

Fall 2016 SS

God's Holy Land

1. Review

- a. Five Major Bodies of Water
 - i. Caspian Sea
 - ii. Black Sea
 - iii. Mediterranean Sea
 - iv. Red Sea
 - v. Persian Gulf
- b. Four Major Rivers
 - i. Nile
 - ii. Euphrates
 - iii. Tigris
 - iv. Orontes
- c. Four Major Mountain Ranges
 - i. Ararat Range
 - 1. Agri Dagh “the Painful Mountain” – traditional site of Noah’s Ark
 - 2. The range is called Koh I Nu – “Mountains of Noah”
 - ii. Kurdistan & Zargos Range
 - 1. Separate Assyria & Media (Persia, Iraq); Assyria from Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - iii. Taurus Range and Amanus
 - 1. Silver deposits
 - 2. Within exists a pass through which one could reach Asia
 - iv. Lebanon Range
- d. Five Major Longitudinal Zones
 - i. **Coastal Plain** – no harbors, no promontories
 - ii. **Mountain Range** – mountains, limestone, difficulty of travel
 - iii. **Rift Valley** – Depression, Descent, Jordan River, Ghor, Arabah
 - iv. **Transjordan Mountains** – Towering Mountains, Transjordan Highway, west steep, east sloping, West boundary the Arabian Desert
 - v. **Eastern Desert** – inhospitable desert
- e. Two Sites Last Week
 - i. Caesarea
 - 1. Some significant “P” people - Pontius Pilate (prefect of Judah), Philip, Peter, Paul
 - 2. Site of death of Herod Agrippa – accepted worship, persecuting Christians.
 - ii. Megiddo
 - 1. Megiddo was a site of great importance in the ancient world. It guarded the western branch of a narrow pass on the most important trade route of the ancient Fertile Crescent, linking Egypt with Mesopotamia and Asia

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Minor and known today as Via Maris. Because of its strategic location, Megiddo was the site of several historical battles. The site was inhabited until approximately 586 BCE.

2. Sites to Study Today

- a. Mt. Carmel
- b. Jordan River
- c. Sea of Galilee
- d. Bashan/Golan Heights
- e. Caesarea Philippi

3. Mount Carmel

- a. Physical Features of the Mountain Range
 - i. On the coast of Israel that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea
 - ii. Name means, "vineyards of God"
 - iii. Wooded mountain range, triangular in shape
 - iv. Served as barrier to traffic/enemies along the coastal plain of Israel
 1. 3 passes cut through the area
 - v. Slopes are covered with significant vegetation, in part due to rainfall
 1. The mountain rises from the sea so sharply that the rapidly rising air deposits its moisture as rain or dew – thus year-round vegetation is found on the mountains.
 - a. Only a catastrophic drought could cause it to turn brown and wither.
 2. Corresponds to Mountains being symbol of beauty & fertility
 - vi. East of the area is the Jezreel Valley, the hills of Nazareth, and Mount Gilboa.
- b. Historical relevance of the site
 - i. From antiquity, altars to strange gods were erected on its heights, and it was, particularly, a sanctuary for the worship of Baal.
- c. Biblical Prominence
 - i. Symbol of beauty & fertility – Song of Solomon 7.5 – Bridegroom compares his lover's head to Mount Carmel; see also Isaiah 35.2; Jeremiah 46.18
 - ii. Symbol of judgment – The beauty will vanish. Isaiah 33.9; Amos 1.2; Nahum 1.4
- d. Particular Texts & People
 - i. Prophets Amos & Nahum predicted visible judgment on Northern Kingdom would be demonstrated by the drying up of the vegetation on Mount Carmel (Amos 1.2; Nahum 1.4).
 - ii. Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18)
 1. Traditional site – El-Muhraqa, "the place of burning" – is at the top of the mountain.

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2. Likely took place near the base of the mountain close to the Kishon stream.
3. Seven Advantages of the prophets of Baal over Elijah
 - a. #s – 450 against 1
 - b. Choice (18.23)
 - c. Volume (18.26-28)
 - d. Zeal (Dancing, Flagellated themselves) v. Dignity (18.36)
 - e. Spilled Human Blood (18.28)
 - f. Time (18.26-29)
 - g. Handicapped w/12 large jars of water (18.32-35)
 - h. Psalm 104.3-4
- iii. Other references
 1. Joshua 19.24-26 – Region was allotted to the tribe of Asher
 2. 1 Samuel 15.12 – Saul erects a monument for himself
 3. 1 Samuel 25.2-42 – Abigail from Carmel becomes David's wife
 4. 1 Kings 18 – Elijah defeats the prophets of Baal
 5. 2 Kings 4.8-25 – The Shunammite mother visits Elisha
 6. Jeremiah 50.19 – God will bring Israel back to Carmel
 7. Amos 9.3 – Mt. Carmel is not a place one can hide from God.
4. Jordan River
 - a. Physical Features of the River
 - i. Begins at snowy slopes of Mount Hermon, flows into the Sea of Galilee & then into the Dead Sea
 - ii. Name means "Go down"
 - iii. Physical distance from Mount Hermon to Dead Sea = 70 miles
 - iv. Length of river is more than double = 150 miles, reflecting its winding path
 - v. River drops 1570 feet
 - vi. Minimal settlements, including Beth Shan
 - vii. Instead, much of area covered with dense vegetation which hid wild animals
 1. Jeremiah 12.5 – Area described as the "thickets by the Jordan"
 - viii. Present day appearance is less than overwhelming due to irrigation, minimal distance of what is now by most descriptions a stream less than 50 feet wide.
 - b. Historical relevance of the site
 - c. Biblical Prominence
 - i. OT
 1. Genesis 13.10-11 – Lot chooses "the plain of Jordan"; "well-watered, like the land of Egypt".
 2. Numbers 34.10-12 – Jordan River identified by God as Eastern boundary of Israel

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- a. Ezekiel 47.18 – God identifies as the future eastern border of Israel
 3. Joshua 3.1-4.18 – Joshua led Israel across the Jordan while God stopped the waters upstream at the town of Adam.
 4. Judges 3.28-30; 7.24-25; 12.1-7 – Critical elements of battle/areas of control
 5. 1 Samuel 31.7-10 – Following defeat of Saul, Philistines occupied the land including Beth Shan.
 6. 2 Samuel 17.15-22 – David flees across the Jordan River to escape Absalom's army.
 7. 2 Kings 2.7-14 – Elijah & Elisha cross the Jordan on dry ground. Miracle is repeated following Elijah's being taken into Heaven.
 8. 2 Kings 5.9-15 – Naaman healed of leprosy after obeying Elisha's orders and dipping himself into the Jordan 7x.
 9. Psalm 114.3-5 – Recounting of God's miracle of turning back the Jordan
 - ii. NT (Life of Christ)
 1. Matthew 3.5-6; Mark 1.5; John 1.28 – John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan River
 2. Matthew 3.13-17; Mark 1.9 – Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River
 3. John 10.40-42 – Jesus 'went back across the Jordan' to the location where JTB had first been baptizing.
 - d. Particular Texts & People
5. Sea of Galilee
- a. Physical Features of the Mountain Range
 - i. 685 ft below sea level – making it the lowest fresh water lake in the world.
 1. Fed by underground springs, but major source is the Jordan River
 - ii. Virtually surrounded by cliffs & hills
 - iii. Subject to sudden weather changes
 1. Cool air from the hills clashes with the warm moist air over the lake & storms are created
 - iv. Relatively Small (13 miles long x 7.5 miles wide)
 - v. 100-150 feet deep
 - b. Historical relevance of the site
 - i. Significant part of the economy of Israel
 - ii. Provides most of the fresh water for the nations
 1. Waters used to irrigate the fertile western slopes, allowing them to produce crops of grains, fruits & vegetables.
 2. At least 22 species of fish swim in the Sea
 - c. Biblical Prominence

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- i. Referred to by many names in the Bible
 - 1. Sea of Kinnereth (Numbers 34.11; Joshua 12.3) – a reference to its harp shape
 - 2. Sea of Gaileee (most common name in the NT)
 - 3. Sea of Tiberas (John 21.1)
 - 4. Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5.1)
 - ii. Backdrop of the first 2 years of our Lord's ministry
 - 1. Jesus recruited four of his disciples from the shores of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4.18-22; Mark 1.16-20; Luke 5.1-11)
 - 2. Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount was taught on a hill overlooking the lake
 - 3. 10 of Jesus' 33 miracles took place in the general vicinity of this lake
 - iii. Josephus reports a thriving fishing industry in the first century with 230 boats regularly working the lake.
- d. Particular Texts & People
- i. OT
 - 1. Numbers 34.11 – Mountain range on the eastern shore was to be the eastern boundary of the Promised Land.
 - ii. NT
 - 1. Luke 5.4-11; John 21.6-8 – Jesus commands 2 large catches of fish
 - 2. Matthew 8.1-4 – Jesus heals a leper near the Sea of Galilee while coming down a mountain on his way to Capernaum
 - 3. Matthew 8.23-27; Mark 4.35-41; Luke 8.22-25 – Jesus stills the storm on the Sea of Galilee
 - 4. Matthew 8.28-34; Mark 5.1-21; Luke 8.26-39 – Demons entered two thousand swine then plunge into the Sea from a steep bank on the eastern shore.
 - 5. Matthew 14.22-33; Mark 6.45-52; John 6.16-21 – Jesus walks on the water to struggling disciples
 - 6. Matthew 18.1-6 – Possible reference to the “sea” while Jesus cautions against causing others to sin (“better to have a millstone tied around one’s neck and be drowned in the sea”).
 - 7. John 21 – Jesus meets the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after His resurrection & there restores Peter.
6. Bashan/Golan Heights
- a. Physical Features of the Site
 - i. A high plateau east of the Jordan Valley between Mount Hermon and the region of Gilead.

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- ii. A relatively flat plain dotted with ancient volcanic peaks; the rich volcanic soil and abundant rainfall caused it to be known for its grazing land and large oak trees.
- b. Historical relevance of the site
 - i. The region became identified with city of Golan during the intertestamental period. As the Greek language took hold following the conquest of Alexander the Great, the nation of the region was Gaulanitis, today known as the Golan Heights.
- c. Biblical Prominence
 - i. One of the cities in the region was Golan, assigned to the tribe of Levi as a city of refuge
- d. Particular Texts & People
 - i. Deuteronomy 3.8-11 – Israel defeated Og, king of Bashan, whose kingdom stretched “as far as Mount Hermon”
 - ii. Joshua 13.29-30 – Territory of Bashan assigned to tribe of Manasseh
 - iii. Joshua 21.27; 1 Chronicles 6.7 – Designated as one of the six cities of refuge in the land of Israel.
 - iv. Psalm 22.12 – David compares his enemies to the “strong bulls of Bashan.”
 - v. Isaiah 2.12-13; 33.9 – God’s judgment against “the oaks of Bashan” – which Isaiah said would lose their foliage.
 - vi. Amos 4.1 – Amos compares the rich, well-fed woman of Samaria to the “cows of Bashan.”
 - vii. Micah 7.14 – Micah promised a time would come when God will restore the flock of Israel to “Bashan and Gilead”
 - viii. Jeremiah 50.19 – Jeremiah announced a day will come when God will bring Israel back to the land to graze on “Carmel and Bashan”
 - ix. Ezekiel 27.6 – Ezekiel pictures the city of Tyre as a mighty ship whose oars were fashioned from the “oaks of Bashan”.
- 7. Caesarea Philippi
 - a. Origin of the Name
 - i. Apparently known as Baal Hermon and Baal Gad.
 - ii. Originally called Panion or Pnias after the Greek god Pan.
 - 1. Sacrifices were thrown into the cave to appease the half-man half-goat god of nature, fields, forests, mountains, flocks and shepherds. Pan was also known as the god of fright (thus, “panic”).
 - iii. As the Roman Empire expanded, Emperor Augustus gave this site to Herod the Great who built a temple in Augustus’ honor (advancing the city’s status as a worship center). When Herod died in 4 BC, it came under the authority of Herod’s son Philip, who renamed the city Caesarea Philippi after the new Roman emperor, Tiberius Caesar, and himself (Philip’s city of Caesar in Latin).

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- iv. During time of Christ, this was the center of Greco-Roman culture. It was known for its pagan worship, its prestigious role as the capital city of Herod Philip's domain, and its significant Gentile population.
 - 1. Because of its large Gentile population, Jesus could escape the Jewish leaders who were constantly questioning and scrutinizing his message/ministry and looking for reasons to kill him.
- b. Physical Features of the City
 - i. Located about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee on a large plateau at the base of Mount Hermon.
 - ii. It was situated on top of an enormous rock wall that rises over 100 feet up and is 500 feet wide. From this rock flow the headwaters of the Jordan River.
- c. Historical relevance of the site
 - i. During the intertestamental period, Antiochus III of Syria defeated the Egyptians at Panias in 197 BC and took control of the region. This sets the stage for the oppression of the Jews by Antiochus IV and the revolt of the Maccabees.
- d. Biblical Prominence
 - i. OT
 - 1. Joshua 11.17 – Baal Gad is part of the northernmost conquest of Joshua
 - 2. Judges 3.1-4 – Baal Hermon is part of the land of the Hivites
 - 3. 1 Chronicles 5.23 – Baal Hermon is the home of the half-tribe of Manasseh.
 - ii. NT
 - 1. Matthew 16.13; Mark 8.27 – Caesarea Phillipi marks the northernmost limit of Christ's ministry.
 - 2. Matthews 16.13-16; Mark 8.27-30; Luke 9.18-21 – Peter made his confession of Christ's deity in response to Jesus' question – "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" in the region of Caesarea Phillipi.
 - 3. Later in this conversation, Jesus reveals his coming death and resurrection – and that he will build a church, a community of followers who would be his witnesses on earth while He was absent.