cyrus' rule in the middle of the sixth century B.C.E., these two kingdoms united, forming the Medo-Persian World Power.



Cyrus' troops had to cross the Zagros Mountains to reach Babylon



Cyrus captured Babylon in 539 B.C.E. His empire extended eastward to India. Westward, it came to include Egypt and what is now Turkey. Daniel fittingly described the Medo-Persian Empire as a rapacious "bear" that 'ate much flesh.' (Da 7:5) Cyrus established a humane, tolerant rule. He divided the empire into prov-



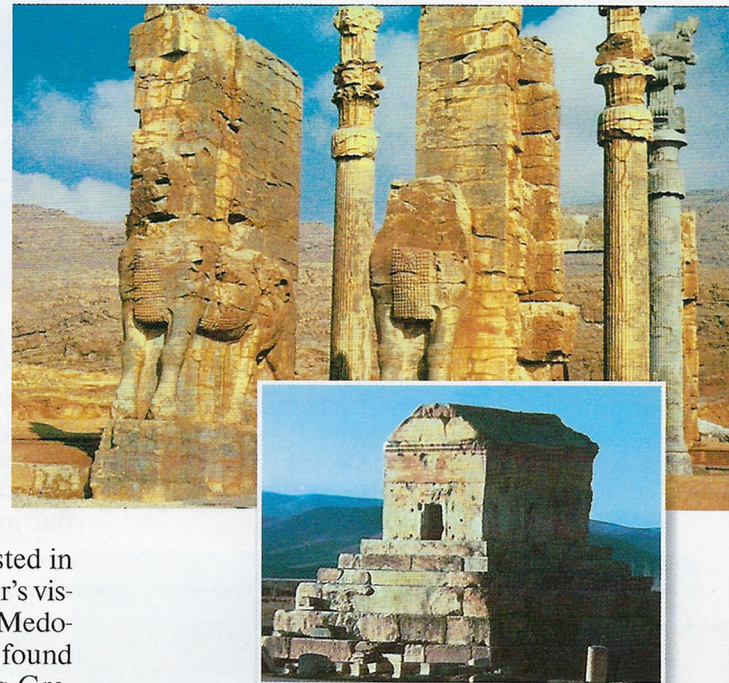
Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, almost 50,000 Israelite men made the journey of 500 to 1,000 miles (depending on the route) back to Jerusalem. What they faced was a grave economic situation. Their land had lain desolate for seven decades. The repatriates

started restoring true worship by rebuilding the altar and offering up sacrifices to Jehovah. In the fall of 537 B.C.E., they celebrated the Festival of Booths. (Jer 25:11; 29:10) Then, the returnees laid the foundation of Jehovah's house.

inces. Each was ruled by a satrap, usually a Persian, but under him, a local ruler exercised some authority. The peoples of the empire were encouraged to retain their customs and religions.

In keeping with this policy, Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to restore true worship and to rebuild Jerusalem, as described by Ezra and Nehemiah. Do you think that this large body returned by the route Abraham had taken up the Euphrate toward Carchemish, or did they perhaps take the shorter route through Tadmor and Damascus? The Bible does not say. (See pages 6-7.) In time, Jews also settled in other parts of the empire, such as the Nile Delta and places farther south. A sizable Jewish population persisted in Babylon, likely explaining the apostle Peter's visit there centuries later. (1Pe 5:13) Yes, the Medo-Persian Empire had a role in Jews' being found in many locations during the succeeding Grecian and Roman empires.

After conquering Babylon, the Medo-Persians used the city, with its torrid summers, as an administrative center. Shushan, the former Elamite capital, was one of the royal cities. Later, that is where Persian King Ahasuerus (evidently Xerxes I) made Esther his queen and thwart-



Top: The Gate of All Nations, at Persepolis
Inset: Cyrus' tomb, at Pasargadae

ed a plot to exterminate God's people across the vast empire. Two other Medo-Persian capitals were Ecbatana (situated at an elevation of over 6,200 feet, with delightful summers) and Pasargadae (at the same altitude, about 400 miles to the southeast).

How did this world power end? At the height of its power, Medo-Persia responded to uprisings fomented by Greeks at the northwestern border. Greece was then divided into warring city-states, but these cooperated to defeat Persian forces in decisive battles at Marathon and Salamis. This set the stage for the supremacy of a unified Greece over Medo-Persia.

BIBLE BOOKS FROM THIS PERIOD:

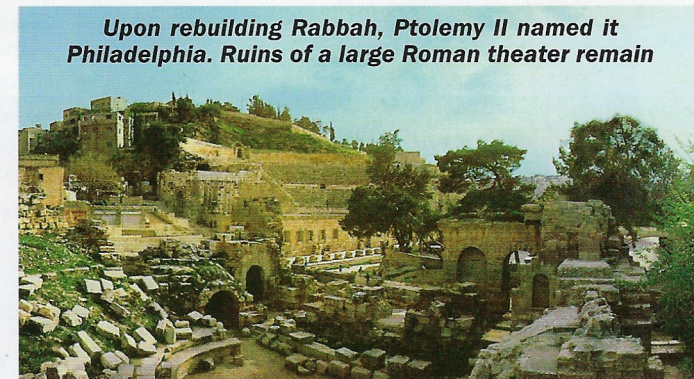
- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Daniel | 1 and 2 Chronicles |
| Haggai | Ezra |
| Zechariah | Nehemiah |
| Esther | Malachi |
| Psalms (part) | |



GREECE AND ROME INFLUENCE THE JEWS

THE expansion of what became the Grecian Empire began in the mountains of Macedonia. There, in his early 20's, Alexander began to look eastward. In 334 B.C.E., he led his army across the Hellespont (Dardanelles), separating Europe and Asia. Like a dashing "leopard," the Greeks under Alexander embarked on a series of rapid conquests. (Da 7:6) Alexander prevailed over the Persians near Troy, on the plains of the Granicus River, and defeated them decisively at Issus.

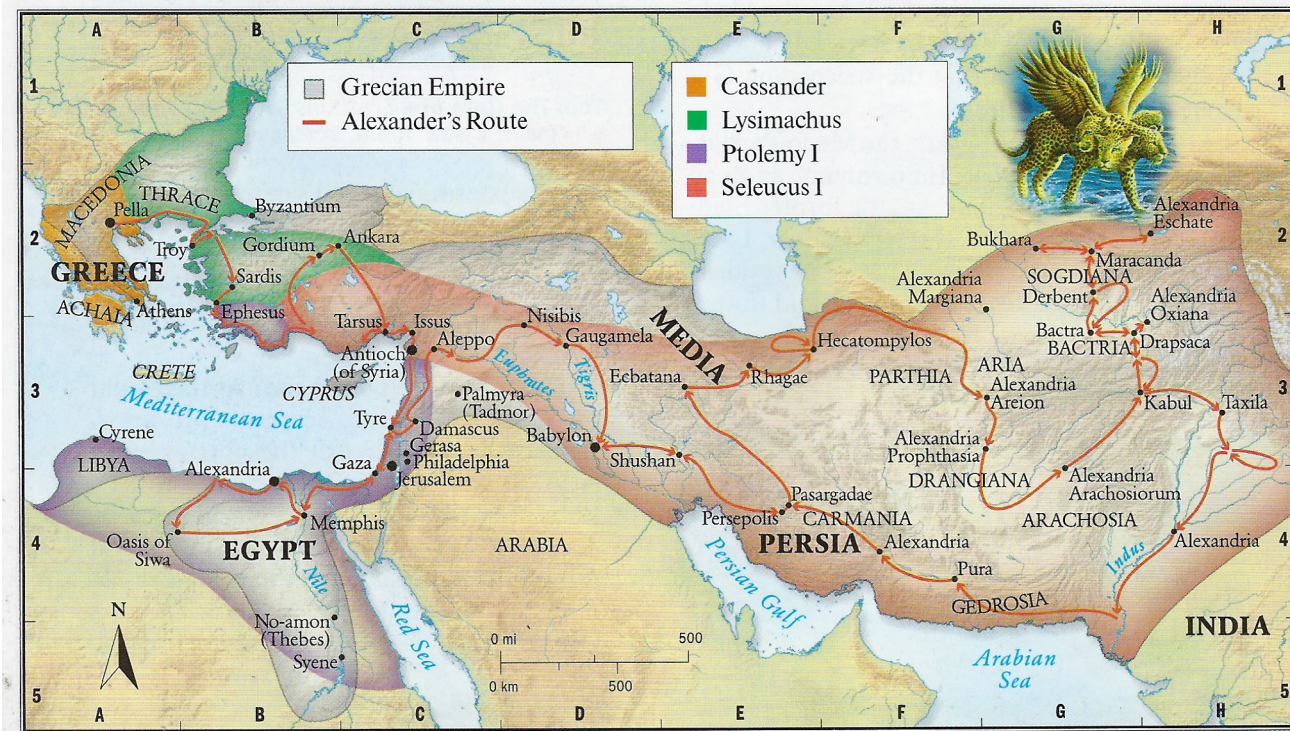
The Greeks invaded Syria and Phoenicia, taking Tyre after a seven-month siege. (Eze 26:4, 12) Sparing Jerusalem, Alexander conquered Gaza. (Zec 9:5) Once in Egypt, he founded Alexandria, which became a center of commerce and learning. Recrossing the Promised Land, he again routed the Persians, at Gaugamela, near the ruins of Nineveh.



Upon rebuilding Rabbah, Ptolemy II named it Philadelphia. Ruins of a large Roman theater remain

Alexander turned south to take Babylon, Shushan (Susa), and Persepolis—Persian administrative centers. He then sped through the Persian domain, reaching the Indus River in what is now Pakistan. In just eight years, Alexander conquered most of the then-known world. But in 323 B.C.E., when 32 years old, he died

After Alexander, four of his generals controlled the vast empire



of malaria at Babylon.—Da 8:8.

Hellenic influences in the Promised Land were strong. Some veterans of Alexander's army settled in the area. By the first century, there was a league of Greek-speaking cities (Decapolis). (Mt 4:25; Mr 7:31) The Hebrew Scriptures had become available in Greek. Koine (common Greek) served as an international language for spreading Christian teachings.

Roman Empire

What was happening in the west? Rome—previously a group of villages on the Tiber River—grew in importance. Eventually, Rome's efficient war machine and centralized political power enabled her to devour the areas controlled by Alexander's four generals. By 30 B.C.E., the Roman Empire was clearly dominant, an early manifestation of the 'fearsome beast' Daniel saw in vision.—Da 7:7.

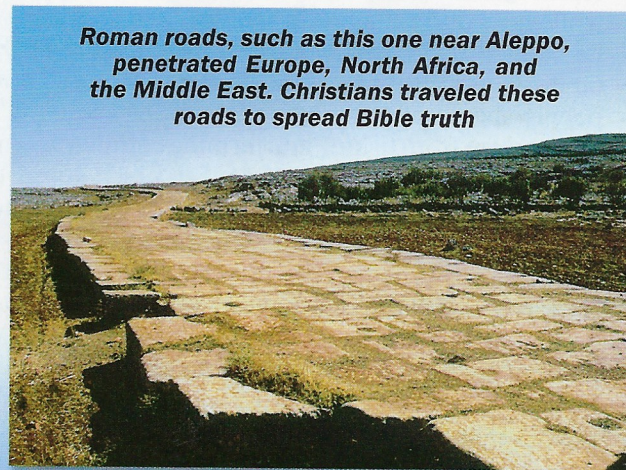
The Roman Empire stretched from Britain down to North Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. Because the empire surrounded the Mediterranean, the Romans called it Mare Nostrum (Our Sea).

Rome too influenced the Jews, whose land was part of the Roman Empire. (Mt 8:5-13;

Decapolis city of Gerasa (Jarash)



Ac 10:1, 2) Jesus was baptized and died during Emperor Tiberius' reign. Some Roman rulers savagely persecuted Christians but could not defeat true worship. After 13 centuries, the empire succumbed to attacks by Germanic tribes in the north and nomadic invaders in the east.



Roman roads, such as this one near Aleppo, penetrated Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Christians traveled these roads to spread Bible truth



JESUS "IN THE COUNTRY OF THE JEWS"

IN WITNESSING to Cornelius, the apostle Peter mentioned what Jesus did "in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem." (Ac 10:39) What areas do you think were included in Jesus' history-making ministry?

"The country of the Jews" included Judea, where Jesus did some of God's work. (Lu 4:44) After being baptized, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness of Judah (or, Judea), a rather arid and desolate region frequented by rebels and bandits. (Lu 10:30) Later, Jesus was traveling northward from Judea when he witnessed to a Samaritan woman near Sychar.—Joh 4:3-7.

A review of the Gospels shows that Jesus concentrated on Galilee. Though he went south to Jerusalem for annual festivals, he spent most of the first two years of his ministry in the northern part of the Promised Land. (Joh 7:2-10; 10:22, 23) For example, he outlined many notable teachings and performed impressive miracles while near or on the Sea of Galilee. Recall that he calmed its stormy waters and even walked on it. He preached from boats to crowds on the pebbly shores of that sea. His early, close followers were from fishing and farming communities nearby.—Mr 3:7-12; 4:35-41; Lu 5:1-11; Joh 6:16-21; 21:1-19.

The base for Jesus' Galilean ministry was shoreside Capernaum, "his own city." (Mt 9:1) He was on a hillside not far away when he gave his famous Sermon on the Mount. On occasion, he went by boat from the Capernaum area to Magadan, Bethsaida, or nearby spots.

Note that Jesus' "own city" was not very far from Nazareth, where he grew up; from Cana,



Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is in the left foreground. View is southwest across the Plain of Gennesaret

where he turned water into wine; from Nain, where he raised the son of a widow; and from Bethsaida, where he miraculously fed 5,000 men and restored sight to a blind man.

After the Passover of 32 C.E., Jesus went north toward Tyre and Sidon, Phoenician ports. Then he extended his ministry to some of the ten Hellenized cities called the Decapolis. Jesus was near Caesarea Philippi (F2) when Peter acknowledged him as the Messiah, and the transfiguration soon followed, perhaps on Mount Hermon. Later, Jesus preached in the region of Perea, across the Jordan.—Mr 7:24-37; 8:27-9:2; 10:1; Lu 13:22, 33.

Jesus spent his last week on earth with his disciples in and around Jerusalem, "the city of the great King." (Mt 5:35) You can find nearby places that you have read about in the Gospels, such as Emmaus, Bethany, Bethphage, and Bethlehem.—Lu 2:4; 19:29; 24:13; see "Jerusalem Area," inset on page 18.



Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim. Mount Ebal is in the background



THE LAND
IN JESUS' DAY

■ Cities of the Decapolis
 — Main Roads
 - - - Common Route Between Galilee and Jerusalem
 - - - Alternate Route Between Galilee and Jerusalem, Through Perea



JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE JESUS KNEW

SOON after Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary took him to the city where his heavenly Father had placed His name—Jerusalem. (Lu 2:22-39) At age 12, Jesus was again there, for the Passover. He amazed the teachers at the temple with his understanding. (Lu 2:41-51) Work on that temple complex, part of Herod the Great's building program, went on for over "forty-six years."—Joh 2:20.

During his ministry, Jesus was present at festivals in Jerusalem, where he often taught crowds. He twice drove out money changers and merchants from the temple courtyard.—Mt 21:12; Joh 2:13-16.

North of the temple, at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus healed a man who had suffered for 38 years. God's Son also gave sight to a blind man, telling him to wash in the pool of Siloam in the southern part of the city.—Joh 5:1-15; 9:1, 7, 11.

View to the east across modern Jerusalem:
 (A) temple area, (B) garden of Gethsemane,
 (C) Mount of Olives, (D) wilderness of Judah,
 (E) Dead Sea

Jesus often visited his friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha at Bethany, "about two miles" east of Jerusalem. (Joh 11:1, 18, ftn.; 12:1-11; Lu 10:38-42; 19:29; see "Jerusalem Area," page 18.) A few days before his death, Jesus approached Jerusalem by way of the Mount of Olives. Picture him stopping to look west at the city and weeping over it. (Lu 19:37-44) His view would have been similar to what you see at the top of the next page. He then entered Jerusalem on the colt of an ass, likely using one of the city's eastern gates. Throngs hailed him as Israel's future King.—Mt 21:9-12.

Important events preceding Jesus' death occurred at places in or near Jerusalem: the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed; the Sanhedrin hall; the house of Caiaphas; the palace of Governor Pilate and, eventually, Golgotha.—Mr 14:32, 53-15:1, 16, 22; Joh 18:1, 13, 24, 28.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared in and around Jerusalem. (Lu 24:1-49) Then he ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives.—Ac 1:6-12.

