

“Geography of the Bible”

Geography of the Bible (Overview)

1. The _____; is where the majority of Bible events take place...it starts in Egypt, goes up through Palestine and Syria around and down through Mesopotamia. (See map)
 - It is called this because the land was _____ due to the accessibility to water as opposed to the desert that surrounds it, and because it is shaped like a _____.
 - ***This area is also called the “_____” because where civilization began—it was all that existed of the known world to them.***
 - This area is of course the modern day “Middle East”
2. ***The most important natural resource in that part of the world then was _____.*** People lived and died and even decided where they would live based on the water supply (e.g. Egypt and the Nile River).
3. ***The “Great Sea” was the _____ Sea...***the other great bodies of water perhaps were unknown to them.
4. The Palestine/Syria area is the area of Israel and God’s people
5. ***This seems like such a small, insignificant stretch of land...but it was the _____ of the Ancient World (Basically is 150 miles long by 45 miles wide) and so the Land was a bridge between two great cradles of civilization _____ and _____)...If armies were going to get anywhere they would have had to go through this area.***

Palestine (See Map)

1. The region/land known as Israel/Palestine would include all of what is in the present day State of Israel, along with the West Bank, part of western Jordan, southern and coastal Syria, Lebanon, and continuing up to the border of modern Turkey.
2. The land was once called _____ which means the “Land of the _____”.
 - The first known settlers to the area of Palestine were the _____ and they were famous for making _____ dye.....thus the Greek word for Phoenicia is **purple**.
 - The Phoenicians well known as “traders” or merchants and often braved the vast oceans to trade their wares on sea as well as land.
 - The term “**Canaanite**” and “**merchant**” became somewhat synonymous and is even referenced in a few Biblical passages.
 - **One of Canaan's most famous exports was a much sought-after purple dye, derived from two species of sea snails found along the east Mediterranean coast and worn proudly by figures from ancient kings to modern popes.**
 - Between 1200 BC–1100 BC, most of southern Canaan was conquered by the _____.
 - St. Augustine also mentions that one of the terms the seafaring Phoenicians called their homeland was "Canaan."
 - This is further confirmed by coins of the city of Laodicea by the Lebanon, that bear the legend, "Of Laodicea, a metropolis in Canaan"; these coins are dated to the reign of Antiochus IV (175 BC–164 BC) and his successors.
 - The Phoenicians ended up settling in Carthage...They are famous for developing the Alphabet!

3. What about the modern dispute between the “Palestinians” and the “Israelis” over the regions referred to as the “Gaza Strip”, “West Bank” and “Golan Heights” or even the main body of land called the State of Israel? Whose does the land belong to?

The Jordan Valley

1. The melting snow of Mt. _____ feeds into the **Sea of Galilee** which is 685 feet below sea level.
2. Out of the **Sea of Galilee** flows the _____ River which runs into the **Dead Sea**.
 - The Dead Sea is one of the _____ bodies of water on the earth which exceeds the average ocean salinity.
 - **The Dead Sea is also the lowest point on the surface of the earth** (1371 feet below sea level).
 - An important thing to understand is that this area is surrounded by Mountains...and thus “Down and Up” in the Bible does not mean “North and South” but was commonly based on elevation (not compass direction...e.g. John 2:12).
3. Some important things to note:
 - There were three main Roman Provinces that were frequently referenced (although there were others – these three were the most frequently talked about):
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - ***Notice some important Cities***—Damascus (conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus); Nazareth (Jesus’ hometown); Caesarea (“city of Caesar” built by Herod the Great and was the Roman capital of Judea and the beautiful home of Pilate; and Felix...see Josephus); Jamnia (100 A.D. the Jewish council fixed the O.T.); Jerusalem; Bethlehem (birth place of Jesus Christ)

The Known World of the New Testament Period

1. Again the three main Roman Provinces were:

2. Here are some important cities and their location on the map
 - **Alexandria** – the _____ Center of the Ancient World
 - **Jerusalem** – the _____ Capital of Christianity
 - **Caesarea** – the Capital of _____, home of Governors and Procurators. This coastal city was built by _____ the Great.
 - **Antioch** – the church that sent Paul on his missionary journeys. Also known as the place where the term “Christian” began to be used for those who followed Christ.
 - **Ephesus** – A hub of the early Christian Church especially as it branched into Europe. Paul wrote a letter to this church, this church is named in the Book of Revelation, Timothy and possibly the Apostle John ministered to this church.
 - **Athens** – sometimes called the _____ and _____ capital of the Ancient World. (Acts 17)
 - **Corinth** – A church to whom Paul wrote two letters
 - **Thessalonica** – Another church to whom Paul wrote two letters
 - **Rome** – The Capital of the Roman Empire