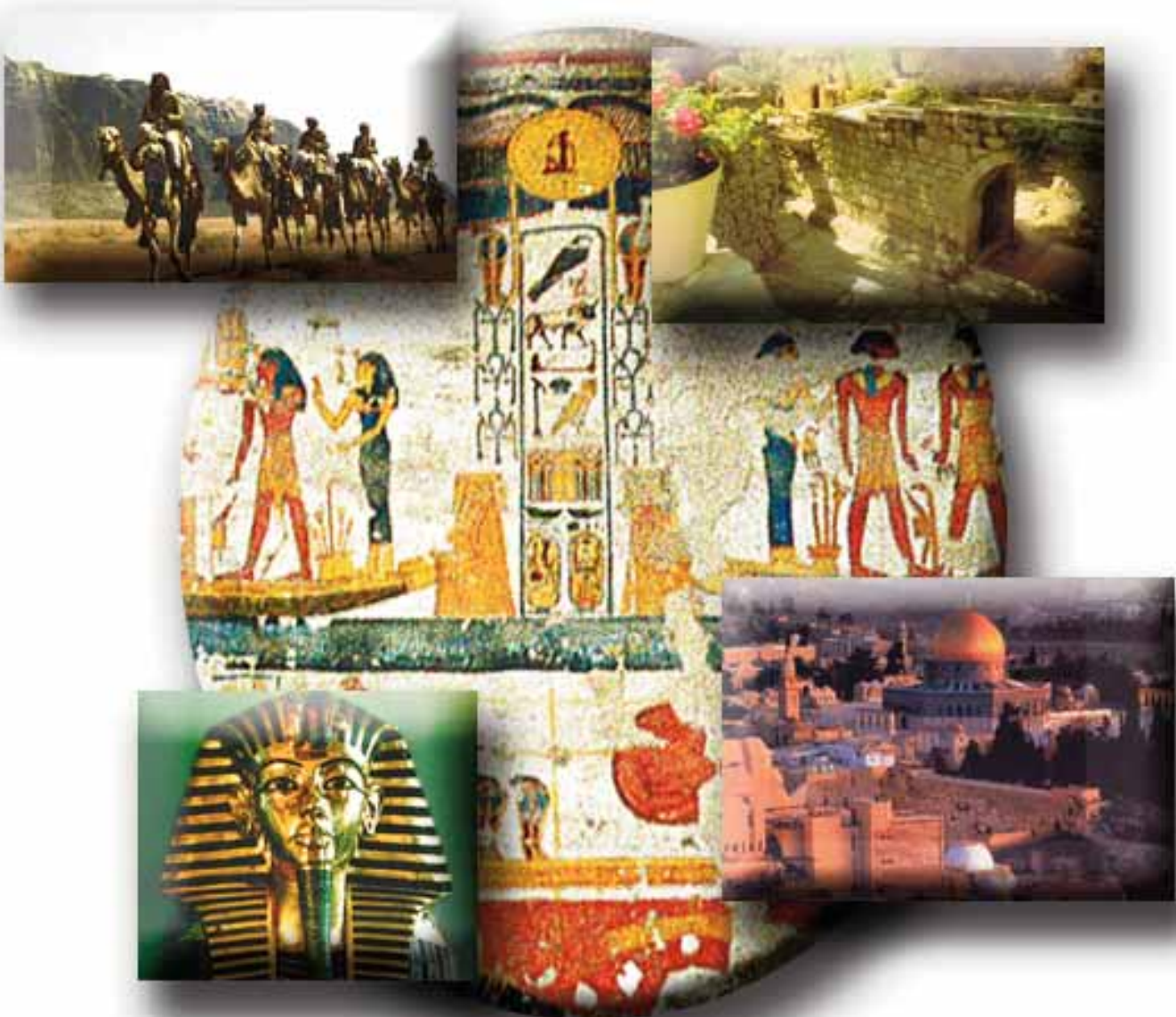




## THE EXODUS

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# Exodus Tour

## Introduction to Ancient Egypt

No other place in the entire world has had the effect on so many people as Ancient Egypt has. With the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone, Egyptian influences are seen reflected in our modern society through art, literature, and architecture.

Reference to Biblical Egypt was always pointing to “the black land around the Nile” and no other area. The political boundaries we see today have very little to do with the region referred to in the Bible apart from the Nile River and Delta areas. Although the Sinai is currently part of political Egypt today, this region was part of the Wilderness, the western part of the area inhabited by the descendants of Esau and referred to as “the Land of Edom.”

None of this should be surprising. Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted well over 5,000 years. This span of time covered a period from c. 5000 BC to the early centuries AD. Before the unification of the country in 3100 BC there were some 2000 years during the pre-dynastic period.

Over the last centuries Egyptologists and scholars have assembled the missing pieces from our picture of Ancient Egypt. Not only do we now know about the pharaohs and the nobility, but also of the common people. Continuing research covers all aspects of Ancient Egyptian society. We do this by examining several main study sources: the monuments, objects and artifacts from archaeological sites, and the literature of the period that is ancient Egyptian history.

We may never solve all the riddles that ancient Egypt sets before us, but each day of research brings us closer to a more complete understanding of one of the most important civilizations on earth.

For the student of the Bible dating is very important. For a long time it was difficult to correlate ancient Egyptian history with Biblical history. This was because historians dated the exodus of Israel from Egypt around 1300 BC. Using that date nothing fit. However, now the "New Egyptologists" have correctly dated the exodus at the mid-15th century BC.

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## The Historicity of Joseph

By looking for Hebrew occupation in the several hundred years before 1450 BC (instead of around 1300 BC), there is much evidence. There are large peasant-type cities in Goshen, with a Semitic culture obviously different from that of their Egyptian hosts. There are also some mass graves with numerous bodies, very unusual in Egypt, indicating some kind of plague that struck the land, as indicated in the Book of Exodus. In the upper Nile River, where the water flows between high cliffs, there are markings by the Pharaohs of the high levels of the river. There are several years in a row in this early time frame, when the level was marked as extremely high. This would cause excessive flooding along the Nile, making it impossible to plant crops until it was too late for the growing season, ruining the harvest. The new breed of Egyptologists thinks that the seven bad years in Egypt in Joseph's time were caused by this type of flooding action, rather than by a lengthy drought.

There is other evidence of Joseph in Egypt during this time period. An artificial lake was made in ancient times called Lake Moeris. It was formed by a canal running off the Nile River called to this day the Canal of Joseph. Beside the lake, which still exists (although smaller in size), there are ruins of a massive building, which contained a labyrinth, and was considered one of the greatest structures of its time by the Greek historian/traveler, Herodotus. The building had twelve sections (reminiscent of the twelve tribes), and might well have been an administrative headquarters for Joseph's agricultural program. The Pharaoh of the time was obviously very proud of the lake and the massive building, because he built his own pyramid at the site for his burial. Nothing like this complex exists anywhere else in the vast ruins of ancient Egypt. Again, the new Egyptologists suggest that this complex is stunning evidence for a remarkable foreign assistant to Pharaoh, and occurs in the correct time frame for Joseph.

### **Mummification process**

At the time of death, the person's body was purified in a natron solution (sodium carbonate & bicarbonate) in a place of purification. After this, the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines were removed and placed in canopic jars, the lids often decorated with the sons of Horus. The corpse was then packed with natron for forty days in order to dehydrate it. After this time had passed the embalmers repacked the body with clean natron. The body was then wrapped in resin and aromatic oil soaked linens. The entire process took seventy days, during which time the tomb was prepared with everything the deceased would need for the afterlife. The burials of Israel's patriarchs, Jacob and Joseph, followed Egypt's mummification procedures.

*"When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people. Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned him for seventy days." Gen. 49:33-50:3*

*"So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt." Gen. 50:26*

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## **Egypt History & Scripture Reference**

### **Cairo**

**Cairo**, the capital of Egypt, is a huge city of over 12 million people that sprawls in all directions. But thankfully, Cairo is full of little districts and communities that feel much smaller and more intimate than the city of which they are a part.

From "Old Cairo," it is possible to see that topography dictated that anyone coming to Biblical Egypt from the north and east must pass through this valley. Everyone, from Abraham, Joseph & Moses to the family of Jesus set foot on this land. Cairo bears the physical remains of 1000 years of being conquered and reconquered by various groups. The city didn't begin with the pharaohs; they quartered themselves in nearby Memphis and Heliopolis, areas only recently overtaken by Cairo's outward urban spread. Cairo actually began as a Roman trading post, which was later taken over by the Arabs (7th century) and then the French and the British (19th century). The revolution of 1952 finally returned power to Egyptian hands

What makes Cairo unique is that each new ruler, rather than destroying what he found, simply built a new city next to the old one. Thus you can follow the progression of history by walking through the various districts of Cairo. Each district retains a distinct identity, not only in its buildings, but also among its residents and their way of life. Coptic Cairo remains a Christian area, with more crosses than crescents. The medieval precinct of Islamic Cairo is still where families traditionally go during Ramadan to spend the night eating and smoking after a day of abstinence. This is one of the main attractions of Cairo that its historic areas are still vibrant, living spaces rather than open-air museums. In Cairo, you don't just visit relics of the past; you can experience the past as it expresses itself in modern times. The relics of the past, however, are about as good as they get. Cairo and the nearby areas of Memphis and Giza hold some of the world's best museums, monuments and ancient treasures, the vast majority of which are of a religious nature. In addition to its relics of Ancient Egypt, Cairo is perhaps second only to Jerusalem in its concentration of sites of interest to Jews, Christians and Muslims.

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## **Abu Simbel**

Abu Simbel is an archaeological site comprised of two massive rock temples in southern Egypt on the western bank of Lake Nasser about 290 km southwest of Aswan. It is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Nubian Monuments," which run from Abu Simbel downriver to Philae (near Aswan).

The twin temples were originally carved out of the mountainside during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II in the 13th century BC, as a lasting monument to himself and his queen Nefertari, to commemorate his alleged victory at the Battle of Kadesh, and to intimidate his Nubian neighbors. However, the complex was relocated in its entirety in the 1960s, on an artificial hill made from a domed structure, high above the Aswan dam reservoir.

The relocation of the temples was necessary to avoid being submerged during the creation of Lake Nasser, the massive artificial water reservoir formed after the building of the Aswan dam on the Nile River. Abu Simbel remains one of Egypt's top tourist attractions.

### **Construction**

Although both the Hittites and the Egyptians claimed victory in the Battle of Kadesh, Ramesses II is represented as victorious on the walls of the greater temple of Abu Simbel. Construction of the temple complex started in approximately 1284 BC and lasted for about 20 years, until 1264 BC. Known as the "Temple of Ramesses, beloved by Amun", it was one of six rock temples erected in Nubia during the long reign of Ramesses. The purpose was to impress Egypt's southern neighbors, and also to reinforce the status of Egyptian religion in the region.

### **Rediscovery**

With the passing of time, the temples became covered by sand. Already in the 6th century BC, the sand covered the statues of the main temple up to their knees. The temple was forgotten until 1813, when Swiss orientalist JL Burckhardt found the top frieze of the main temple. Burckhardt talked about his discovery with Italian explorer Giovanni Belzoni, who travelled to the site and was unable to dig out an entry to the temple. Belzoni returned in 1817, this time succeeding in his attempt to enter the complex. He took everything valuable and portable with him. Tour guides at the site relate the legend that "Abu Simbel" was a young local boy who guided these early re-discoverers to the site of the buried temple that he had seen from time to time in the shifting sands. Eventually, they named the complex after him: Abu Simbel.

### **Relocation**

In 1959 an international donations campaign to save the monuments of Nubia began. The southernmost relics of this ancient human civilization were under threat from the rising waters of the Nile (due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam).

The salvage of the Abu Simbel temples began in 1964, and cost some USD \$80 million. Between 1964 and 1968, the entire site was cut into large blocks, dismantled and reassembled in a new location - 65 m higher and 200 m back from the river. Many consider this to be one of the greatest feats of archaeological engineering ever. Today, thousands of tourists visit the temples daily. Guarded convoys of buses and cars depart twice a day from Aswan, the nearest city. Many visitors also arrive by plane, at an airfield that was specially constructed for the temple complex.

#### Temples

Abu Simbel complex consists of two temples. The larger one is dedicated to Ra-Harakhty, Ptah and Amun, Egypt's three state deities of the time, and features four large statues of Ramesses II in the facade. The smaller temple is dedicated to the goddess Hathor, personified by Nefertari, Ramesses's most beloved wife (in total, the pharaoh had some 200 wives and concubines).

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## Aswan

Aswan, called Swenet by the ancient Egyptians, is located at the southern end of Egypt at the first set of rapids on the Nile River. From here the Egyptians quarried much of their granite that was used for their temples. It is also the gateway that led to the southern bound caravan routes to Sudan and Nubia. In the time of Ptolemies, the town was known as Syene, and the granite known as syenite. South of the city is Aswan High Dam, built by Egypt and the Soviet Union, and forming Lake Nasser.

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## Giza

The Giza plateau rises on the western bank of the Nile River across from Cairo and is part of the ancient necropolis of Memphis. Here, the pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty built one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Sphinx and the pyramids. The largest pyramid is Cheops, or Khufu, which is said to have taken 100,000 men working in shifts of 3 months a year, for 20 years, to build. Cheops stands 450 feet high, and coming in at 448 feet is the pyramid of Khafre (or Chephren). Chephren is the pharaoh whom is also thought to have built the Sphinx. The Sphinx has the body of a lion with a human face, possibly that of the pharaoh himself. It is carved from the natural rock outcropping and is 241 feet long by 65 feet high. Between its legs is the "Dream Stela" of Thutmose IV that promised kingship in return for clearing the sand from around the Sphinx. Menkure is the third pyramid, also known as Mycerinus, which stands at 203 feet. To the south of this pyramid are three smaller pyramids built for relatives of the pharaoh.

**Period of the Exodus** *Exodus 12:29-32 - Thutmose IV's reign began after his fathers passing, and although not much is known about this period, a stela was found at the base of the Sphinx, between its legs. This stela stated that as a youth Thutmose IV dug the Sphinx out of the sand and so was promised that someday he would be king. The "Dream Stela" could indirectly confirm the death of the Pharaoh's firstborn son at the time of the Exodus, since Thutmose IV would not have needed such a promise had he been the firstborn.*

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## Goshen/Cities of the Exodus

The area of Egypt where the Israelites settled is known as the "region of Goshen" (Gen. 46:28-34) Located near the route that led up to the "Philistine country" (Ex. 13:17) on the eastern frontier of lower Egypt. In Psalm 78:12, 43 this region is called the "region [or pastoral plain] of Zoan" a city that was located at the mouth of the Bubastic branch of the Nile River.

**Patriarchal Period** Genesis 46:28-47:6 - Jacob led his family to Goshen during the time of the seven-year famine. Joseph asked the pharaoh to give his family permission to dwell in Goshen as shepherds. **Period of the Exodus** Exodus 1:11 - The Israelites living in Goshen were enslaved and forced to build the Egyptian storage cities of Pithom and Rameses. Exodus 8:22, 9:26 - During the plagues on Egypt, God said He would deal differently with "the land of Goshen" so that a number of the plagues affected only the Egyptians and not the Israelites.

"Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees [that is, were counted as his]. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, 'God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place. So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.'" Genesis 50:22-26 -David M. Rohl, *A Test of Time: The Bible from Myth to History* (1995), pp. 350-351, 355.

"The pyramid tomb discovered by Manfred Beitzak and his team in Area F at Tell ed-Daba, was the original burial place of the patriarch/vizier Joseph (before his body was removed by Moses for reburial in the Promised Land). The shattered limestone head and shoulders found in the tomb originally formed the upper part of a cult statue of Joseph, awarded to him by Amenemhat III for the Hebrew vizier's outstanding services to the Egyptian nation during a time of great trials and tribulations." -David M. Rohl, *A Test of Time: The Bible from Myth to History* (1995), p. 355, 358.

"Immediately atop an earlier Syrian Villa at Tell ed-Daba was 'a large Egyptian-style palace, to which was attached a beautiful garden. The pottery and stratigraphy indicated that the palace had been built during the early 13th Dynasty. The elegant palace... was originally **erected as the residence for the vizier Joseph** in the regional capital of Avaris - the headquarters of the delta administration known as the Department of the North.'"

"In the garden, a tomb was uncovered of typical Egyptian style. It was found to be almost empty, having been broken into long ago. However, Beitzak did discover the desecrated remains of a twice life-size colossus or statue of the occupant of the tomb and palace. Over his right shoulder is a throw stick', representing a holder of office and authority. The figure is Asiatic. The face has been mostly cleaved off and there are marks on the head where someone has tried to split the stone." -John Fulton, "A New Chronology - Synopsis of David Rohl's book 'A Test of Time'"

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## Karnak/Thebes/Luxor

Karnak is a city with five names- the original name was Weset or Newt, which meant simply "the city". It then became No-amon "the city of Amun" or simply No- "the city" during the Middle and New Kingdom periods, when the city was the political and religious center for Egypt. During the Hellenistic period the city became Thebes, a Greek name sometimes used by Bible translators. The name Luxor was derived from Arabic *al-Qusur* "the palaces", following the Muslim conquest.

**Single Kingdom** Nahum 3:8 - Nahum asked Nineveh whether it was "better than Thebes [No-amon]," a city that the Assyrians had attacked and destroyed in 663 BC. Jeremiah 46:25 - God announced that He would punish "Amon god of Thebes" along with the pharaoh and Egypt's false gods. Ezekiel 30:14-16 - Ezekiel announced God's judgement on Thebes and several other cities in Egypt.

**Apostolic Age** Hebrews 11:24-26 - Moses would have spent some of his childhood in Pharaoh's house in Thebes. This is certainly on the spot where Moses saw the "treasures of Egypt" that the writer of Hebrews says he ultimately rejected.



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## Edfu

The town is known for the major Ptolemaic temple, built between 237 BCE to 57 BCE, into the reign of Cleopatra VII. Of all the temple remains in Egypt, the Temple of Horus at Edfu is the most completely preserved. Built from sandstone blocks, the huge Ptolemaic temple was constructed over the site of a smaller New Kingdom temple, oriented east to west, facing towards the river. The later structure faces north to south and leaves the ruined remains of the older temple pylon to be seen on the east side of the first court.

Horus is a god of the Ancient Egyptian religion, most commonly known by the Greek version Horus, of the Egyptian Heru/Har. Horus was an ancient and important deity and the Eye of Horus became an important Egyptian symbol of power. Horus had a man's body and a falcon's head. One of Horus' eyes became injured after Osiris was murdered by his brother Set (Horus fought with Set for the throne of Egypt). In this battle one of his eyes was injured and later it was healed by Thoth. This healing of the eye became a symbol of renewal. Horus united Egypt and bestowed divinity upon the pharaoh. Pharaohs were viewed as the incarnation of Horus. It is interesting to note that there is a yearly pilgrimage to this temple by a growing number of people to worship here.

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## Kom Ombo

The Temple of Kom Ombo is an unusual double temple built during the rule of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the Egyptian town of Kom Ombo. One side of the temple is dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek, god of fertility and creator of the world. The other side is dedicated to the falcon god Haroeris, also known as Horus the Elder. The temple is atypical because everything is perfectly symmetrical along the main axis. The temple was started by Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-145 BC) at the beginning of his reign and added to by other Ptolemys, most notably Ptolemy XIII (47-44 BC), who built the inner and outer hypostyle halls. Much of the temple has been destroyed by the Nile, earthquakes, and later builders who used the stones for other projects. Some of the reliefs inside were defaced by Copts who once used the temple as a church.

A few of the three-hundred crocodile mummies discovered in the vicinity are displayed inside the temple.

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## Marah

Marah means bitterness. It is a spring at the sixth station of the Israelites (Ex. 15:23, 24; Num. 33:8) whose waters were so bitter that they could not drink them. On this account they murmured against Moses, who, under divine direction, cast into the fountain "a certain tree" which took away its bitterness, so that the people drank of it. This was probably the 'Ain Hawarah, where there are still several springs of water that are very "bitter," and distant being some 47 miles from 'Ayun Mousa.

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## Memphis

Founded around 3100 BC by Menes (Narmer), the city of Memphis allowed him to control the land and water routes between Upper Egypt and the Delta. By the Third Dynasty Memphis had become the administrative and religious center of all Egypt. The original name for the city was Ineb-Hedj, "the White

Wall"- a name which referred to the white mudbrick wall built around the city by Menes. The Greek name of Memphis most likely came from the transliteration of the pyramid complex at nearby Saqqara which was called *Mennefer* ("the good place") or, in Coptic, *Menfe*.

**Divided Kingdom** *Isaiah 19:13 - Isaiah announced God's judgement on Egypt, in part because the princes of Memphis were "deceived". Hosea 9:6 - Hosea predicted that the people of Memphis would be burying those Jews who had fled there for refuge.*

**Single Kingdom** *Jeremiah 2:16 - Jeremiah said the men of Memphis had "shaved the crown of your head", pointing to Judah's humiliating subjection to Egypt. Jeremiah 44:1 - Jeremiah delivered a message to those Jews living in Egypt, including those dwelling in Memphis. Jeremiah 46:14-19 - Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Memphis by the Babylonians. Ezekiel 30:13-16 - God threatened to destroy the idols and the leaders in the city of Memphis.*

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## Oasis of Feiran - Rephidim

Rephidim was one of the places (or "stations") visited by the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt.

The Israelites had come from the wilderness of Sin. At Rephidim, the Israelites found no water to drink, and in their distress they blamed Moses for their troubles, to the point where Moses feared that they would stone him (Exodus 17:4). God commanded Moses to strike a certain "rock in Horeb," which caused a stream to flow from it, thus providing ample water for all of the people.

Afterwards, the Amalekites attacked the Israelites while encamped at Rephidim, but were defeated (Exodus 17:8-16). They were the "first of the nations" to make war against Israel (Numbers 24:20).

One proposal places Rephidim in the Wadi Feiran, near its junction with the Wadi esh-Sheikh. Leaving Rephidim, the Israelites advanced into the Sinai Wilderness (Exodus 19:1-2; Numbers 33:14-15), possibly marching through the two passes of the Wadi Solaf and the Wadi esh-Sheikh. They converge at the entrance to the er-Rahah plain (then identified with the "Sinai Wilderness"), which is two miles long and about half a mile broad.

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## Saqqara

Part of the large necropolis (cemetery) associated with Memphis; Saqqara is the burial site of Menes (Narmer), the first king of the First Dynasty and founder of Memphis. Saqqara is composed of 15 royal pyramids, including the Step Pyramid, which is the earliest stone structure in the world. Step Pyramid was built for Djoser, a king of the Third Dynasty by his vizier Imhotep. Nearby is the pyramid of Unas, the last king of the Fifth Dynasty- this is the first pyramid to be inscribed with the funerary texts known today as the Pyramid Texts. Prior to the completion of these pyramids, the main form of tomb architecture was a mastaba (Arabic for "bench"), a low rectangular structure built over a shaft that descended to a burial location.

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## Sinai (Mount)

Mount Sinai is the name for a collection of peaks and also the biblical name for the peak on which Moses received the Ten Commandments (Jebel Musa). To reach the summit, visitors can take the 3,750 stone



carved steps made by St. Catherine's Monastery monks, and take in the view from 7,497 ft. Here you can find the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, built in 1934 on the site of the original chapel, built in AD 363. At the foot of the mountain is St. Catherine's Monastery, completed in AD 565 atop the supposed location of Moses' burning bush.

**Period of the Exodus** *Exodus 3:1-2 - Moses was pasturing his father in law's flocks at "the mountain of God" when he encountered God in the burning bush. Exodus 19:1, 31:18 - Three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, and God's glory came down and rested on the mountain. Exodus 31:18 - God gave Moses the two tablets containing the law on Mount Sinai.*

**Divided Kingdom** *1 Kings 19:8 - When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he came to Mount Sinai, called Mount Horeb in the text and identified as "the mountain of God".*

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## Valley of the Kings/Queens

The cliffs located on the west bank of the Nile River became the burial grounds for the pharaohs, beginning in the Eighteenth Dynasty until the Twentieth Dynasty. Rather than using the necropolis at Saqqara and pyramid-style tombs, they began to cut their tombs into the limestone cliffs in Karnak/Thebes. The Valley of the Kings contains 62 known tombs, 24 of which were for royal burials. To the southwest is the Valley of Queens, which was originally for high officials, and eventually became the burial site for queens as well as royal children. Here there are 80 known tombs built on a smaller scale than those in the Valley of the Kings. In addition to the tombs the west bank of the Nile also held a number of mortuary temples, the most famous being the one built by Queen Hatshepsut.

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## A HISTORICAL BRIEF; EGYPT AND ISRAEL

Following is an attempt to correlate the histories of these two peoples relative to the historical period we are focusing on during this trip. Some of the dates are approximate, some are accurate, but all are very close. We believe this correlation argues for the historical accuracy and inspiration of the Bible. All dates are BC. /// indicates a gap.

<u>Egyptian History</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Biblical events re: Israel</u>
	2091	Abraham enters Canaan; Gen. 12
	2066	Isaac born

	2006	Jacob born
<u>Middle Kingdom Period</u>	1991	
Pharaoh Amenemhet	1927 – 1894	
	1898	Joseph brought to Egypt
Pharaoh Sensusert II	1894 – 1878	
	1885	Joseph exalted
	1876	Jacob and sons come to Egypt
	//////////	
Pharaoh Sensusert III	1841 – 1792	
	1805	Joseph dies at 110 yrs. (Gn. 50:26)
	//////////	
Hyksos control Egypt	1730 – 1584	Slavery imposed
<u>18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty</u>	1584 - 1317	
	//////////	
Pharaoh Thutmose I	1539 – 1514	Birth control imposed, kill babies
	1526	Moses born
Pharaoh Thutmose II & Hatshepsut	1514 – 1504	
Hatshepsut & Thutmose III	1504 – 1483	Moses/ Senenmut serves the throne
	1486	Moses flees Egypt – to Midian
Pharaoh Thutmose III (sole ruler)	1482 – 1450	
Pharaoh Amenhotep II	1450 – 1424	
	1446	Moses to Egypt – Exodus. Takes Joseph's remains with him.

Pharaoh Thutmose IV, 2<sup>nd</sup> born  
son of Amenhotep II

1424 – 1414

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## EARLY EGYPTIAN HISTORY & THE BIBLE

**Pre-Dynastic Period** (5000 – 2920 BC). NOTE: All dates are approximate. A dynasty represents rule by a family. We will only chronicle those that are significant to us and our trip.

### Early Dynastic Period

- 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty (2920 – 2770 BC)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty (2770 – 2650 BC)

### Old Kingdom:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty (2650 – 2575 BC): King Zoser of this dynasty had his capitol at Memphis (10 miles south of Cairo) and was the builder of the famous “Step Pyramid” at Saqqara. Saqqara is a necropolis, a city of the dead.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2575 – 2467 BC): Khufu founder of this dynasty built the great pyramid at Gizeh. His successor, Khafre, built the second pyramid there. His head is probably represented on the Great Sphinx.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2465 – 2323 BC):
- 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2323 – 2150 BC): Abraham was born in 2166 BC and came to Egypt during the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Old Kingdom period. Cf., Gn. 12:10-20. When Sarah failed to bear children she gave her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham. They had a son, Ishmael, who became the father of the Arab peoples. Later, Sarah had a son, Isaac, who was a progenitor of the Israelite nation then yet to be born.

**First Intermediate Period (7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasties) (2150 – 1991 BC)**: This was a period of relatively weak pharaohs.

### **Middle Kingdom: (Strong)**

- 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1991 – 1759 BC)
- 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1759 – 1650 BC) This was the period of great classical literature. It was also the time that Egypt expanded to the south at the second cataract of the Nile, and north as far as Syria. When we visit Abu Simbel on October 31 we will be about 50 miles north of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cataract.

- Joseph came to Egypt in 1876 BC during the latter years of Amenemhet's reign (1878 – 1841 BC; c.f. Gn. 37:12-36); He was exalted in 1841 BC by Sensusert II (1841 – 1830 BC; c.f. Gn.41);
- Jacob and his sons came to Egypt in 1830 BC during the reign of Sensusert III (1830 – 1800 BC; c.f., Gn.37:12-36). Because they were shepherds, and the Egyptians hated shepherds but wanted to honor Joseph's father, they were settled in the region of Rameses in the Goshen (delta) area: c.f., Gn.46:31 – 47:12). This would enable Israel to develop without intermingling with non-Israelis.
- Also during this period a canal (still referred to as "The Canal of Joseph") was dug to connect the Nile River with an artificial lake, Lake Moeris. Joseph's tomb has been found in this area. (see article, "Has Joseph's Egyptian Tomb Been Found in Egypt?").

### **Second Intermediate Period (13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties) (1759 – 1584 BC)**

The 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasties were marked by internal struggles and weakness. After this the Hyksos, a Semitic people from the east, conquered and ruled Egypt during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> dynasties. They conquered Egypt because they had two awesome weapons – the war chariot and a powerful bow. Their capitol was Avaris (also known as Rameses) in the Delta area. They are sometimes referred to as "rulers of a foreign lands" or "Shepherd Kings" and as such might have been favorable to Israel since they were nomadic shepherds in background. This might account somewhat for Israel's phenomenal growth in a favorable atmosphere. Some scholars, however, believe that it was the Hyksos that first placed the Israelis under bondage. The reasons for this would be that they did not know Joseph and since the Hyksos were not a numerous people they might have felt threatened by the Israelis. We favor the latter view.

Ahmose, the last king/pharaoh of this period expelled the Hyksos. The Hyksos left their mark in that the mostly peaceful Egyptians were transformed into a warlike people. The capitol of Egypt was re-established at Memphis.

### **New Kingdom (18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (1584 – 1069 BC)** - During this period many

public buildings were erected, such as the great temple at Karnak, which we will visit on November 4. This could possibly be referred to as Egypt's Golden Age.

- 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1584 – 1295 BC). With the Hyksos driven out the pharaohs again ruled Egypt and continued the oppression of Israel. The first of these was Ahmose (1584 – 1560 BC) who possibly began the persecution of Israel because he wouldn't know Joseph. (Ex.1:8). He was followed by Amenhotep I (1560 – 1539 BC) and Thutmose I (1539 – 1514 BC).

Thutmose I was the father of Hatshepsut, the only woman who sat on the throne as a pharaoh with all of the authority of a man. She was the only surviving child of Thutmose I by his primary wife, Ahmose. She is also likely the princess who drew Moses (born c.1526 BC) out of the Nile and adopted him as her son. (Ex.2:10).

Hatshepsut was married to a son of a lesser wife of Thutmose I, who took the name of Thutmose II. Therefore, she married her half-brother. This was to facilitate his ascension to the throne since the royal blood line was passed down through the woman. They ruled jointly from about 1514, but he was very weak and only lived until 1504. They had only one child, a daughter, who was then married to a son of a lesser wife of Thutmose II and their child was given the name Thutmose III. Since he was only 10 years old at the time, Hatshepsut was the sole ruler for a few years (1504 - ?), but then their joint rule continued until 1482 when she died. Thutmose III reigned alone from 1482 – 1450.

This means that Moses, having spent the first 40 years of his life in Egypt would have fled Egypt c. 1486 BC, during the final years of his benefactor, Hatshepsut. Two things might be noted. One can only imagine how she felt when her adopted son killed an Egyptian and stood with the Hebrew slaves. Also, there is some possibility that Moses as her son would give Thutmose III some reason to get rid of Moses as his rival for the throne. The state of her relationship with Thutmose III is indicated in that he tried to destroy every reference to her name in all of Egypt. Fortunately for us he was not totally successful.

According to the chronology preserved in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament, Thutmose III (“Napoleon of Ancient Egypt”) was probably the pharaoh of the latter part of the oppression. He was a great warrior and one of the greatest pharaohs of Egyptian history. He conducted 17 military campaigns and extended the control of Egypt as far north as Syria and on to the upper Euphrates. He extended Egypt’s control to the south as far as the 4<sup>th</sup> cataract of the Nile.

His son, Amenhotep II, assumed the throne in 1450 and ruled till 1424. This means that if the Exodus occurred in 1446 BC he would be the pharaoh that Moses and Aaron confronted just a few years after his accession. (cf., Ex.2:23-25). It also means that his first born son would have been slain the night of the exodus.

Two things confirm this. One is that it is quite clear that the following pharaoh, Thutmose IV (1424 – 1414 BC), was not the oldest son of Amenhotep II. A dream stela, which was discovered some years ago between the feet of the Great Sphinx at Giza, says that he learned in a dream that he would be the next pharaoh. This would be irrelevant if he had been the firstborn son. Also, Amenhotep II was very active militarily during his reign except for a period of about 5 years during which he seems to have been militarily impotent. The reason for this is indicated in Ex.14:7 which states that his 600 pursuing chariots were manned by officers. In other words, the flower of the Egyptian army, perhaps his entire officer corps, perished in the waters of the Red Sea.

- 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1295 – 1186 BC)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1186 – 1069 BC)

### **Third Intermediate Period (21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasties)**

- 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty (1070 – 945 BC)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty (945 – 712 BC)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty (828 – 725 BC)
- 24<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (725 – 715 BC)
- 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (712 – 657 BC)

### **Late Period: (26<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Dynasties)**

- 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (664 – 525 BC)
- 27<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (525 – 404 BC)
- 28<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (404 – 399 BC)
- 29<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (399 – 380 BC)
- 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (380 – 343 BC)
- 31<sup>st</sup> Dynasty (343 – 332 BC)

### **JOSEPH IN EGYPT:**

Below is an article by Thomas McCall (quoted in the July 1999 Levitt Letters) which summarizes the material relating to Joseph very well. This is followed by some comments by David Rohl, a leading “New Egyptologist” and author.

### **JOSEPH’S EGYPTIAN TOMB: Thomas McCall**

“Is it possible that the tomb of the ancient patriarch Joseph has been found in Egypt? The Biblical account is that Joseph was elevated to being the right-hand man of Pharaoh, the vizier of Egypt, because God enabled him to interpret Pharaoh’s troubling dream. Joseph then structured the agriculture and taxation procedures of Egypt so that great storehouses then structured the agriculture and taxation procedures of Egypt so that great storehouses of grain were utilized over the seven bad years. When the bad years came, there was a famine in Canaan, and Joseph’s estranged brothers and his father Jacob made their way to bountiful Egypt, where they discovered to their great surprise that the despised brother was not only still alive, but both able and willing to save them and provide for them.

Through Joseph’s good offices, Pharaoh allowed the Hebrew cattlemen from Canaan to settle in the Land of Goshen, in the eastern sector of the Nile delta. This land was relatively flat and well watered from the flow of the delta. For several hundred years, from Joseph to Moses, the Hebrew people flourished and multiplied in the Land of Goshen, even after a Pharaoh arose “who knew not Joseph,” and all he had done for Egypt.

**THE OATH ABOUT THE BONES OF JOSEPH:** Joseph believed the word of God, and knew that the Hebrew people would not stay in Egypt forever. He knew that one day the Lord would bring them out of Egypt back to the Land of Abraham, to the Land of Promise. Joseph knew that he would not see that day, but he made his kinsmen swear that, when that day came, they would carry his remains with them out of Egypt to the Promised Land:

Gen 50:25, 26, “Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, ‘God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.’ So Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Hundreds of years passed. Joseph's body lay in the coffin, and his tomb must have been well identified, because when the Exodus occurred, and Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, he was able to locate Joseph's coffin and take it with them to the Promised Land:

Ex.13:19, "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the children of Israel swear, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away from here with you.'"

**Not only were the bones of Joseph taken out of Egypt, but they were carefully guarded all during the wilderness journey for forty years, the transition from Moses to Joshua, and the turbulent conquest of Canaan.** As the Book of Joshua closes, after the Land was conquered, and the territory of Israel was parceled out to the tribes, Joseph's bones were ultimately buried in their final resting place by his descendants in the town of Shechem:

Josh.24:32, "The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money: and they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

Thus the story of the bones of Joseph is faithfully recorded by Moses and Joshua, to make sure that posterity knew that the oath Joseph made his fellow Israelites swear had been fulfilled to the letter. Joseph's body did not remain in Egypt, but went with his people and abode with them in the Land of Israel. Joseph is a magnificent illustration of the Messiah, the rejected Kinsman Redeemer who will ultimately be reconciled with His Jewish brethren in the Land of Israel.

**THE IDENTIFICATION OF JOSEPH'S TOMB:** But we return to Joseph's coffin in Egypt, where his bones lay for hundreds of years. It must have been well marked and identified all that time, in order for Moses to have selected it out of all the Hebrew tombs in the Land of Goshen. Most likely, the coffin of Joseph would have been laid in a clearly identified tomb, befitting the office of the man who had served most of his life as the vizier of all Egypt. Furthermore, Joseph would have wanted his tomb to be in the Land of Goshen, close to his people, where his remains would be readily available when the people of Israel left Egypt. Also, we would not expect Joseph, as a Hebrew, to be buried in the Upper Nile Valley, known as the Valley of the Kings. This is where the Pharaohs and some of their chief servants were buried. It was probably by mutual agreement that Joseph, although the vizier of Egypt, would be buried close to his people in the Land of Goshen. Such is the Biblical account of the burial of Joseph.

Does archaeology confirm any of this? Up until recently, it has not. The Egyptian archaeologists, using the conventional chronology, have not been able to find any evidence of the Hebrew people in the Land of Goshen as indicated in the Scriptures. They do find various groups of Semitic people occupying Goshen at various periods of time, but they do not see any mass Semitic occupation at the time the Exodus was supposed to occur. In their chronology, if the Exodus event occurred at all, it would have had to have been about 1300 BC. Only traces of Semitic occupation are found at that time period.



This has led the archaeologists to conclude that the Exodus never happened. They think that Moses and his phenomenal struggles with Pharaoh are all mythological and unhistorical, and only a “fundamentalist conservative” could possibly believe in the historicity of these ancient Biblical accounts.

**THE NEW EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY:** It is important to understand that the Biblical chronology does not put the Exodus at 1300 BC, but rather some 150 years before that, around 1450 BC. What a difference a couple of hundred years make! At that time period, there is evidence of a massive Semitic occupation of Goshen. Until recently though, Egyptologists have claimed that this could not be the Hebrew occupation described in the Scriptures, because it is too early. They ascribe this occupation to other type Semites, such as the Hittites. However, there is a small but very vocal group of Egyptologists, led by British scholar David Rohl (author of *Pharaohs and Kings*), that is vehemently challenging the conventional chronology. They assert that there are numerous fallacies in the assumptions of the accepted chronology, and they have established a new chronology based on what they believe are more sound Egyptian archaeological grounds. Having done this, these secular scientists were astonished to discover that the new chronology supports the Biblical chronology, and the once mute Egyptian evidence is alive with testimony to the validity of Biblical history.

**THE POSSIBLE PALACE, TOMB AND STATUE OF JOSEPH:** One last stunning piece of evidence for Joseph exists, and that brings us back to his burial in Goshen, and his bones that were removed by Moses at the time of the Exodus. In this same area in Goshen, where a large contingent of Semites lived, a great palace has been discovered, with a garden and a tomb, curious in its combination of Egyptian and Semitic styles. Rohl and his colleagues believe the palace is that of Joseph, perhaps his retirement villa after many years of service to Pharaoh. It has two apartments in front, suggesting the living quarters of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. In the rear are the more spacious living quarters of the prime occupants, perhaps Joseph and his Egyptian wife.

Adjacent to the ruins of the palace, there is an elegant garden area, and in the garden was an unusual tomb. The tomb was in the shape of a small pyramid, but it is clear that the vault was broken into and the remains removed. However, the damage to the tomb was not like that done by the all too common grave robbers of Egypt. It appears to be a careful and methodical removal of bricks from the tomb, as one would expect where the bones of Joseph were carefully removed from his long-used grave by Moses. Could it be that we have here the very tomb of the great patriarch Joseph? The evidence certainly takes it out of the realm of mythology, even for the hardened scientist, and into the realm of accurate history.

But there is more. In the tomb complex, there are ruins of an ancient statue, also unusual in its design and subject matter. It has been violently smashed almost beyond recognition, but enough of it has been found to piece together a possible identification. The statue is of a man who had obvious stature in the Egyptian power structure, with the symbol of Pharaoh’s authority, the throw-stick, on his chest. Yet he also has an unusual Semitic hairdo, with flaming red hair, and wears a coat with variegated colors. The statue has been deliberately smashed and defaced, with an obvious attempt to destroy the head and face. It is as though the remaining Egyptians were so

angry with the Semitic inhabitants that, when the Semites left, the Egyptians tried to destroy any trace of their occupation.

One could well imagine this to be the reaction of the Egyptians after suffering the plagues and the Red Sea destruction at the hand of the Hebrews and their mighty God. The similarities between this ruined statue with the Biblical account of Joseph are so striking, that Rohl has an artist's conception of what this statue might have looked like on the front cover of his book.

The new Egyptologists are persuaded that they have not only corrected some of the most glaring errors in understanding the history of ancient Egypt, but that they have constructed a marvelous bridge between the histories of Egypt and Israel that demand further study and appreciation. Not least in this consideration is the possibility that the artifacts of the unique person of Joseph have been discovered in the stone ruins of Egyptian archaeology."

#### COMMENTS:

"Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all of his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees [that is, were counted as his]. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, 'God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place. So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.'" Genesis 50:22-26.

- David M. Rohl, *A Test of Time: The Bible from Myth to History* (1995), pp. 350-351, 355.

"The pyramid tomb, discovered by Manfred Beitak and his team in Area F at Tell ed-Daba, was the original burial place of the patriarch/vizier Joseph (before his body was removed by Moses for reburial in the Promised Land). The shattered limestone head and shoulders found in the tomb originally formed the upper part of a cult statue of Joseph, awarded to him by Amenemhat III for the Hebrew vizier's outstanding services to the Egyptian nation during a time of great trials and tribulations."

- David M. Rohl, *A Test of Time: The Bible from Myth to History* (1995), p. 355, 358

"Immediately atop an earlier Syrian Villa at **Tell ed-Daba** was 'a large Egyptian-style palace, to which was attached a beautiful garden. The pottery and stratigraphy indicated that the palace had been built during the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The elegant palace... was originally **erected as the residence for the vizier Joseph** in the regional capital of Avaris – the headquarters of the delta administration known as the Department of the North.'"

"In the garden, a tomb was uncovered of typical Egyptian style. It was found to be almost empty, having been broken into long ago. However, Bietak did discover the desecrated remains of a twice life-size colossus or statue of the occupant of the tomb and palace. Over his right shoulder is a throw stick', representing a holder of office and authority. The figure is Asiatic.

The face has been mostly cleaved off and there are marks on the head where someone has tried to split the stone.”

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## Jordan History & Scripture Reference

The part of the Holy Land on the eastern side of the Jordan River, in the country of Jordan, is blessed with the rich spiritual heritage of the full story of Salvation as recorded in the Bible. The Biblical history of Abraham, Job, Moses, Ruth, Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Paul and other leading figures from the Bible is found etched in the ancient landscape now within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

In and around southern Jordan, God first manifested Himself to mankind. Subsequently, this land witnessed the missions of numerous prophets, the completion of the Covenant through Moses and the Israelites, the increased revelation of the Christian faith heralded by John the Baptist and completed through Jesus Christ. Jordan is also where Jacob wrestled with the angel of God, Job suffered and was rewarded for his faith, and Elijah ascended to Heaven.

The very name of the country and its famous river of baptism and spiritual commitment - Jordan retains the unique heritage of the land.

The heartland of this spiritual landscape that witnessed the unfolding of God's Salvation History is the area alongside the Dead Sea and the Jordan River, in today's west-central Jordan. This area was called the "Plains of Moab" in the Old Testament and formed part of the region of "Peraea" in the New Testament. This is the only area in the Holy Land that combines the traditions of Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, key figures in God's redemption of mankind.

This is where Moses delivered God's Law to mankind and here is where Jesus was baptized by John and anointed by God, where he called his first disciples, and where the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit manifested itself explicitly during the baptism along the Jordan River.

In the land of Jordan, God frequently appeared and encountered mankind in the form of a whirlwind, a cloud of light or dust, an angel, or a voice speaking with the prophets. One biblical passage (Habbakuk 3:3) says explicitly that "God come from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran". Deuteronomy 33:2 notes that "The Lord come from Sinai, and dawned down on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran". Teman, Seir and Paran are in the area of Edom, in southern Jordan.

God repeatedly designated Jordan as a land of peace and refuge, where Ruth, Elijah, David, Jesus, John the Baptist and the first Christian communities, among others, found safety and peace. Most of the great biblical prophets journeyed from the east bank of the Jordan River to the west, symbolically moving from the "wilderness" where men and women are tested, to the promised Holy Land, the Kingdom of God.

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### **Amman/Ammon/Ammonites**

The Ammonites occupied the tableland east of the Jordan Valley that stretched into the Arabian Desert. The capital of Ammon was Rabbah (sometimes called Rabbath-ammon), current-day Amman, Jordan. By New Testament times, Rabbah had become the southernmost city in the league of cities called the Decapolis, and its name had been changed to Philadelphia.

**Period of the Exodus** Deuteronomy 2:19-21, 37 - God prohibited Israel from taking the land of the Ammonites.

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## Bethany Beyond the Jordan/Plains of Moab

On the Eastern bank of the Jordan River is "Bethany Beyond the Jordan," the place associated with John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus.

This is also the area where the twelve tribes camped prior to entering the Promised Land.

Nearby you may view a small hill called Tel Mar Elias, or "Elijah's Hill," the place where Elijah ascended into heaven.

**Period of the Exodus** Numbers 21:1 - Israel arrived at the Plains of Moab.

Numbers 26, Deuteronomy 1:5 - Moses numbered the sons of Israel

Deuteronomy 34:8 - Israel mourned the death of Moses for 30 days.

Joshua 13:8-32 - Moses allotted this territory to Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

**Divided Kingdom** 2 Kings 2:1-15 - Elijah and Elisha crossed the River and Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire.

**Life of Christ** John 1:28-29 - John the Baptist

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## Edom/Edomites

The Edomites were the descendants of Jacob's twin brother, Esau (Gen. 25:21-26: 36:9). The name Edom comes from the word meaning "red", and it described Esau's physical characteristics at birth (25:25). It also became his nickname because of his fondness for red lentil stew, the "red stuff" for which he bartered away his birthright (v. 30-31 NASB). Finally, the name is an apt description of the land occupied by the Edomites with its red sandstone rock. Because the Edomites descended from Jacob's brother, they were considered a "brother" nation to Israel. Moses commanded Israel, "Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother" (Deut. 23:7). The northern border of the land of Edom was the Wadi Zered which flows from east to west and joins the Arabah at the southeastern tip of the Dead Sea. The land of the Edomites extended south to the Red Sea, or Gulf of Aqaba.

**Period of the Exodus** Numbers 20:14-21 - The Edomites refused to let Israel pass through their land as the Israelites made their way up the east side of the Dead Sea. Israel had asked for permission to travel on the "king's highway" (the main north-south road from Damascus to the Gulf of Aqaba) where it passed through Edom.

Numbers 34:3; Joshua 15:1 - The Wilderness of Zin, along the southeastern border of the tribe of Judah, was the boundary between Israel and Edom.

**United Kingdom** 1 Samuel 21:7; 22:9-19 - Doeg the Edomite spotted David when he fled from Saul to the priests of Nob to retrieve Goliath's sword. Doeg later reported the event to Saul and personally killed eighty-five priests at the order of Saul.

2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13 - David destroyed an Edomite army and conquered the land of Edom.

1 Kings 9:26; 11:14; 2 Chronicles 8:17 - Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber near Elath "in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea." God raised up Hadad the Edomite as an adversary to judge Solomon for his unfaithfulness.

Isaiah 34:1-11; 63: 1-3 - In picturing God's final judgment on the earth as He intervened to judge sin and restore His people Israel, Isaiah recorded that God's sword "descends in judgment on Edom." (34:5) The prophet pictured God coming from Edom with His robe stained in the blood of His enemies.

**Divided Kingdom** 2 Kings 3:4-27 - The kings of Judah, Israel, and Edom led their armies through the Desert of Edom in a surprise attack against the king of Moab. 2 Kings 14:7; 16:6 - King Amaziah of Judah defeated ten thousand Edomites in a major battle and captured the city of Sela. Later the king of Aram captured Elath from Judah, and drove out the people of Judah. The Edomites moved back to populate the city.

2 Chronicles 20 - The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites united and crossed the Dead Sea at the tongue of land called the Lisan to attack Judah. Jehoshaphat led the Israelites into the wilderness, only to discover that God had already intervened and caused the allies to fight among themselves and kill one another.

2 Chronicles 28:17 - The Edomites attacked Judah during the reign of Ahaz.

Isaiah 11:14 - Isaiah prophesied a day when God's people would triumph over Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

**Ammon** Isaiah 34:1-11; 63:1-3 - In picturing God's final judgment on the earth, as He intervened to judge sin and restore His people Israel, Isaiah recorded that God's sword "descends in judgment on Edom" (34:5). The prophet pictured God coming from Edom with His robe stained in the blood of His enemies. Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12 - God would make Edom a desolate waste because of their violence against the people of Judah. Through Amos, God condemned Edom for pursuing "his brother [Judah] with a sword, stifling all compassion" (Amos 1:11).

The Book of Obadiah - The prophet Obadiah described God's judgment on the prideful people of Edom.

**Babylonian Captivity** Psalm 137:7 - The psalmist asked God to judge the Edomites for their boastful taunting over Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonians. Jeremiah 49:7-22 - Jeremiah described God's judgment against Edom. Lamentations 4:21-22 - Edom rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem, but God promised to punish Edom for their sin. Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:1-15 - God vowed to destroy Edom because the Edomites had taken revenge on the people of Judah and, by force, tried to take the land God had promised to His people Israel. Daniel 11:41 - Daniel predicted that Edom, Moab, and Ammon would not fall into the hands of the final world ruler who would invade Israel just before the coming of Israel's Messiah.

**Restoration** Malachi 1:4 - God vowed that the Edomites would not be allowed to rise again. Instead they would remain under the wrath of the Lord.

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## Ezion Geber/Ezion-geber

Meaning: the giant's backbone (so called from the head of a mountain which runs out into the sea). It is an ancient city and harbor at the northeast end of the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Akabah, near Elath or Eloth (Num. 33:35; Deut. 2:8). According to the translation of "Targum Yonathan Ben Ezial", the words Ezion-Geber mean 'The Village of the Hen'.

Here Solomon built ships, "Tarshish ships," like those trading from Tyre to Tarshish and the west, which traded with Ophir (1 Kings 9:26; 2 Chr. 8:17). Here also Jehoshaphat's fleet was shipwrecked (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chr. 20:36). It became a populous town, many of the Jews settling in it (2 Kings 16:6, "Elath"). It is supposed that anciently the north end of the gulf flowed further into the country than now, as far as 'Ain el-Ghudyen (which is 10 miles up the dry bed of the Arabah) and that Ezion-geber may have been there.

The Children of Israel encamped in Asiongaber in their journey through the wilderness (Numbers 33:35). The ships of Solomon and Hiram started from this port on their voyage to Ophir. It was the main port for Israel's commerce with the countries bordering on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Josaphat, King of Juda, joined himself with Ochozias, the wicked King of Israel, to make ships in Asiongaber; but God disapproved the unholy alliance, and the ships were broken in the port (2 Chronicles 20:37).

Ezion-Geber was one of the places the Israelites migrated through during the Exodus.

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## Jerash/Gerasa

The modern city of Jerash in Jordan preserves the name of the ancient city of Gerasa, one of the most important cities in the region of the Decapolis. The city is located about twenty-five miles north of Amman and about forty miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Jerash has some of the best-preserved Roman ruins in the Middle East. The only possible reference to Gerasa in the New Testament occurs in the account of Jesus casting the demons into the herd of swine. Matthew 8:28-34 records the exact location where the

miracle occurred. Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience more familiar with the geographical details of the land, could record the specific village along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. However, Mark (writing to a Roman audience) and Luke (writing to a Greek audience) recorded the nearest large city that would be familiar to their readers. While there is a textual problem that divides scholars, the two possible cities named by Mark and Luke is Gadara (a smaller city six miles from the Sea of Galilee) or Gerasa (the larger city forty miles from the Sea of Galilee). If Gerasa is the correct textual reading, then Mark and Luke were pointing to the region dominated by the city called Gerasa (modern Jerash).

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## Machaerus

The dramatic hilltop/fortress of Machaerus, known today as Mukawir, is the place where John the Baptist was beheaded. This promontory allows for a view of the Dead Sea from the Eastern shore. The fortress was originally built by Hasmonean ruler Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) to defend the region of Perea. His widow, Alexandra, stored her treasure here. The site was destroyed by the Romans in 63 BC and restored and enhanced by Herod the Great (37-4 BC).

**Life of Christ** Matthew 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-29 - When Herod Antipas divorced his wife to marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, John the Baptist publicly condemned his behavior. John was imprisoned and later beheaded when Salome, Herodias's daughter, danced for Herod and requested John's head on a platter.

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## Medeba/Madaba

The Medeba of the Bible is today the Arabic town of Madaba. Also known as "the City of Mosaics", the town is famous for its spectacular Byzantine-era mosaics, which are scattered throughout the town's homes and churches. Located on the king's highway just nineteen miles south of Amman, Madaba is best known for the sixth-century mosaic map of the Holy Land, in which Jerusalem and its surrounding regions are depicted.

**Period of the Exodus** Numbers 21:21-25, 30-31 - Israel defeated Sihon king of the Amorites and captured his territory, including Medeba.

Joshua 13:15-16 - The tribe of Reuben received "the whole plateau past Medeba" as part of its inheritance.

**Divided Kingdom** Isaiah 15:2 - Isaiah predicted the inhabitants of Moab would weep over the destruction of Nebo and Medeba.

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## Moab/ Moabites

The Moabites descended from a son born to Lot and his oldest daughter following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:30-38). Because the Moabites descended from Lot (Abraham's nephew), they were considered a "related" nation to Israel. "Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession" (Deut. 2:9). The Moabites occupied the tableland east of the Dead Sea. Their northern boundary extended to the Arnon River, and their southern boundary extended to the Zered River. However, in times of strength their territory did expand northward beyond the Arnon River. Thus, the place where Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land was called the "plains of Moab." The national god of the Moabites was Chemosh.

**Patriarchal Period** Genesis 19:30-38 - Lot's oldest daughter got her father drunk and had sexual relations with him. The child born of that union was named Moab, and the Moabites descended from him.

**Period of the Exodus** Numbers 21:11-13; Judges 11:17-18 - Israel skirted past Moab on its journey northward along the eastern side of the Dead Sea.

Numbers 22-25; Revelation 2:14 - Balak, king of Moab, summoned the prophet Balaam to Moab, and

summoned the prophet Balaam to curse the nation of Israel. Although Balaam was unable to curse Israel outright, he evidently urged the Moabite women to entice the men of Israel into idolatry.  
Deuteronomy 2:9-18 - God prohibited Israel from taking the land of the Moabites.

**Period of the Judges** Judges 3:12-30 - Eglon, king of Moab, oppressed Israel for eighteen years and controlled the city of Jericho until he was defeated by the judge Ehud.  
The Book of Ruth - Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons fled to Moab to escape a famine in Bethlehem. Naomi's husband and two sons died. She returned to Bethlehem accompanied by one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess. Ruth married Boaz, and from their line came King David (Ruth 4:22) and Jesus (Matt. 1:5, 16).

**United Kingdom** 1 Samuel 14:47 - King Saul conducted military campaigns against Moab.  
1 Samuel 22:3-4 - David, while a fugitive from Saul, took his parents to live in Moab.  
2 Samuel 8:2; 1 Chronicles 18:2 - David conquered the Moabites and made them his subjects.

**Divided Kingdom** 2 Kings 1:1 - After King Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against the northern kingdom of Israel.  
2 Kings 3 - The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom attacked and defeated the Moabites.  
2 Chronicles 20 - The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites united together and crossed the Dead Sea at the Lisan to attack Judah. God would intervene and cause the allies to fight among themselves and kill one another.  
Isaiah 11:14; 15-16 - Isaiah prophesied of a day when God's people would triumph over Edom, Moab, and Ammon. He presented God's oracle of judgment against the people of Moab because of their excessive pride.  
Amos 2:1-3 - Amos announced God's judgment on the people of Moab because of their callous disregard even for the dead.

**Babylonian Captivity** Jeremiah 48 - Jeremiah presented God's prophecy of destruction against the people of Moab for their prideful self-reliance and their gloating over Judah's destruction.  
Ezekiel 25:8-11 - Ezekiel predicted Moab's destruction because of the nation's refusal to acknowledge God's special place for Israel.  
Daniel 11:41 - Daniel predicted that Edom, Moab, and Ammon would not fall into the hands of the final world ruler who would invade Israel just before the coming of Israel's Messiah.

**Restoration** Nehemiah 13:23-27 - Nehemiah rebuked the people of Judah for mixed marriages, including marriages to women of Moab.

### **Nabateans**

The Nabateans were Semitic nomads who developed and controlled the land caravan routes in the Middle East. Their early history is obscure, but by the fourth century BC they had taken control of Petra, from the Edomites, forcing the remaining Edomite population to migrate westward into the Negev and wilderness area in southern Judea.

Although the Nabateans began as nomadic traders, they eventually settled into cities that sat strategically along the main trade routes. Several such cities are in Israel (Mampsis/ Mamshit, Avdat/ Oboda), but the most well-known city is Petra in Jordan. The beautiful buildings carved into the hillside were constructed by the Nabateans and, later, by the Romans who captured the city in AD 106.

The Nabateans' sudden, swift conquest of the land of Edom and expulsion of the Edomites seems to confirm Obadiah's prophecy against Edom. "All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you; those who eat your bread will set a trap for you, but you will not detect it" (Obadiah 7). The Edomites welcomed the caravans of the Nabateans, and the wealth they brought, into their land...only to discover their "allies" would later become their conquerors.

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## **Mt. Nebo**

Mount Nebo, also identified with Pisgah, was located northeast of the Dead Sea overlooking the Jordan Valley opposite Jericho. A town with the same name was nearby. It is unclear whether the town was



named for the mountain or the mountain named for the town.

**Period of the Exodus** Numbers 23:13-14 - The king of Moab took Balaam the prophet to "the top of Pisgah" in an effort to get Balaam to curse Israel. Numbers 32:1-3, 37-38 - The tribe of Reuben received the city of Nebo as part of their tribal inheritance. Deuteronomy 32:49; 34:1 - God allowed Moses to view the Promised Land from "Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho." The specific mountain on which Moses stood was called "the top of Pisgah."

**Divided Kingdom** Isaiah 15:2 - Isaiah predicted the inhabitants of Moab would weep over the destruction of Nebo and Medeba.

**Single Kingdom** Jeremiah 48:1, 21-22 - Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Nebo and the other cities located on the "plateau."

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## Petra

Petra, the rose-red capital of the Nabateans, was originally a city of the Edomites (2 Kings 14:7). Some believe the Old Testament city of Sela (from the Hebrew word meaning "jagged cliff, craggy rock") is the same as the Nabatean city of Petra (from the Greek word meaning "the rock"). The city of Petra is located in a semi-landlocked valley on the eastern side of the Arabah, approximately fifty miles south of the Dead Sea. The normal entrance to the city of Petra is through the Siq ("cleft"), a winding fissure in the eastern ridge. At the end of the Siq, the path opens up to a canyon and there is a spectacular view of a temple carved into the face of the rock. Some Bible teachers believe the people of Israel will flee to Petra during the period of tribulation immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ to earth to set up His kingdom. These teachers cite several passages of Scripture to support their view. Those Scriptures are listed below.

**Divided Kingdom** "All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. My sword...descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed. The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood" (Isa. 34:4-6). "Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save'" (Isa. 63:1).

**Life of Christ** "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader understand - then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt. 24:15-16).

**Apostolic Age** "The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days" (Rev. 12:6).

*Excerpts taken from: The New Christian Traveler's Guide to the Holy Land, Dyer/Hatteberg*

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## Israel History & Scripture Reference

### Israel

Israel was the new name given to Jacob, which means "ruling with God" (Genesis 32:28). The twelve

tribes of Israel were created by the descendants of Israel's twelve sons. These tribes became known as the nation of Israel. The Northern Kingdom later became known as Israel. Israel was a term used to refer to God's true and obedient people in the New Testament.

*"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32:28).*

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## Caesarea

Herod the Great built the city of Caesarea between 22 & 10 B.C. and named it in honor of Caesar Augustus. Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, is an 8,000 acre site which is located 23 miles south of Mount Carmel on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea became the administrative capital of the Province of Judea, where the Roman procurators, or governors, resided. Three Roman governors of Palestine lived there: Felix (Acts 24), Festus (Acts 25), and Pontius Pilate (John 19). Archeologists found Pilate's name carved in stone in the theater at Caesarea. In New Testament times, Caesarea served as the major seaport of Judea. Herod built a harbor that could shelter ships from Mediterranean storms.

Herod wanted the city to be Hellenistic, accommodating mainly non-Jewish populations; however, there were still a significant number of Jews who resided in the city. Cornelius, a Roman officer, was converted to Christianity in Caesarea (Acts 10:1, 24). Peter's mission to Caesarea helped to expand the Christian population among the Gentiles (Acts 10). The apostle Peter visited Philip, who was a prominent Christian leader who lived there (Acts 21:8). Caesarea was also the place of Paul's imprisonment for two years, before his journey to Rome. In AD 70 Roman general Titus returned to Caesarea after conquering Jerusalem, as did Flavius Silva in AD 73 after defeating the fortress cities of Masada and Herodium. During the Byzantine period,

Caesarea became a center of Christian learning.

Since 1971, excavations have added much information about Caesarea. A very productive aqueduct was built by King Herod, which brought freshwater from Mount Carmel to Caesarea. This water traveled underground, originating from springs to the northeast. A smaller aqueduct was also used for irrigation. Large sewers have been found running under the city as well. A 30,000 seat hippodrome (racetrack) was also built on the east side of the city. However it was destroyed during the Muslim invasion of 640, along with a large archives building on the coast. Two quotations of the Greek text of Romans 13:3 were found inscribed on mosaic floors in the archives building during excavation. Still visible today is the large amphitheater northwest of the hippodrome. In 1976, excavations produced the first evidence of Strato's Tower, the Hellenistic site near which Herod built Caesarea, according to Josephus. Also, a small synagogue was excavated north of a large fort built at the Herodian harbor during the Crusades. This harbor area contained many stone storerooms; many of which have still not been excavated. The only one ever found in Palestine was reused by the Roman legions as a Mithraeum (a cultic center dedicated to the Persian god Mithras). The city of Caesarea was never rebuilt after its destruction by Muslims in the thirteenth century.

*"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him..." (John 19:1-42).*

*"Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30).*

*"And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends"(Acts 10:24).*

*"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him"(Acts 21:8).*

*"We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness..."(Acts 24:3-27).*

*"Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem..."(Acts 25:1-27).*

## **Mt. Carmel**

Carmel is a mountainous ridge extending about twenty miles along the Mediterranean Sea and jutting southeastward into the Jezreel Valley. Its greatest width at the southeast is thirteen miles; its highest point 1,742 feet. The ridge is made of the same Cenomanian limestone as makes up the central mountain range of Palestine. Haifa, located on Carmel's northwestern corner, contains harbors for ships passing in the ocean; several Jewish settlements are also nestled in Mount Carmel's slopes, and two large Druze villages. (Druzes are members of a particular Muslim sect.) The plain of Sharon extends to the south.

In ancient times oak trees, olive groves, and vineyards grew around Mt. Carmel, which explains why it is known for its beauty and fertility (Isaiah 33:9; 35:2). "Carmel" is a contraction of a Hebrew word meaning "vineyard" or "garden of God." Robbers and outcasts used this area as a hiding place, because of the many dense wild plants and gorges and caves (Amos 9:3). Today, Carmel is still forested, and large parts of it have been made a nature reserve. Solomon described his beloved by saying, "Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel" (Song of Solomon 7:5), possibly comparing her hair to the thick, luxuriant foliage of Carmel.

Conquerors and traders often avoided Mount Carmel's military base and moved through the Jezreel Valley to the east or the Zebulun Valley to the northeast. There were important passes that cut through the mountain, which linked the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon. Early in the fifteenth century BC, that route was taken by Pharaoh Thutmose III and also by British Lord Allenby when he conquered Palestine in 1918. The tribal territories of Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, and Manasseh met at Mount Carmel, although possession of the mountain's heights was never fully settled.

The crowning event of Elijah's ministry took place on Mount Carmel. Elijah the prophet challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). Elijah was not the first to build a Hebrew altar on the mountain; the Bible describes him as repairing a ruined "altar of the LORD" before offering his sacrifice (1 Kings 18:30). According to tradition, that contest took place at Qeren ha-Carmel, located at 1,581 feet, overlooking the Jezreel Valley. The brook Kishon flows through that valley and around to the north of Carmel before emptying into the Bay of Acre (1 Kings 18:40).

*"So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel" (1 Kings 18:20).*

*"It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (Isaiah 35:2).*

*"And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence..." (Amos 9:3).*

## Megiddo

Located west of Jordan at the edge of the fertile Jezreel Valley, this important city guarded the main pass of the International Coastal Highway leading into the valley. This strategic position made Megiddo one of the most important commercial and military centers of Palestine from 2000 to early 1000 B.C. Megiddo was the scene of many Old Testament battles. Great military men, such as Thutmose III of Egypt (15th century B.C.), Napoleon in 1799, and General Allenby during World War I, have fought for mastery there. King Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.) defeated a coalition of Canaanite kings at Megiddo. It is also the place where king Ahaziah (2

Kings 9:27) and Josiah (2 Kings 23:29-30) died.

Although he did not take the city, Joshua defeated the king of Megiddo at the time of the Israelite conquest of Canaan (Joshua 12:21). The land was later divided among the tribes of Israel and Megiddo was assigned to Manasseh. However, they could not conquer it from the Canaanites (Joshua 17:11-12; Judges 1:27). Deborah and Barak defeated the forces of Hazor under the command of Sisera near Megiddo, but they did not take the city either (Judges 4:15; Judges 5:19). King David might have conquered the land as part of his program for establishing the kingdom. By the time of King Solomon, Megiddo served as the headquarters of one of his twelve administrative regions (1 Kings 4:12). Later, Solomon rebuilt the city in order to serve as one of his chariot and garrison cities (1 Kings 9:15-19). The plain of Megiddo (valley of Megiddon, KJV) is referred to in Zechariah's prophecies that Israel and Jerusalem would be restored (Zechariah 12:11). Revelation 16:16 mentions the numerous conflicts fought over control of this valley, also known as Armageddon (Har Megiddon, the "mount of Megiddo").

*"Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns...nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land" (Judges 1:27).*

*"And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer" (1 Kings 9:15).*

*"In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" (Zechariah 12:11).*

*"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:16).*

## **Cana**

Cana was a village in Galilee, located four miles northwest of Nazareth. Jesus performed His first miracles in Cana. He changed the water into wine (John 2:1, 11) and healed an official's son who lived in Capernaum (John 4:46-50). Nathaneal, one of Jesus' disciples, and possibly Simon came from Cana (John 21:2).

Cana was made headquarters for defending Galilee against the Romans during the first Jewish revolt, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. After this destruction, the town became the seat of the priestly family of Eliashib. John's Gospel refers to it as "Cana of Galilee," in order to distinguish it from Kanah, located near Tyre (Joshua 19:28). Since Byzantine and medieval times, the traditional site of Cana has been Kefar Kana, about four miles east of Nazareth on the main road from Nazareth to Tiberias. However, contemporary scholars have almost unanimously settled on Khirbet Kana as the site of New Testament Cana. This site is located eight miles north of Nazareth on the northern edge of the Battuf Plain. To this day it is called Cana of Galilee by the Arabs of the region. Pottery from the Hebrew monarchy period, as

well as from Hellenistic, Roman, Arabic, and Crusader times, has been found by archeologists.

*"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).*

*"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum..." (John 4:46-50).*

## **Nazareth**

Jesus grew up in Nazareth; a small village in Galilee located seventy miles north of Jerusalem. It is first mentioned in the New Testament as the home of Mary and Joseph (Luke 1:26-27). Nazareth is located about 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee and 20 miles east of the Mediterranean. Jerusalem lies about 70 miles south. It was located in the rocky limestone hills, overlooking the Jezreel Valley. It is situated on three sides of a hill. This location forms a sheltered valley with a moderate climate favorable to fruits and wildflowers. Archeologists found that the ancient town was higher on the western hill than the present village (compare Luke 4:29). Although trade routes and roads passed near Nazareth, the village itself was not on any main road.

Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha (ancient writings not included in the Bible), Jewish writings, or the histories of Josephus. Nathanael remarked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see" (John 1:46). Jesus' public ministry began in Nazareth. He later left the village to be baptized by John in the Jordan River (Mark 1:9). When John was arrested, Jesus moved to Capernaum (Matthew 4:13).

Though Jesus was often identified by his boyhood city as "Jesus of Nazareth" (John 18:5, 7), the New Testament records only one subsequent visit by Jesus to Nazareth. During this visit, Jesus preached in the local synagogue and claimed that Isaiah's prophecies were coming true to the oppressed people. He was then rejected by the townspeople (Luke 4:16-30). Jesus' followers were also known as "Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). The angel Gabriel announced in Nazareth that Mary would bear a Son whose name would be called Jesus (Luke 1:26).

Nazareth remained a Jewish city until the time of the emperor Constantine (AD 327), when it became a sacred place for Christian pilgrims. In about AD 600, a large basilica was built in Nazareth. The village was alternately controlled by Arabs and Crusaders until 1517, when it fell to the Turks, who forced all Christians to leave. In 1620, Christians returned and the town became an important Christian center.

*"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23).*

*"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read" (Luke 4:16).*

*"For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).*

## **Tiberias**

Founded by Herod Antipas about A.D. 18, Tiberias was one of the two cities that dominated Lower Galilee later that century. It is located midway along the western shores of Lake Galilee. Herod named the city in honor of the emperor Tiberius. Today the name is preserved in the town Tabariyeh. The site became Herod's new capital after abandoning Sepphoris, which he built in 4

B.C. Tiberias had several advantages because of its location. It lay just below a rocky projection above the lake, a natural acropolis that offered good protection. It was a center where roads from north, south, and west met, allowing Herod to move readily to various parts of his domain. To the south lay famous warm springs, which were known to the Roman writer Pliny the Elder. He spoke of their health-giving qualities. A lakeside palace was built by Herod, with the security of a naturally fortified acropolis lying behind him. This palace would let in a panoramic view of Galilee.

After a burial ground was discovered during the building of the town, Jews abandoned the site. The town was settled by a group of Gentiles, some under the orders of Herod. Herod fostered population growth by offering nice houses and plenty of land to all who lived there. According to the Gospels, Jesus never went to Tiberias, probably because of the pollution caused by corpses. The town of Tiberias is only mentioned once in the New Testament, after the feeding of the five thousand. The Sea of Tiberias, or Lake Galilee, is referred to in John 6:1 and John 21:1.

*"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias" (John 6:1).*

*"The day after Jesus walked on the sea a crowd from Tiberias pursued Him across the sea to Capernaum..." (John 6:22-25).*

*"Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks" (John 6:23).*

## **Sea of Galilee**

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake thirteen miles long and seventeen miles wide. The lake is surrounded on all sides by higher land because the surface of the lake is 690 feet below sea level. It lies in the lower section of the Jordan Valley. It is located about 60 miles north of Jerusalem in a range of mountains. The mountains of Upper Galilee are northwest of the lake and rise to a height of 4,000 feet above sea level, while the mountains on the east and west ascend about 2,000 feet. The Decapolis is found on the west, south, and east. The mountain wall flattens into the plain of Gennesaret at the northwest corner of the lake. At about 2,000 feet above sea level, it gives way to El Batila in the northeast. Where the Jordan River enters the sea. During the New Testament, the sea was surrounded by the towns of Capernaum, Bethsaida,



Korazin, Magdala, Tiberias, and others.

This lake has many names, beginning with Sea of Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11), which is found in the Old Testament. The name was later changed to Lake Gennesaret (Luke 5:1). Because the town of Tiberias is on the shore, it was also called the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1, 23, and 21:1). King Herod built the town near the warm springs of Hamath by the sea around AD 26 and named it for the emperor. People began to call it the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18) because it is close to the province of Galilee. In the New Testament, "the sea" identifies it as the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is one of the five divisions found in the Jordan Rift, which drains 70 percent of the land of Palestine. In its 65-mile course from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, the Jordan River drops 590 feet, an average of about nine feet per mile. This lake provided fishing industries and agriculture products to many local towns and villages. After being rejected by His home village, Jesus moved his ministry to the Sea of Galilee, where He performed many miracles and teachings. Jesus calmed the storm on the lake for His disciples and also appeared walking on the water of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 6:47-52).

*"And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26).*

*"Now as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers" (Mark 1:16).*

*"And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out..." (Mark 6:48-49).*

## Capernaum

This city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee became Jesus' home base for His ministry. This name means "village of Nahum," although there is no knowledge as to who Nahum was. Capernaum was located in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matthew 4:13). The west shore of the lake was settled by the tribe of Naphtali. Its location was described as being near the border of the Jordan and the political frontier. Such a frontier town is told about in the story of the centurion (8:5; Luke 7:2).

Through excavation and Jewish evidence, Tell Hum has been revealed as the site for ancient Capernaum. During the excavations, a private house was uncovered beneath a fourth-century Jewish-Christian place of meeting. In the first half of the second century, this house served as an assembly hall for the early Christians. It was very likely the home of Peter as well, through findings of inscriptions and reports from early Christian travelers.

Matthew refers to Capernaum as "Jesus' own city" (Matthew 9:1). Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, healed two paralytics, and raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Matthew

8:5-17; Mark 2:1-22; Luke 8:40-56). Jesus called His first disciples from the villagers and fishermen nearby. He called Matthew to be His disciple from a station selling goods located in the vicinity of Capernaum. Although He taught much in the local synagogue and performed many miracles, few people from the city were among his followers. This caused Jesus to grieve over the city for its lack of faith (Matthew 11:20-24). Because of the city's refusal to believe and repent, there was a heavy curse imposed on Capernaum (Matthew 11:23).

*"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim" (Matthew 4:13).*

*"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him..." (Matthew 8:5-17).*

*"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret..." (Luke 5:1-11).*

## **Mount of Beatitudes**

This is the mountain where Jesus was followed by great multitudes to listen to his sermon of Beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 5:3- 12). These statements tell who's blessed and the reason that they are blessed.

*"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him..." (Matthew 5:1).*

*"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him" (Matthew 8:1).*

## **Dan**

This city lay at the southern base of Mount Hermon and was the northernmost point of the ancient Israelite kingdom. It was also used as a topographical marker in the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" (2 Samuel 3:10). Dan was a Phoenician city, originally named Leshem (Joshua 19:47) or Laish (Judges 18:7), which was conquered by Dan's tribe when they migrated northward.

Dan was also a very important commercial center, because it guarded a major trading route running between Damascus and Tyre. The Huleh Valley, below Dan, was very lush and fertile because of the great water sources from the Jordan River. There was an abundant amount of grain and vegetables produced in this territory, as well as plenty of supplies to feed the flocks and herds of animals.

Eventually Israel separated into two kingdoms. When Jeroboam I became king of the northern kingdom of Israel, Dan housed one of two shrines where golden calves were worshiped. Even

Jehu's drastic purge did not defeat the worship of Baal at Dan. The city fell under Syrian control (2 Kings 10:28-32) during Ben-hadad's reign. Dan was later re-conquered by the northern kingdom when the Syrians were attempting to ward off Assyrian attacks during the time of Jeroboam III (793-753 BC). Its inhabitants were deported to Assyria (2 Kings 17:6) by Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC). The site did continue to be inhabited (Jeremiah 4:15; 8:16), and its acropolis was used for worship. During Greek and Roman times, the area was enlarged and in the New Testament times, it was eclipsed by Caesarea, which was located very close to Dan.

*"And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father" (Joshua 19:47).*

*"To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba" (2 Samuel 3:10).*

*"For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim" (Jeremiah 4:15).*

## Caesarea Philippi

Located on the southern slopes of Mount Hermon near the ancient city of Dan, this city is found at the northern extremity of Palestine. It lies in the Wadi Banias, a beautiful area near the Jordan River. It was called Panion in the second century BC, because the Greek god Pan was worshiped in a cave nearby. It was also the place where the King Antiochus III, of Syria, defeated the Ptolemies of Egypt in a crucial battle in 200 BC. "Panium" was governed by Zenodorus, according to Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities 15.10.3). Josephus writes its cultic site was "a very fine cave in a mountain, under which there is a great cavity in the earth, and the cavern is abrupt, and prodigiously deep, and full of a still water; over it hangs a vast mountain, and under the caverns arise the springs of the river Jordan."

Augustus Caesar gave the city to Herod the Great after the death of Zenodorus. King Herod then gave the territory to his third son, Philip, when he died in 4 BC. Philip built his capital and named it Caesarea Philippi, after the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar and himself. This distinguished it from the larger Caesarea Maritima on the Mediterranean coast. This territory was also known as Panias, an area sacred to the Graeco-Roman nature god. Herod and Philip also built a temple in this capital dedicated to Caesar.

Caesarea Philippi is where Jesus asked His disciples "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" and Peter made his confession that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-16). The transfiguration of Jesus probably took place here as well. King Agrippa II enlarged Caesarea Philippi in about AD 50 and named it Neronias in honor of the emperor Nero. The modern name, Banias, derives from the Arabic difficulty in pronouncing

Panias.

*"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16).*

## **Jordan River**

The Jordan River originates above the Sea of Galilee and meanders south through the Jordan Valley two hundred miles to end in the Dead Sea. This river lies in the bottom of a great canyon called the Jordan Rift, an elongated depression stretching from lower southwest Asia Minor (Syria) to the Gulf of Aqaba. The rift was once filled by the Lisan Lake, but geological activity caused it to recede, and the result was the formation of three separate bodies: the Huleh Lake, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea. Each of these bodies of water is fed by the Jordan River even to this day. In Hebrew, Jordan River means "the descender." The Jordan is comprised of four separate streams: Bereighith, Hasani, el-Liddani, and Baniyas. In the northwest corner of the Huleh Valley, the Bereighith emerges within the area of Merj Ayoun, flowing from a spring located on a modest knoll west of Mount Hermon. To the east is the Hasbani, a stream that descends from a spring 1,700 feet above sea level and follows a course of about 24 miles. These two smaller streams merge less than a mile above where they merge with the el-Liddani and the Baniyas. The el-Liddani is located near Tel el-Qadi (the biblical city of Dan). The most powerful stream of the four, it is fed by 'Ain Leddan, a spring that is nestled among thick underbrush and is fed by the melting snows off Mount Hermon. The el-Liddani meets the Baniyas, the last of the four streams. The Baniyas originates from a cave approximately 1,100 feet above sea level in the northeast corner of the Huleh Valley (Caesarea Philippi) and follows a steep descent before it joins with others. These four streams, making up the Jordan River, flow together along a southerly course of 10 miles before entering Huleh Lake.

The Jordan River played a very important role in Biblical times. It is the river that the Israelites crossed to enter the Promised Land of Canaan (Joshua 3:14-17). The fords of the Jordan were the sites of conflict in the war of Jephthah and the Gileadites against the Ephraimites (Judges 12:1-6). The prophet Elijah sought refuge from Ahab king of Israel by the brook of Kerith east of the Jordan (1 Kings 17:1-5). Elisha followed Elijah to the Jordan River, where he watched Elijah ascend into heaven by a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:6-12). Naaman, the Syrian general, bathed in the Jordan at the command of Elisha and his leprosy was healed (2 Kings 5:8-14). Elisha made the ax float at the Jordan River (2 Kings 6:1-7). The Jordan River also marked the division between the tetrarchy of Philip and that of Herod Antipas. It is also the river in which John baptized Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17). Peter confessed that Jesus was the "Christ, the Son of the living God" at Caesarea Philippi, located on one of the sources of the Jordan, Baniyas (Matthew 16:13-20). Jesus healed two blind men at Jericho, which is near the Jordan (Matthew 20:29-34) and visited with Zacchaeus in that same city (Luke 19:1-10).

*"And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people..." (Joshua 3:14-17).*

*"And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan..." (2*

*Kings 2:6-12).*

*"Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong..." (Jeremiah 49:19).*

*"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him..." (Matthew 3:13-17).*

## **Bethany beyond the Jordan**

The Jordan River site is along the major east-west trade route. The site is midway between Amman, Jordan and Jerusalem, directly east of and in view of Jericho. It was also along the north-south route for those traveling between the Galilee region and Jerusalem.

**Baptismal of Jesus** - Matthew 3:13-17 & corresponding passages in the other three Gospels. Jordan claims this place as the baptism site of Jesus by John the Baptist, but actually it can be claimed by Israel as well. John the Baptist was baptizing in this well traveled area, calling for repentance and "prepare ye the way of the Lord" for the coming Messiah.

**Crossing the Jordan to the Promised Land** – Joshua 3:1-4:24 This is the location of the Israel encampment and the crossing of the Jordan River led by Joshua and the Arc of the Covenant into the "Promised Land."

**Elijah ascends to heaven** - 2 Kings 2:5-14 The hill on the east of the Jordan River is the site where Elijah passed the mantle on to Elisha and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

## **Beth- Shan**

There are traces of an ancient settlement here in the well watered and fertile northern part of the Jordan Valley. This Palestinian town is located fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee and four miles west of the Jordan River. It stood at the eastern end of the Jezreel Valley, guarding an important Jordan River crossing. It was one of the key cities that developed at points where natural routes connected the highlands to the east and west.

When the Philistines defeated Israel under King Saul at the battle on Mount Gilboa, Beth-Shan was a Philistine city. The slain bodies of Saul and his sons were hung on the city wall. Saul's head was displayed in the temple of Dagon, a Philistine deity (1 Samuel 31:10-13; 2 Samuel 21:12-14; 1 Chronicles 10:8-10). Later, the city became a part of David's kingdom.

Beth-Shan contains the ancient tell from the Old Testament, which towers above the city of Scythopolis. Two Egyptian texts found at Tell-el Husn, a mound, indicate that this is the same area as Beth-Shan. The tell, or mound, is 213 feet high and about one-half mile in circumference at its base. An inscribed stone, called a stele, was found at Beth-Shan that tells the story of Seti

I's victory over Habiru.

The area that included Beth-Shan was given to Issachar's tribe at the time of Israel's conquest of Canaan. Eventually, Manasseh's tribe took it over (Joshua 17:11). It was then added into the district of Baanah under King Solomon (1 Kings 4:12). The city is thought to have been destroyed by Shishak (Sheshonk I), pharaoh of Egypt in the tenth century B.C. During the remainder of the Old Testament period, Beth-Shan was insignificant.

Beth-Shan received the name of Scythopolis during the Hellenistic period because it was settled by a colony of Scythian mercenaries serving the Egyptian king Ptolemy II. This strategic site also held an Egyptian military base, which were also located in other surrounding areas. Greek deities Dionysus and Zeus had temples built in honor of them. Eventually, Beth-Shan became an important administrative center under the rule of the Hasmonean kings. It prospered as a member of the league of Greco-Roman commercial cities called Decapolis (Matthew 4:25; Mark 7:31) and was the only league member west of the Jordan.

*"And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-Shan..." (1 Samuel 31:10-12).*

*"And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa..." (2 Samuel 21:12-14).*

*"And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa..." (1 Chronicles 10:8-10).*

*"And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan" (Matthew 4:25).*

## **Jericho**

Jericho was an ancient city on the west side of the Jordan River. The name Jericho may be connected to the ancient name of the Canaanite moon god. The Hebrew words for moon, month, new moon, and Jericho are very similar. It is also associated with the words for spirit or smell.

The pleasant fragrances of the fruits and spices in the land may have helped to name the place. In the Old Testament, it is referred to as "the city of palm trees" (Deuteronomy 34:3; 2 Chronicles 28:15). Jericho was located about five miles from the southern-most fords and about ten miles northwest of the Dead Sea. It lies nearly 1,000 feet below sea level and about 3,500 feet below Jerusalem, which was only 17 miles away. As Jesus said in the parable of the good Samaritan, "down from Jerusalem to Jericho" (Luke 10:30).

Before the Bible first mentions Jericho in connection with the exodus from Egypt, it was a large and thriving city for centuries. Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is dated back to the Neolithic Age ten thousand years ago. There are three main reasons primitive people would have chosen this site as a settlement and as a key city. 1) It has a plentiful spring, now called Elisha's Fountain (2 Kings 2:18-22). 2) It has a warm climate in the winter, although "hot"

describes it in the summer. 3) It is strategically placed at a Jordan ford and at the base of several routes leading westward to the foothills. Many different populations have come and gone in Jericho, however, the civilizations grew more complex over the years. The food-gathering population gave way to a relatively complex urban society, which included kings, soldiers, and guest houses. Jericho was developed this way when Joshua arrived there. The first certain identification of its inhabitants occurs in Numbers 13:29: "The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan."

In the Old Testament, Jericho is best known because of Joshua's conquest of the city by encircling it and blowing the trumpets in obedience to God's command. Israel had spent some time on the east bank of the Jordan in the plains of Moab (Numbers 22:1; Numbers 26:3, 63). Jericho was targeted as the first military objective in the conquest. Before crossing the Jordan and establishing camp at Gilgal, Joshua sent spies ahead to Jericho. Rahab the harlot took them in and later helped them escape. For her cooperation, she and her family were spared when Israel destroyed the city (Joshua 2:1; Joshua 6:1). Because Jericho was such a strategic oasis, if it could be taken, the way into the mountains of Canaan would lay open. The fall of the city itself occurred after the Israelites had marched around it in silence, except for the continual blowing of trumpets, once a day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. As the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted and the walls collapsed. Joshua laid a curse on anyone who might rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26). Five hundred years later, Hiel rebuilt the city at the cost of two of his sons (1 Kings 16:34). Joshua's victory has led to major excavations at Tel es Sultan, the mound of ancient Jericho.

Jericho appears throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In 2 Samuel 10:5 David had his humiliated ambassadors wait there until their beards grew back (see also 1 Chronicles 19:5). It was also where many of the prophets lived, as well as a headquarters for Elisha (2 Kings 2:5; 1 Samuel 10:5). A return of prisoners also took place there at the time of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:15). Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. and King Zedekiah fled to land near Jericho, but was caught by Babylonians. The Babylonians took out his eyes at a place called Riblah in Syria (2 Kings 25:5; Jeremiah 39:5; Jeremiah 52:8). Jericho is mentioned in the census lists of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 2:34; Nehemiah 7:36). Men from Jericho also helped rebuild the Jerusalem wall (Nehemiah 3:2).

King Herod built the Jericho of the New Testament more than a mile to the south of the Old Testament site. In the New Testament Jericho is the home of Zacchaeus, the wealthy chief tax collector of the new Roman Jericho. As Jesus passed through Jericho (Luke 19:1) he met and ate with Zacchaeus. Jesus also healed blind men while passing from the site of ancient Jericho (Matthew 20:29) to the Herodian Jericho (Luke 18:35). The parable of the good Samaritan also took place in Jericho (Luke 10:30-37).

In 1868, Charles Warren first excavated Jericho. It was then excavated by Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger in 1907-11, and then by John Garstang in 1930-36. Although Garstang thought he had found the wall that fell before the Israelites, the investigations by Kathleen Kenyon in 1952-56 showed that the topmost level of ruins was already too early to tell anything of the city of Joshua's day. Kathleen Kenyon uncovered and interpreted many layers of civilizations that date back to 8000 B.C. at Jericho. The Neolithic tower has also been uncovered through



excavations.

Although Jericho was of small consequence after its destruction under Joshua, the Jericho of Herod was a city of beauty and importance. Eventually this Jericho decayed with the decline of Roman influence in the Middle East. There have been writings of pilgrims to the Holy Land that have taught us what we now know of the modern city of Jericho. They usually report seeing certain things of Biblical significance, such as the tree that Zacchaeus climbed. They also report that Jericho was a filthy, wretched Muslim village. It remained that way until recently, when it grew in size and importance as a major West Bank City.

*"And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho..." (Joshua 2:1).*

*"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in" (Joshua 6:1).*

*"And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho..." (Joshua 6:26).*

*"And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives... and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria" (2 Chronicles 28:15).*

*"But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him" (Jeremiah 52:8).*

*"And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him" (Matthew 20:29).*

*"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves..." (Luke 10:30-37).*

*"And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging..." (Luke 18:35-43).*

## **Dead Sea**

The Dead Sea is both the lowest point in Eurasia at 418 meters (1,371 ft) below sea level and falling, and the deepest hypersaline lake in the world at 330 m (1,083 ft) deep and 799 m (2,621 ft) below sea level. It is also one of the saltiest bodies of water on Earth with a salinity of about 30%. This is about 8.6 times greater than the average ocean salinity. It measures 67 kilometers (42 mi) long, up to 18 kilometers (11 mi) wide, and is located on the border between the West Bank, Israel, and Jordan, and lies in the Jordan Rift Valley. The main tributary is the Jordan River.

The Dead Sea has attracted interest and visitors from around the Mediterranean basin for thousands of years. It was a place of refuge for King David, it was one of the world's first health resorts for Herod the Great, and it has been the supplier of products as diverse as balms for Egyptian mummification to potash for fertilizers.

In Arabic the Dead Sea is called Al Bahr al Mayyit meaning "the Dead Sea", or less commonly Bahr Lūt meaning "the Sea of Lot". Historically, another Arabic name was the "Sea of Zoar", after a nearby town. In Hebrew the Dead Sea is called the Yam ha-Melakh - meaning "sea of salt", or Yam ha-Mavet - meaning "sea of death". In past times it was the "Eastern Sea" or the "Sea of Arava". To the Greeks, the Dead Sea was "Lake Asphaltites"

The Jordan River is the only major stream flowing into Dead Sea. There are no outlet streams. The water level is receding to alarming levels due mostly to irrigation of the Jordan River, both in Israel & Jordan. Plans are being discussed to dig a channel from the Red Sea, Gulf of Aqaba in order to bring it back to past levels.

It is important to read Ezekiel's prophecy regarding this body of water in Ezekiel 47:7-10, 18

## **Called at various times:**

### The Salt Sea

*"All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." Geneses 14:3*

*"And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about." Numbers 34:12*

### The Sea of the Plains

*"The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, under Ashdoth-pisgah eastward." Deuteronomy 3:17*

*"And all the plain on the east side of the Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pisgah." Deuteronomy 4:49*

### The East Sea

*"But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into the land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder parts toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things." Joel 2:20*

### The Former Sea

*"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out of Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter it shall be." Zechariah 14:8*

# Masada

Masada is the name for a site of ancient palaces and fortifications in the South District of Israel on top of an isolated rock plateau on the eastern edge of the Judean Desert overlooking the Dead Sea. Masada became famous for its significance in the First Jewish-Roman War (Great Jewish Revolt), when a siege of the fortress by troops of the Roman Empire led to a mass suicide of the site's Jewish defenders when defeat became imminent.

## Geography

The cliffs on the east edge of Masada are about 451 m high, dropping off to the Dead Sea, and the cliffs on the west are about 100 m high; the natural approaches to the cliff top are very difficult. The top of the plateau is flat and rhomboid-shaped, about 600 by 300 m. The center of the plateau is at 31°18'55"N, 35°21'13"E. There was a casemate wall around the top of the plateau totaling 1400 m long and 4 m thick with many towers, and the fortress included storehouses, barracks, an armory, the palace, and cisterns that were refilled by rainwater. Three narrow, winding paths led from below to fortified gates.

## History

According to Flavius Josephus, a first century Jewish Roman historian, Herod the Great fortified Masada between 37 and 31 BCE as a refuge for himself in the event of a revolt. In 66 CE, at the beginning of the First Jewish-Roman War (also called the Great Jewish Revolt) against the Roman Empire, a group of Jewish rebels called the Zealots took Masada from the Roman garrison stationed there. In 70 CE, they were joined by additional Zealots and their families who were expelled from Jerusalem by the other Jews living there shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (and the Second Temple). For the next two years they used Masada as their base for raiding and harassing Roman and Jewish settlements alike.

In 72 CE, the Roman governor of Judaea, Lucius Flavius Silva, marched against Masada with the Roman legion X Fretensis and laid siege to the fortress. After failed attempts to breach the wall, they built a circumvallation wall and then a rampart against the western face of the plateau, using thousands of tons of stones and beaten earth. Josephus does not record any major attempts by the Zealots to counterattack the besiegers during this process. This is significantly different from his accounts of other sieges against Jewish fortresses, suggesting that perhaps the Zealots lacked the equipment or skills to fight the Roman legion. Some historians also believe that Romans may have used Jewish slaves to build the rampart. The Zealots were reluctant to kill the slaves because of their beliefs.

The rampart was complete in the spring of 73 CE, after approximately two to three months of siege. This allowed the Romans to finally breach the wall of the fortress with a battering ram on April 16. When they entered the fortress, however, the Romans discovered that its approximately 1000 defenders had set all the buildings but the food storerooms ablaze and committed mass suicide rather than face certain capture or defeat by their enemies. Capture would probably have led to slavery or execution. Because Judaism strongly discourages suicide the defenders were reported to have drawn lots and slain each other in turn, down to the last man, who would be the only one to actually take his own life. The storerooms were apparently left standing to show that the defenders retained the ability to live and chose the time of their death over slavery. This

account of the siege of Masada was relayed to Josephus by two women who survived the suicide by hiding inside a cistern along with five children. They repeated Elazar ben Yair's final exhortation to his followers, prior to the mass suicide, verbatim to the Romans.

## The site today

The site of Masada was identified in 1842 and extensively excavated from 1963 to 1965 by an expedition led by Israeli archeologist Yigael Yadin. A pair of cable cars now carries those visitors who do not wish to climb the ancient Snake Path (now restored on the eastern side of the mountain with access via the Dead Sea road). The area remained largely untouched by humans or nature in the past two millennia, due to the location's remoteness from human habitation and its arid environment. The Roman ramp still stands on the western side and can be climbed on foot. Many of the ancient buildings were restored from their remnants, as well as the wall- paintings of Herod's two main palaces, and the Roman-style bathhouses that he built. The synagogue, storehouses, and houses of the Jewish rebels were also found and restored. The meter-high circumvallation wall that the Romans built around Masada can be seen just outside this wall along with eleven barracks for the Roman soldiers. Water cisterns two-thirds of the way up the cliff drain the nearby wadis by an elaborate water system, which explains how the rebels managed to have enough water for such a long time.

## Ein Gedi

On the western shore of the Dead Sea about 35 miles southeast of Jerusalem, the extreme conditions of the area made habitation difficult except near the freshwater springs. En-gedi contained a hot water spring coming from the side of a limestone cliff that produced semi- tropical vegetation. This vital oasis was allotted to Judah's tribe as an inheritance (Joshua 15:62). The area became known for its palms, vineyards, and balsam (Sg 1:14; Josephus's Antiquities 20.1.2). This ancient site was southeast of the oasis at Tell el-Jarn near modern 'Ain Jidi. In 2 Chronicles 20:2, En-gedi was called Hazazon-tamar and was involved in several Old Testament events. Kedorlaomer conquered the Amorites here (Genesis 14:7). When David fled from Saul he found refuge in the many caves of the region (1 Samuel 23:29). In Ezekiel's vision of Israel's restoration, fishermen would catch fish from the Dead Sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim (Ezekial 47:10).

*"And they returned, and came to En-mish-pat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar" (Genesis 14:7).*

*"And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-ge-di" (1 Samuel 23:29).*

*"And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto En-eg-laim..." (Ezekiel 47:10).*

## Qumran Caves

These caves, located on the western shore of the Dead Sea, are where many ancient manuscripts have been found. Such manuscripts include the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Psalm Scroll, the Temple Scroll, and fragments of over 400 other writings including pieces from almost every book in the Old Testament. They were found in a dozen caves from 1947 onward. Some manuscripts are intact and others are fragmentary. Esther is the only book from the Old Testament that remains unrepresented.

On the north side of the Wadi Qumran, about one mile south of Cave I, lay the ruins of a Jewish monastery known as Khirbet Qumran. Khirbet Qumran was first investigated in 1949 by archaeologists Harding and de Vaux. The Jordanian Archaeological Museum and the Ecole Biblique conducted more investigation in 1951. They uncovered the main building and concluded that it was the center of a well-organized community. Most of the 200 to 400 people, who lived in Qumran, lived in tents or in nearby caves. A large cemetery was located to the east toward the Dead Sea. It was announced by De Vaux that Khirbet Qumran was the headquarters of a Jewish sect called the Essenes.

Dated back to the eighth and seventh centuries BC, investigations at this site have shown that it was lived in several times. Some have suggested that the buildings may have been built during the reign of King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:10). There is more evidence of people living on the site during the Greco-Roman period. A major settlement began shortly before 100 BC, in the time of Hyrcanus I, and ended with an earthquake in 31 BC. There was probably settlement in the area again at about the time of death of Herod the Great (4 BC). The area was then captured by the Romans in AD 68. A Roman garrison remained there until about AD 90. Jewish rebels then used the site as a base during the second revolt against the Romans under Bar-Kochba in AD 132-135.

The largest building was the main assembly hall. Much pottery was found, some of which was used for housing the scrolls, which were copied in the writing room. There were no manuscripts found in the ruins of Khirbet Qumran, however, the pottery was very similar to that in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in Cave I. This clearly shows that there is a link between the ruins and the manuscripts. Small plaster tables or benches together with inkwells dating from Roman times were also found during excavation in the writing room, or scriptorium.

The elaborate water system in the area had many round and rectangular cisterns that collected water from the mountains to the west, probably used for ritual purifications and baptism by the Qumran group. Hundreds of coins from the Greco-Roman period have also helped in telling us when the area was occupied. 'Ain Feshka, an oasis and spring about two miles to the south, was probably used as an agricultural outpost of Khirbet Qumran.

*"And the Ziphites came unto Saul and Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon..." (1 Samuel 26).*

*"Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the*

*low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry" (2 Chronicles 26:10).*

## Mount Moriah

This name is used only twice in the Old Testament. Abraham was sent to sacrifice his son Isaac in "the land of Moriah" (Genesis 22:2). It has been suggested that the form of the name "Moriah" may be connected with the ram that was "provided" in the place of Isaac when God "appeared" to Abraham. The Hebrew verb ra'ah can have the meanings "see," "provide," and "appear," and the ending -iah is the shortened form of the name of the Lord that is found in many Hebrew names.

The northern part of the ridge of Mount Moriah is actually 250 feet higher than the southeastern hill because the eastern ridge slopes towards the south. It is on this higher elevation that Solomon built the Temple Mount. Solomon's commencement of his grand design for Jerusalem enclosed the higher ridge of Mount Moriah, which provided space for the temple and palace complex. David expanded Jerusalem northward upon the northern part of the eastern ridge (2 Chronicles 3:1). The threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21) has been identified with Solomon's temple. Some see in the description of the Lord's appearing to David a reminder of his appearing to Abraham there. The Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities 1.13.2; 7.13.4), as well as the second-century BC book of Jubilees, connects the place of the temple with the place where Isaac was offered up (Jubilees 18:13). Moriah has been linked with Mt. Gerizim by Samaritan tradition. Muslim tradition links the Dome of the Rock with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on the great rock under the dome of the mosque.

*"And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2).*

*"And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (2 Samuel 24:18).*

*"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah..." (2 Chronicles 3:1).*

## Mount of Olives

From this overview, we sit while your guide discusses the Biblical significance and history of the city gates, valleys, and important structures. Thoughts of time past, present day and future events brings to mind the realization that this is the city of our Great King and our future home.

*"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from hence forth and forever." (Psalms 125:2)*

On Sunday of the last week of His life, Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives to cries of "Hosanna". On Tuesday of the same week, after answering questions from the religious authorities He taught his disciples about the "end times" while seated on the Mount of Olives.

*"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world" (Matthew 24:3).*

*"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately" (Mark 13:3).*

*"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12).*

## Garden of Gethsemene

Gethsemene was located opposite the temple, across the Kidron Valley on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. After the Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus engaged in fervent prayer in the Garden of Gethsemene. He underwent a great inner struggle, knowing that the hour of his betrayal was coming soon. It was here that Judas betrayed Jesus to temple authorities who placed Jesus under arrest (Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32-50; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:2-12).

The name Gethsemene is used only in Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32. It means "oil press," also suggesting the presence of an olive grove. More than anything else Jesus realized that He must say "yes" to the Father and bare the weight of the sins of all mankind. He prayed three times and was pressed to the extent that He sweated great drops of blood. For devotional application, it is interesting to note that olives are pressed three times. The use of the word "place" in the Gospel accounts indicates that Gethsemene was an enclosed piece of ground. It may be that the grove was privately owned and that Jesus and his disciples had special permission to enter.

The Gospels of Luke and John do not mention the word Gethsemene. However, they both record Jesus' agony before his betrayal. Luke says the location was on the "Mount of Olives" (Luke 22:39). John describes the area as "across the Kidron Valley" (John 18:1); the Gospel of John is the only Gospel to call the spot a garden. It is also evident that Jesus and his disciples gathered in Gethsemene for fellowship and prayer (Luke 22:39; John 18:2). The Gospel narratives indicate that the garden was large enough for the group to separate into different parts of it.

*"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemene: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray..." (Mark 14:32-42).*

*"And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him..." (Luke 22:47-53).*

## House of Caiaphas - St. Peter in Gallicantu

On the southeastern slope of the hill is one of the traditional locations for the house of Caiaphas. Gallicantu means "cock crowing" and it reminds us of the three denials of Peter. Built atop the ruins of a Byzantine church and monastery, Catholic pilgrims believe that the prison in which Christ was held is located inside the church. Others believe that a more likely location for Caiaphas' house is in the Armenian property outside Zion Gate.

Whether it is the actual site or not does not take away from the devotional application here. In the lower level one may view rooms from Christ's time including the place where He was possibly beaten, scourged and held as prisoner for the evening. Outside of the house is part of the Roman Road that He walked to be led to the Judgment Hall. The rooster pen provides the timely sound effects as a reminder of Peter's weakness and our own need for strength from the Spirit of God.

*Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover. (John 18:14-28)*

*And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee? Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he*



*denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:57-75)*

## Upper Room

The upper room is a second-story room of Hebrew or Greek homes; often like a tower, built on the flat roof of a Hebrew home for privacy, comfort during the hot season, or the entertainment of guests. It could sometimes accommodate large gatherings of people. Jesus met with his disciples shortly before his arrest in an upper room and ate the Passover supper (Lord's Supper) with them as well (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12). This is where He prepared them for His death, the Holy Spirit's coming and their future ministry. The size of some of these rooms is evident from the fact that, after Jesus had left and ascended to heaven; the disciples went to the upper room where they all had been staying before. In one instance the room was on the third story (Acts 20:8). Eutyclus, sitting in the window, went to sleep and fell three stories to the street below (20:9-10). Ahaziah also fell through the latticework of his upper room (2 Kings 1:2).

The dead son of the widow of Zarephath was taken by Elijah to an upper room where he had been staying and raised him from the dead (1 Kings 17:19-23). David went to an upper room for privacy to mourn the death of Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33). The kings of Judah built strange altars near the upper room of Ahaz, which Josiah pulled down as part of his reform program (2 Kings 23:12). Dorcas was laid in an upper room after she had died; later, Peter was taken up to the same room to pray for her restoration to life (Acts 9:36-41).

*"And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of baalzeub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease"(2 Kings 1:2).*

*"And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron" (2 Kings 23:12).*

*"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover..." (Matthew 26:17-29).*

*"And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us."*

*(Mark 14:15).*

*"And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew..." (Acts 1:13, 2).*

## Jerusalem

This city was located in the hills of Judah and had access to the Ridge Road, which ran alongside major cities. Jerusalem was captured by David from the Jebusites in about 993 B.C. and made capital (2 Sam.5:1-10). It became Israel's national sanctuary as well. David made many building establishments in Jerusalem. He built the royal court along with Solomon, a palace with the aid of Hiram, transported the Ark of the Covenant, and built a tent shrine to house the sacred chest (2 Sam. 6). Solomon's crown achievement in building activities was the construction of a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant (known as the Temple Mount). Jerusalem became the spiritual and political heart of Israel and the Zion of Yahweh.

Jerusalem was later captured by Babylon in 598 BC and destroyed in 587 BC. About 50 years later rebuilding was started and by Jesus' day it was the center of Jewish worship and under Roman rule. Jesus often traveled to Jerusalem to attend Jewish festivals. John recorded three Passover feasts, one Feast of Tabernacles, an unnamed feast, and a festival of Dedication (Hanukkah) that Jesus attended. Jesus performed many miracles while in Jerusalem. He healed a paralytic man at the "Sheep's Pool," known as Bethesda (John 5:2-9). Jesus also healed a blind man in the Pool of Siloam. He also spent a lot of time teaching His disciples and others in the temple. Jesus spent his last days in Jerusalem, cleansing the temple, discipleing, and being judged by high priests and leaders. He was then crucified just outside city walls in a place called Golgotha, "the place of the skull." The Gospels describe several post-resurrection appearances that took place in Jerusalem (Matt. 28:9-10; Mark 16:14-18; John 20:19-29).

The name "Jerusalem" has many meanings: 1) Egyptian Meaning: The earliest mention of Jerusalem is found in the texts known as the Egyptian Execration Texts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries before Christ, in the form Urusalimum. 2) Semitic Meaning: In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the name appears as Urusalim. Later it is found as Ursalimmu. The two Hebrew root-words, uru (city) and salim (a divine name), produced the compound word "the city of the god salim." Salim, or Shalem (Akkadian, Shulmanu; perhaps Solomon), was a god worshiped by the Amorites (Ezekiel 16:3). 3) Hebrew/Aramaic Meaning: In the Hebrew Old Testament, Jerusalem is written yerushalayim, and in the portions of the Old Testament written in the Aramaic language, the name is written yerushalem. It contains the root words yarah ("to found") and shalem (a divine name), which gives us "the foundation of [the god] Shalem." 4) Greek Meaning: In the New Testament, the word "Jerusalem" is a translation of Ierusalem and Hierosolyma. The first of these is simply the way that Greek authors wrote the Old Testament Aramaic word; the second reflects the Greek word hieros (holy).

*"Behold, I build a house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him..." (2 Chr. 2-4:8).*

*"So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward" (2 Sam 5:9).*

*"Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand..." (2 Sam 6).*

*"And say, Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy*

*father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite" (Ezekiel 16:3).*

*"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him..." (Matt 28:9-10).*

*"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief..." (Mark 16:14-18).*

*"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches" (John 5:2-9).*

*"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you..." (John 20:19-29).*

## Jerusalem Area

**Ecce Homo** -- (Latin: "Behold, the man!") A station of the cross on the Via Dolorosa commemorated by an arch. The phrase "Ecce Homo" refers to Pilate's words when he brought Jesus out to the crowd for judgment. (John 19:5)

**Garden Tomb** -- The Garden Tomb was first pointed out in 1849; a rock formation there resembles a skull (Golgotha), and the site accords with the biblical data of the area where Jesus was buried. It is presently a beautiful garden park, where many Christian groups take communion.

**Jewish Quarter** -- Where you may find the "broad wall" that is mentioned in Isaiah 22 and Nehemiah 3; a "window" into the period of the First Temple.

**Mount Zion** -- Often identified with the "City of David", it was after Solomon that the city grew farther to the north and to the west on the hill today identified as Mount Zion, a hill that is protected on the south and west by the Valley of Hinnom. This identification of Mount Zion, which in 2 Sam. 5:7 is applied to David's city, derives from the Jewish historian Josephus, who identified all of the Jerusalem of his day (the first century A.D.) with the city of David. You can visit the "Upper Room" (Mark 14:12-26) and the House of the High Priest Caiaphas (Mt.26:57).

**Palm Sunday Road** -- Follow the trail of Jesus and his disciples from the Mt. of Olives to Jerusalem, when he was hailed as king in the so-called, "Triumphal Entry." (Matt 21:1-11 Mark 11:1-10 Luke 19:28-40 John 12:12-16)

**Pool of Bethesda** -- A name found in later NT manuscripts for the original "Bethzatha" in John 5:2. It is the Hebrew name of the pool near the 'Sheep Gate' in Jerusalem. Here, according to tradition, many of the sick in Jerusalem waited for healing by means of a periodic angelic visitation. Jesus performed a great miracle here on a man who had been lame for 38 years. As it was done on the Sabbath, this led to controversy with certain Jewish leaders of the time. (John 5:1-16)

**Rabbi's Tunnel/Western Wall Tunnel** -- Underneath the present surface of the Western Wall compound lies the magnificent Western retaining wall of the Herodian Temple. Controlled by the Rabbis, the Western Wall Tunnel is an underground tunnel exposing the Western Wall in its full length. The tunnel is adjacent to the Western Wall and is located under buildings of the Old City in Jerusalem, Israel.

### **Tunnel History:**

After the Six Day War, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Israel began the excavations aimed at exposing the continuation of the wall. The excavations lasted almost twenty years and revealed many previously unknown facts about the history and geography of the Temple Mount.

The tunnel exposes a total length of 500m of the walls, revealing the methods of construction and the various activities in the vicinity of the Temple Mount. The excavations included many archaeological finds along the way, including discoveries from the Herodian period (streets, monumental masonry), sections of a reconstruction of the Western Wall dating to the Umayyad period and various structures dating to the Ayyubid, Mamluke and Hasmonean periods constructed to support buildings in the vicinity of the Temple Mount.

"Warren's Gate", lies about 150 feet into the tunnel. This sealed off entrance has been turned into a small synagogue called "The Cave" by Rabbi Yehuda Getz since it is the closest point a Jew can get to the Holy of Holies assuming it was located at the traditional site, under the Dome of the Rock.

At the northern portion of the Western Wall remains of a water channel, which originally supplied water to the Temple Mount, were found. The exact source of the channel is unknown, though it passes through an underground pool known as the "Strouthion Pool". The water channel was dated to the Hasmonean period and was hence dubbed the "Hasmonean Channel".

The biggest stone used to build the Western Wall is also revealed within the tunnel. The stone has a length of 13.6 meters, a width estimated between 3.5 to 4.5 meters; estimates place the weight at 570 tons.

Included with our tour of the Tunnel is audiovisual show showing the different Temple Periods. While walking through the Tunnel you will find Jews fervently praying as this is the closest they feel that they can get to the place where the Temple was prior to its destruction.

**Devotional Application:** Before exiting the Tunnel, we view the massive cornerstone rejected by the builders and the stones on the street where Jesus walked as he was taken to the Judgment Hall. This is definitely a time for prayer and reflection.

## **Herodian Mansion**

Located in Jerusalem, this was the palace of King Herod the Great of Judea. During Roman times, wealthy Jerusalemites, like King Herod, built their palatial villas or palaces in the Upper City. Herod was responsible for the building of many great structures, including an impressive port of Caesarea on the coast, giving to Palestine a much needed major harbor. He also built two fortresses, Masada and Macherus, along the shores of the Dead Sea. In an attempt to locate and kill Jesus, Herod killed many baby boys in the land when Jesus was born (Matt 2).

*"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem..." (Matt 2:1-22).*

**Southern Wall Excavations** -- This southern side of The Temple was the main entrance for the common folk, whereas the Priests and Levites had their own entrance from the higher, eastern side. Parts of the giant stairs, which led to the Temple Mount from the courtyard, have been unearthed. It is in this courtyard that Jesus likely drove out the vendors and money exchangers who were exploiting the people. (Matt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46) In the Mishna, we are told that Rabbi Gamliel taught at the Temple steps; thus this is likely the place where the Apostle Paul (Saul) learned at Gamliel's feet. (Acts 22:3) It is also the only known area where 3,000 could have heard the preaching of Peter and be baptized on the Day of Pentecost.

**Day of Pentecost** - According to the Book of Acts, the experience of the Pentecost was shared by all in the large crowd, causing confusion, and inspiring fear.

*"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" Acts 2:6-12*

Then (the Apostle) Peter standing with the eleven other apostles spoke to the crowd. He explained that these strange events had been predicted by the prophet Joel, and that Jesus's coming had been prophesied by David. Peter explained that these events confirmed David's prophesied exaltation of Jesus. Peter then exhorted his listeners to turn to Christ. About three thousand responded to Peter's sermon.

Three physical signs occurred showing the coming of the Holy Spirit

A. Sound of Blowing Wind

B. Vision of tongues of Fire that rested on each of them. The tongues of Fire which descended on the disciples represents a theophany (a visible manifestation of God). This is important to Christianity in that it represents the dynastic succession of power from Jesus to the Holy Spirit who guides the believers.

C. They heard the apostles speaking in the native tongue of the listener, i.e., the miracle was in the hearing. This was important in that it was key for the spread of the gospel. The Holy Spirit acted as a translator so that as the preaching occurred everyone there comprehended the message in their own native language. (This event has also been interpreted as the opposite of the events at the Tower of Babel, which, according to the tradition, introduced the language barriers in the first place.)

*"Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts 2:26-33*

Simon Peter also reminded the multitude (in Acts 2:17-21) that this experience had been predicted by the prophet Joel:

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:" (Joel 2:28)*

*"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:38-41*

**Temple Mount** -- The place where God chose to "put His name;" where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice (Mt. Moriah, Gen 22); the site of both the First and Second Temples found in the Bible. Today it is occupied by the Dome of The Rock Mosque.

**Via Dolorosa** -- (Latin: 'way of pain'), the traditional pilgrimage route in Jerusalem commemorating Jesus' journey to the cross (Mark 15:20-23). The traditional route is not likely to have been historical, since Pilate probably condemned Jesus at the Herodian palace on the opposite side of the city (Matt. 27:19; Luke 23:4; John 18:28; Philo Delegation to Gaius 38; Josephus War 2.301). A route from there through the city to Golgotha would have led east on David street and then west on Triple Suk to Golgotha. The present route consists of two devotional stops near the Ecce Homo arch, seven outside leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and five inside the church itself. Though Byzantine pilgrims followed approximately the present route from Gethsemane to Calvary on Holy Thursday, they made no devotional stops. Numerous routes developed during the Middle Ages. The devotional practice of representing the gospel story in churches around fourteen stations led to the development of the present route. The route itself was fixed in the eighteenth century and all of the stations established in the nineteenth. (Matt.26)

**Wailing/Western Wall and Excavations** -- The holiest site in Judaism, that is the closest visible and accessible part of the Second Temple complex from Jesus' time.

**Israel Museum/Shrine of the Book** -- Israel's finest and most comprehensive museum, containing artifacts and documents from pre-historical to Biblical to Byzantine, Turkish and Modern times. Also, the some of the Dead Sea Scrolls (including the famous Isaiah text) and many artifacts relating to the Qumran community can be found in the separate Shrine of the Book building, whose famous roof is shaped like the ceramic jar covers in which the scrolls were first found.

**Jerusalem Model of 2nd Temple Jerusalem** -- Here the visitor can find a full scale model of the Jerusalem of Jesus' time. A great aid in visualizing the geography of NT Jerusalem.

**The Knesset** -- home of the Israeli Parliament.

**Solomon's Quarry** -- A quarry located north of the Temple Mount near the present-day Damascus Gate, now called Solomon's Quarry or Zedekiah's Cave. This quarry was used through the Roman period (63 B.C.-A.D. 324), and possibly also by Hezekiah for his building projects.

**Yad V'Shem** -- ("Hand and Name" from Isaiah 56:5) This museum commemorates the Holocaust of European Jewry perpetrated by the Nazis before and during WW II.

**Bethany** - John 10:19-40 - Jesus returned after threatened stoning and again to raise Lazarus from the dead.

**Stephen's Gate** - Stephen was the first martyr of the Christian faith. After his stoning, many Christians fled to Judea and Samaria from Jerusalem, while also planting the Gospel in Cyprus.  
*"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit..." (Acts 7:59-60).*

## Judgment Hall of Pilate

Found in the New Testament, the word "Judgment Hall" was also translated as "Praetorium" (Mark 15:16)

and "common hall" (Matt 27:27). The word was first used to refer to the place where the Roman general's tent stood in an army camp and hence was a reference to the headquarters of the camp. Later, it came to mean the military council that met in the general's tent. It was then used in reference to the palace in which the Roman governor or procurator resided while ruling a province. In Jerusalem, it was the palace that Herod the Great had built for himself. When the Roman governor came from his normal residence in Caesarea to Jerusalem, he occupied Herod's palace and conducted his official business there. On Friday, before Jesus' death, the high council brought Jesus before Pilate to gain assent to their verdict, charging Jesus with treason. The site of the interrogation before Pilate is debated. It could have been in Herod's palace in the western part of the city. Another possibility is that Pilate lodged in the Antonia Fortress while residing in Jerusalem. Pilate then sent Jesus to be judged by Herod Antipas, after realizing that Jesus was a Galilean. Jesus was then turned back into the hands of Pilate, who allowed Jesus to be executed by torture and crucifixion.

*"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers" (Matt 27:27).*

*"...And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it..." (Mark 15:1-5).*

*"And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band" (Mark 15:16).*

## Church of the Holy Sepulcher

Ancient tradition places Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection over this site. Queen Helena, mother of Constantine, ordered this church to be built over the site Christians showed her when she visited Jerusalem in about 335 A.D. Through archeology, it was found that this site was actually outside city walls at the time of Jesus' death and was used as a quarry with many tombs cut into the rock.

*"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites? For ye are like unto white sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt 23:27).*

*"And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher" (Matt 27:61).*

*"Their throat is an open sepulcher..." (Rom 3:13).*

## Bethlehem

Bethlehem is a town six miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is sometimes called Bethlehem-judah or Ephrath (Gen 35:19; Micah 5:2) to keep it from being confused with another city, Bethlehem of Zebulun. Located in Judah, Bethlehem was one of the towns that played a key role in history. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which was a fulfillment of prophecy (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7). Bethlehem was also the place of death and burial for Rachel. It is also known as the City of David, as David was both born and anointed there (1 Sam. 16:4, 13; Luke 2:4, 11). The name Bethlehem actually means "house of bread."

Bethlehem was first settled by the Canaanites and was associated with the earliest fathers (or "patriarchs") of Israel, because Rachel died and was buried near it (Gen 35:16, 19; Gen 48:7). The earliest mention of Bethlehem is in some ancient battle reports, written fourteen hundred years before

Christ's birth, which refer to a city named bitil u-lahama south of Jerusalem. This name may have meant "house of (the goddess) Lahama." A branch of Caleb's family settled there, and Caleb's son Salma was known as "the father of Bethlehem" (1 Chr 2:51). It was also the home of a Levite boy who served as priest to Micah (Judges 17:7-8), and of Boaz, Ruth, Obed, and Jesse, the Bethlehemite, David's father (Ruth 4:11-17; 1 Samuel 16:18).

Bethlehem was the birthplace of David and the home of one of David's mighty men, Elhanan (2 Sam 23:24; 1 Chr 11:26). A daring deed was performed in Bethlehem by three of David's warriors. They broke through a chain of Philistine warriors who had taken over the city to bring David water from a well near the city gate of his hometown (2 Sam 23:14-17). Bethlehem is also mentioned as being next to the village of Geruth-kimham, where Jews running from the Babylonians stayed while they were on their way to Egypt (Jer 41:17). People from Babylon were part of the group of Jews who returned Israel after living in exile in Babylon (Ezra 2:21; Nehemiah 7:26; 1 Esdras 5:17). Bethlehem was only a small village when Jesus was born (Matt 2:1-16; Luke 2:4-6, 15; John 7:42). Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because he was part of the family of David (Luke 2:4), under orders of Caesar Augustus. It is said that the birth of Jesus might have taken place in a cave in the rocks outside town, as agreed upon by Christian writers Justin Martyr and Origen. Another early Christian writer, Jerome, described the cave where the Roman Emperor Constantine had built a church. Some evidence was found near Bethlehem that suggested a second period of building in the time of a later emperor, Justinian (AD 527-565), in 1934-

35. Constantine's church was then extended past its original boundaries. There were steps that led down to the cave, which were artificially shaped into a square, probably by Constantine's builders. There is, however, no description of the cave from before the construction of Constantine's church.

*"And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem" (Genesis 48:7).*

*"Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose names was Jesse..." (1 Samuel 17).*

*"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).*

*"Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" (John 7:42).*

**Bethlehem/Shepherd's Field** -- Originally a small village on the road from Jerusalem to Hebron. Here took place the story of Ruth and Boaz, and is the birthplace of both David, and David's greatest son, Jesus. Here also can be found the tomb of Rachel. Many believe the site of The Shepherd's Field to be the place where angels of the Lord visited the shepherds to announce the birth of Israel's King and Savior. (Gen 35:16-20 48:7 Ruth 1 Sam 16:1-12; 17:12 Micah 5:2 Luke 2:1-7, 8-20 Matt 2:1-18)

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# Jerusalem Gates

Ancient cities were often more like fortresses than cities, as we understand the term "city" today. The perimeter consisted of a massive stone wall (or walls) with gates to permit or prevent the entry of people and animals. In times of war, enemy forces often concentrated their attacks on these openings, typically the weakest part of the city wall, so the gates were usually constructed in such a way that they were flanked by, or actually part of, one or more defensive guardtowers.

The old city of Jerusalem has had numerous gates over the many thousands of years of Bible History. You can still walk through some of them today, while others have been sealed at one time or another. Individual gates have been known by various names, sometimes by two or three or more, through their centuries of existence.

King Solomon built a wall around Jerusalem, and it appears that he did it with forced labor. (I Kings 3:1, 9:15)

When the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were fighting with one another, Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, and came and tore down the walls of Jerusalem. (II Kings 14:13; II Chronicles 25:23)

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, built a wall (kind of like a blockade) around Jerusalem before he conquered it. (II Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4)

In the days of the Zechariah, Uzziah was King of Jerusalem, and he built towers and fortified the wall of the city of Jerusalem. (II Chronicles 26:9)

The Chaldeans came and attacked Jerusalem, tore down the wall, and took all the valuables from the temple as well as those who escaped the sword into captivity in Babylon. The neat part about this story is that it has a happy ending: a new King (King Cyrus) allows them to return, and pays to have the temple rebuilt. (II Chronicles 36:15-23)

The book of Nehemiah provides detail concerning the rebuilding of the wall after the Israelites were released from their Babylonian captivity.

The wall is pierced by 8 gates - seven are open and one is closed (Golden Gate). Until 1887, each gate was closed before sunset and opened at sunrise.

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**There are three gates in the north wall: Herod's Gate, Damascus Gate, and the New Gate**

## **Herod's Gate**

Herod's (Flowers) Gate is on the north wall, just east of the Damascus Gate.

Built in 1538-40 by Sulieman the Magnificent's architects., it became a direct entry during the British Mandate, losing its L shape interior for traffic purposes. Called in Arabic Bab ez-Zahra or Flowers Gate, it is called Herod's Gate because pilgrims of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Century erroneously believed that it led to Herod's palace.

At noon on 15 July 1099, the Crusaders breached the wall at this gate to take the city of Jerusalem and proclaim the Latin Kingdom.

### **Damascus Gate**

Located on the northern wall, it is the busiest and most magnificent of all Jerusalem's gates. This is the best example of Ottoman artwork in the city. It consists of one large center gate originally intended for use by persons of high station, and two smaller side entrances for commoners.

Also built by Suleiman in 1542, it forms the centre of Palestinian East Jerusalem and is located at the start of the Arab bazaar and marketplace. In contrast to the Jaffa Gate, where the stairs rise towards the gate, in the Damascus Gate, the stairs descend towards the gate.

Called the Shechem Gate by the Jews, the gate's Arabic name, Bab el Amud or gate of the column, reflects the column from the Byzantine Period that once stood near the gate as a landmark. Outside the gate there were two roads, one leading to Damascus (north) and on veering west to the coast.

Damascus Gate stands at the approximate location of the ancient Fish Gate, just west of the Gihon Spring, where men gathered to sell fish, sometimes in violation of the Sabbath (II Chronicles 33:14, Nehemiah 3:3, 13:16). It also may be the same as the Middle Gate (Jeremiah 39:3).

### **New Gate**

So named because it was constructed relatively recently — in 1889 — the New Gate was built with permission of Sultan Abdul Hamid II to link the properties near the wall in the northwest of the city with the Old City. The gate is located near the northwestern corner of the city and leads into the Christian quarter.

The tower nearby (around the corner in the park) is called Tancred's Tower (after the Latin Kingdom ruler who may have commissioned it) and is built of stones originally cut for Herod's palace inside the Jaffa Gate area. The stones were removed and built into this tower some distance away in the Crusader Period.

The New Gate stands at approximately the same place as the Old Gate, or Jeremiah Gate, which was located at the northwest corner of the city during the time of Nehemiah, near the location of the present-day Holy Sepulcher (Nehemiah 3:6).

**There is only one gate on the western wall.**

### **Jaffa Gate**

Today's Jaffa Gate seems to have taken the place of the ancient Valley Gate, though the western portion of the city wall lies much further west than it did in the City of David and Nehemiah. The Jaffa Gate (called Jaffa after the highway that led to the seacoast town of Joppa) overlooks the Valley of Gehenna; but the ancient Valley Gate overlooked the Valley of the Cheesemakers (tyropeon Valley).

The main entrance to the Old City is the Jaffa Gate, which was built by Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Magnificent in 1538. The name in Arabic, Bab el-Halil or Hebron Gate, means "The Beloved," and refers

to Abraham, the beloved of God who is buried in Hebron (Isa. 41:8). The Jaffa Gate gets its name because the road leading from it goes to the port city of Jaffa (Joppa). This gate is the only one on the western side of the Old City and today leads into the Muslim and Armenian quarters. A road allows cars to enter the Old City through a wide gap in the wall between Jaffa Gate and the Citadel.

A low part of the city wall was torn down and the Crusader moat of the Citadel filled in for the 1898 visit of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. The ruling Ottoman Turks opened it so the German Emperor would not have to dismount his carriage to enter the city.

This gate was also the famous scene of the English General Allenby's entrance in 1917.

Between Jaffa and Zion Gates are a number of walls from the time of Herod the Great and before exposed on the surface. A gate base of the first century is also exposed. The area of the southwest corner is where the Romans breached the wall in 70 C.E.

### **On the Eastern Wall are St Stephens Gate and The Golden Gate**

#### **St. Stephen's Gate**

St. Stephens Gate is also known as the Lion's Gate and marks the beginning of the Via Dolorosa.

This gate is so named because of the tradition that the first Christian martyr was stoned outside this gate. However an earlier tradition locates this execution north of the city.

St. Stephen's Gate, it is located on the east wall, north of the Temple Mount.

Lions' Gate is another name for this eastern entrance into the Old City because of the four animals that decorate the gate's facade and reportedly placed there because of a dream of the builder Suleiman.

Bab el Ghor or Jordan Gate was so named by the Turks because it led to Jordan. In the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, St. Stephen's Gate was on the north wall, now the Damascus Gate. The name moved with a change in Pilgrim traditions to the eastern Gate.  
(Nehemiah 3:1,32, 12:39, John 5: 1-3)

#### **Golden Gate**

The Golden Gate was located on the east wall adjacent to the Temple Mount. Originally constructed approximately 640 AD by either the last of the Byzantines rulers or the first of the Arab conquerors, it was later sealed by Muslims to "block the future path of the Messiah into Jerusalem." This is because according to Jewish tradition, the Messiah will enter Jerusalem through this gate.

This gate is also known as the Gate of Mercy and the Gate of Eternal Life.

### **On the south wall are the Dung Gate and Zion Gate**

## **Dung Gate**

The Dung Gate was one of the 12 or so gates that existed at the time of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 3:13-14). Found in the south wall, this gate is closest in proximity to the Temple Mount.

Different theories account for the naming of this gate, including one which puts it back to Omar's conquest of Jerusalem in 638 A.D. when trash was cleared out of the city through this gate. It is also known as the Gate of the Moors because of the North African immigrants who lived in a neighborhood next to the gate in the 16th century.

The Jordanians widened it when Jaffa Gate was sealed because of the 1949-67 frontier. It now leads to the Western Wall plaza and the southwest excavations near the ancient Temple mount.

## **Zion Gate**

This gate is also known as the Gate of the Prophet David because of the traditional location of David's tomb on Mt. Zion. During the medieval period it was called the Gate of the Jewish Quarter. This entrance leads to the Jewish and Armenian quarters.

Zion Gate is located on the south wall and provides access to Mt. Zion. The stones surrounding this gate are still pockmarked by weapons fire from the Arab and Israeli battles in the 1948 War of Independence. This gate was also used by the Israel Defense Forces in 1967 to enter and capture the Old City.

## **Other Gates of interest:**

The **Huldah Gates** are the two sets of now-blocked gates in the south wall of the Temple Mount, which is also one of Jerusalem's Old City walls. The western set is a double arched gate (the *double gate*), and the eastern is a triple arched gate (the *triple gate*). Each arch of the double gate lead into an aisle of a passageway leading from the gate into the Mount, and to steps leading to the Mount's surface; when the al-Aqsa Mosque was built, the old steps were blocked, and the eastern aisle lengthened so that new steps from its end would exit north of the Mosque. The triple gate is similar, though the longer aisle is to the west, and its third aisle, on the east, forms the western boundary of the vaulted area known as *Solomon's Stables*.

The **Old Gate, or Jeshanah Gate**, was located at the northwest corner of the city during the time of Nehemiah, near the location of the present-day Holy Sepulcher (Nehemiah 3:6)

The **Valley Gate**, overlooked the Kidron Valley (Nehemiah 3:13)

*Excerpts taken from: The New Christian Traveler's Guide to the Holy Land, Dyer/Hatteberg*

