

ISRAEL STUDY TOUR MANUAL SUPPLEMENT

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Your study has given you a general understanding of the layout of the land of Israel. In this supplement, you will see how the geography and the topography of the land relate to the Biblical stories. With that you will gain greater insight as you see that the characters of the Scripture deal with the same pressures that people deal with today.

Study One: The Patriarch Abraham

To be used with Study Map One

DISCUSSION

Sometime around the turn of the 2nd millennia BC, God chose a specific family line through which he was going to send the Messiah and bless the entire world. He called Abram, had him leave the land of the Euphrates Valley, and relocate to a land that he would show him. The first place mentioned in the promised land is Shechem (Gen.12:6), where God reappeared to Abram to identify the region in which God would do his special work through Abraham's descendant(s). As a nomad, Abram was perpetually looking for places to graze his flocks, so from there he journeyed south to Bethel and Ai (Gen.12:8), then on to the Negev. When famine hit and he had no place to graze, Abram went down to Egypt, only to be sent back after his lie about Sarai being his sister instead of his wife brought serious disease to the Pharaoh's household. He returned to the Negev, continued to travel from place to place looking for grazing land, and finally arrived back at Bethel (Gen.13:1-3). At this point Abram and his nephew Lot realized there was not enough grazing land for their combined flocks, so Lot chose to move to the lower rift valley, to the plain of the Jordan (Gen.13:11), possibly south of the Dead Sea. After receiving the promise from God that he would give Abram's descendants all the land he could see from the Judean ridge (Gen.13:15), Abram relocated his tents to Hebron.

Regional wars and skirmishes between Bedouin tribes and grazing rights of city-states broke out periodically. In Genesis 14 we are told of various alliances that fought for rights in the Jordan Valley, the most lush place in Israel and no doubt the only place of abundant vegetation in times of drought. Being new to the region, Lot was "caught in the crossfire," was captured and taken away. When Abram heard it, he mustered 318 fighting men from his household (providing us some idea of his wealth as a Bedouin tribal chief) and rescued Lot. He quickly and quietly pursued them all the way to Dan for a sneak attack at night. On his return to Hebron, he met Melchizedek, the King of Salem (the most likely first mention of Jerusalem) and paid him honor by giving to him a tithe (10%) of everything he had (Gen.14).

While in Hebron, Abram was visited by two angels announcing that in the next year Sarai was going to have the promised child (Gen.18). These same angels announced that God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and they subsequently went there to warn Lot who fled to Zoar, further east (Gen.19). Lot seems to have been

fairly traumatized by these events and the strange death of his wife; he was afraid of entering any town and lived with his daughters as a hermit in a cave (Gen.19:30). Sadly, his daughters got him drunk repeatedly and conceived children by their father. These children became the fathers of the Moabite and Ammonite nations to the east of the Rift Valley. Notice that the stories provide a very derogatory history to Israel's later enemies.

Abram moved back down to the western Negev, into the region controlled by the city-state of King Abimelech who had sufficient power to be able to take Sarah as his wife by force. God protected Sarah and Abraham and rather than fight for territorial rights, Abraham established a treaty with Abimelech, settling in the eastern Negev where he dug a new well called Beersheva ("well of the oath" or "seven wells"). It was there that Isaac was born.

With the exception of the trip to Jerusalem (Mount Moriah) to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham spent his days between Beersheva and Hebron, relocating up the Judean ridge whenever grazing conditions required it. It was on one trip into the hills that Sarah died, so Abraham bought a cave in Hebron as a place to bury his wife. This became the center of the memorials for the patriarchs to this day.

READ: Genesis 12:1-9

MARKING

1. Draw a series of green arrows following the route from east of the Sea of Galilee down to Jordan Valley, then up to Tizrah (this road travels up Wadi Faria), then south to Shechem. This Abraham's original entrance into the land.
2. Circle Shechem in red/orange. Note its location at the base of mounts Ebal and Gerizim. They figure prominently later in the return to Israel after the Exodus when Joshua gathers the people at this site recalling God's covenant with Abraham.
3. Draw a green arrow to Bethel and circle it in orange/red. Draw green arrows down the route of the Judean ridge, past Hebron and toward Beer Sheva. At Beer Sheva, split the arrows in two directions showing the Abraham grazed throughout the Negev, stretching between the cities of Gerar (to the west) and Arad (to the east), write in brown/black NEGEV.
4. As a reminder of the order of events, label Shechem with a 1, Bethel with a 2, and Negev with a 3.

Read Gen.12:10-20

MARKING

5. Draw a green arrow following the road from Beersheva toward Egypt., then drawn a return arrow back from Egypt to the Negev. At the bottom of the page write EGYPT with an arrow pointing toward Egypt and label it 4.

Read Gen.13:1-13

MARKING

6. Draw a green arrow from the Negev up to Bethel and label it 5.
7. On the bottom portion of the Dead Sea, write "Lot", with an arrow pointing south of the Dead Sea.

Read Gen.13:14-18

MARKING

8. Draw a green line south to Hebron and label it 6.
9. It was at this point that war broke out and Abram went to rescue Lot as he was being taken away. (Time permitting, read Gen.14.) Draw a dotted green line with periodic arrows beginning at Hebron, going north through Jerusalem, following the road down to Jericho, and up the Jordan Valley all the way to Dan north of the Sea of Galilee. (That is where Abram had his sneak attack under the cover of nightfall.) At Dan, in brown/black write "Lot rescued." Label it 7. Draw a dotted green line that retraces the route Abraham had taken in pursuit of Lot's captors, stopping at Jerusalem. To the east of Jerusalem write "Melchizedek," and label it 8.

Read Gen.18:1-15

Read Gen.20:1-18

MARKING

10. Draw a green arrow back down to the Negev and west to Gerar. Circle Gerar in red/orange and label it 9.

Read Gen.21:1-5

Read Gen.21:22-34

MARKING

11. Draw a line east to Beersheva, circle "Beersheva," and label it with a 10.

It was from Beersheva that the test of sacrificing Isaac began. He had waited 25 years for the promise to come true, he had finally settled into a home area with an established well, established a peace treaty, and was now set on raising his son. If you are unfamiliar with the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, read Gen.22:1-19. Although we do not know for sure where Mount Moriah is, the most likely candidate is Jerusalem. Notice that at the end of the trip they returned to Beersheva.

12. Abraham and his clan grazed the land between Beersheva and a looping arrow that goes up to Hebron and back to Beersheva. In the loop, label it 11. Next to Hebron, in brown/black write "Buried," and the



Hebron. Draw middle of the number 12.

SUMMARY

The story of Abraham introduces us to the land of Israel. The following key sites were labeled as places in which Abraham spent his time:

Shechem Bethel Hebron Gerar Beersheva

You have numbered the events of his life as follows:

- 1 Shechem – he arrived and built an altar
- 2 Bethel
- 3 Negev –his first exposure to the grazing and of the flat Negev
- 4 Egypt – he went there to find grazing and due to drought
- 5 Bethel – Better grazing in the high lands; Lot splits and goes east. You labeled Lot by the Dead Sea.
- 6 Hebron – from there he launched his rescue mission of Lot
- 7 Dan – where Abram rescued Lot
- 8 Jerusalem – Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek
- 9 Gerar in the Negev
- 10 Beersheva – Isaac is born
- 11 In loop between Beersheva and Hebron.
- 12 Hebron with the word "buried."

Study Two: Joseph

To be used with Study Map Two

Map Work

On Regional Map 1, refresh yourself with the route of the International Coastal Highway as it comes from the Plain of Sharon into the Jezreel Valley. Remember that there are three passes that cut through the Mount Carmel range to reach the Sharon Plain. On Study Map Two, trace in red the International Coastal Highway: Starting at Bethshan south of the Sea of Galilee, trace the line westward toward Oprah, into the Jezreel Valley.

From the valley there are three passes that go through the Carmel ridge to reach the coast of the Sharon Plain. From Oprah, trace the main pass through Megiddo, through the ridge and south to Aphek, then to Gath, Eglon, and Geder. Draw an arrow pointing south with the word "to Egypt". Return to the Jezreel Valley and trace in red the route that leaves the Valley further west at Gina, pass through Dothan, and join the route you traced previously. To complete the three passes through the Mount Carmel range, return to the Jezreel Valley and in red trace the route from Jokneam (just southwest of Megiddo) through the range to Gath where it joins the route you traced previously.

Discussion

Joseph was the eldest son of Jacob and by the wife he loved: Rachel. He received special treatment from his father, irritating his eleven brothers. Furthermore, Joseph did not think very much of the work habits of some of his brothers, nor was he very tactful in sharing the things about which he dreamed. Read Genesis 37:1-11.

Map Work

Again on Study Map Two, circle the city of Shechem in the hill country (fairly close to the center of the map). Also circle the city of Dothan, (about 2 inches north of Shechem). Note the location of these two cities in relation to the International Coastal Highway.

Discussion

Read Genesis 37:12-28. In caring for the sheep, where did Joseph's brothers move when they decided to leave Shechem? After they threw him in the cistern, what were the brothers planning to do with Joseph? What changed their minds? What is the importance of Dothan's proximity to the International Coastal Highway in this story? Why is the location of Dothan important in God's plan? If they had not moved to Dothan, what would have happened?

Years later, Joseph was able to see God's hand at work. Read Gen.45:4-5. Truly this is another illustration of Romans 8:28!

Study Three: Joshua & The Conquest

To be used with Study Map Three

DISCUSSION

The nation of Israel had spent forty years in the Sinai desert after the Exodus as a result of their lack of confidence in God's ability to help them conquer the land he had promised to give them. Everyone who was older than twenty years of age at the time of the Exodus had died in the wilderness, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. At the end of the forty years, Moses called the people together and repeated the words God had given him on Mt. Sinai. The sermon of Moses to the next generation of Israelites is recorded in Deuteronomy. ("Deutero" means second, and "nomos" means law; this book is the second giving of the law by Moses to the Israelites, this time to the next generation.) Instructions given by Moses at this point provide valuable background information on the character of the land itself, a land that due to its location was to become God's testing ground of faith. (Time permitting, read Deuteronomy 1-11, especially noting 6-11.)

Israel's entry into Canaan signaled a time of renewal and a moment of new beginnings in the life of the nation. Joshua was given command, the Israelites crossed the Jordan, the supply of manna ceased, the feast of Passover was celebrated and Jericho stood as the first city and guard to entering the land.

The story of Joshua's two spies who conspired with Rahab of Jericho illustrates Jericho's setting. The spies must have hid somewhere west of the city, either in the deeply eroded and lonely chalk hills or in one of the isolated canyons cut through the limestone cliffs.

READ: *Joshua 2:1-24*

READ: *Joshua 3:1-17*

MARK

1. To the east of the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea, in the space between Beth-jeshimoth and Nimrah write in black/brown "Plains of Moab." This was the starting point for Israel's invasion of Canaan.
2. Draw a black/brown line across the Jordan River at Adam. This is where the water of the Jordan was dammed up by God to allow the nation of Israel to cross.

READ: *Joshua 4:19*

MARK

3. Draw a green arrow across the Jordan from the plains of Moab toward Gilgal (in the Rift Valley). Circle Gilgal in Red/Orange and label it "base camp."

Read Joshua 5:1-3

Read Joshua 5:1-25

MARK

4. Circle Jericho and label it 1.

Read Joshua 7:2-26

MARK

5. Draw a green arrow from Gilgal up to Ai. Draw double-headed arrows (————> >) retreating down from Ai back to Gilgal. Circle Ai in red/orange and label the retreat arrows 2.

DISCUSSION

Notice the strong way in which God deals with the sin of Achan and his family. It is obviously very important to God that the people realize that their success was directly related to their relationship to him. It is also clear that there was more to the conquest than winning battles; faithfulness to God was even more important. Finally, God showed them that the consequences of sin affect more than just one person; it affects the whole body of believers.

Read Joshua 8:1-29

MARK

6. Draw another green arrow up to Ai. Circle the city and label it 3.

Read Joshua 8:30-33

MARK

7. Circle Shechem, in red/orange, label it 4 and write "covenant renewal."

Read Joshua 10:1-15

DISCUSSION

Because Gibeon had made a treaty with Joshua -- albeit in an under-handed way (see Joshua 9) -- five city-states bonded together to attack Gibeon in order to demonstrate that they would not tolerate Israel or anyone who sided with her. This is a major assault to stem the tide of a huge group of people (the Israelites) amassed in the rift valley and ready to permanently invade the highlands. Joshua's response pushed his soldiers to the limit as they marched all night from Gilgal, surprising the allegiance of the five cities. As a result, Israel pursued the allegiance way down into the Shephelah.

MARK

8. Using a blue pen, circle the cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Lachish, Jarmuth, and Eglon. Draw a blue line from all of these cities toward Gibeon.
9. Draw a green arrow from Gilgal up to Gibeon. Draw a red star at Gibeon (to indicate an attack), then draw shorter green arrows westward through Upper Beth Horon, Lower Beth Horon, all the way to Azekah in the Shephelah. Draw double-headed blue retreat arrows indicating that the allegiance's soldiers fled. Label Gibeon with a 5.

DISCUSSION

At the conclusion of this battle, Joshua 10 provides us a blow by blow description of Joshua's march through the Shephelah and back into the highlands. You can read it if you would like in Joshua 10:29-43.

MARK

10. Circle in red the following cities that Joshua attacked: Libnah (in the Shephelah), Lachish (southwest of Libnah), Eglon (southwest of Lachish), Hebron (on the central ridge), and Debir (south of Hebron). Place a red number next to each of these cities as follows: Libna 1, Lachish 2, Eglon 3, Hebron 4, Debir 5.

READ: *Joshua 11:1-11*

DISCUSSION

Just as the kings of the city-states of the south formed an alliance in order to reject Israel's incursion into the highlands, so did the kings of the north in order to stop Israeli incursion to the fertile valleys of Galilee or the Sea of Galilee. Israel's success in the south made it clear that the northern leaders needed to mobilize. Hazor (just north of the Sea of Galilee) is obviously the leader in this coalition in that it was the strongest city with its king, Jabin.

MARK

11. Identify these geographical features in Galilee:

Carmel Ridge	Jezreel Valley	Harod valley (by Bethshan)	Rosh Pinna Sill
Hulah Basin			
12. Draw a blue circle around each one of these cities listed in Joshua 11:1-5:

Hazor	(above the Sea of Galilee on the International Coastal Highway)
Madon	(Just west of the Sea of Galilee near where the ICH begins a steep descent to the lake)
Shimron	(On one of the exit routes from the Jezreel Valley)
Achshaph	(On the western exit route from the Jezreel Valley, closer to the coast)
Dor	(On the coast, south of the Carmel Ridge, possibly playing a role on protecting the ICH)
13. Circle in blue Merom (there are two on the map, use the one to the north). In blue, write "armies mobilize."

DISCUSSION

Why the armies form up at Merom is a good question. Quite probably these city-states did not always have standing armies, so when summoned, the troops were in need of equipping and basic training. The large fortress of the time was at Hazor, so Jabin was the likely one to take the lead in forming a unified army. Later, another King Jabin from Hazor – no doubt wishing to avenge his name's sake! -- returns in Judges 4, rising from the ruins of Joshua's conquest to oppress the northern tribes for twenty years until Deborah leads Israel in victory. Remember that after the victories to the south, Joshua and all Israel returned to Gilgal; he did not want to split his army or begin settlement until the major threats were out of the way. Hearing that the Canaanite kings of the north had mobilized and were preparing against him, he once again made a sudden attack (Josh.7:7), catching them off guard and scattering their newly formed army.

MARKING

14. Circle Gilgal in green and draw a green arrow up the Jordan Valley. Just south of the Sea of Galilee, have the arrow turn west to intersect the ICH south of Madon, then follow the route up to Merom.

15. Draw a red star at Merom.
16. Draw a blue double arrow (→→) retreat away from Merom toward Tyre. In brown/black write Sidon with an arrow pointing north up the coast. (Josh 11:8 tells us that Israel pursued the army of Jabin as far as Greater Sidon.) Draw green arrows pursuing them.
17. Draw a blue double arrow retreat from Merom into the Hulah Basin and up past Dan. (Write Valley of Mizpah in brown/black with an arrow north of Dan.) Josh. 11:8 tells us Israel pursued remnants of Jabin's army to the Valley of Mizpah.)
18. Draw an green arrow from Merom east to Hazor. Circle Hazor in red, then put an X through it, signifying that Joshua burned down a now unprotected Hazor and killed Jabin.
19. Write a red 1 by Merom and a 2 by Hazor.

SUMMARY

Take a broad look at this map. It is obvious that Joshua led the Israelites into key confrontations, establishing control so that each tribe could then proceed to inhabit its allotted space. Starting in the Rift Valley, they were established at Gilgal, took Jericho, then made an incursion into the highlands at Ai. He routed the armies of the highlands and Shephelah, crippling the major cities. He did likewise to the north. Having won this security, the latter half of the book of Joshua is a detailed description of how the land was divided among the tribes who were then charged with moving there to finish taking control (Judges 2:6-7).

It should be noted that there was still a lot of warfare to be waged; people do not leave their villages easily. What Joshua had accomplished was disarming the major threats that could over-power a single tribe or two. However, according to the book of Judges, when the people of Israel chose to be unfaithful to him and begin to worship the gods of the local peoples, God used these city-state kings to test Israel to see if they would come back to him as their God (Judges 2:22-23).

It should also be noted which cities are *not* mentioned among the conquests of Joshua. This can be seen fairly easily by looking at your diagramming of this map. He did not conquer all the way out to the Coastal Plain (the cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza). He also seems to have avoided Megiddo (in the Jezreel Valley) and Betshean to the east of Megiddo in the En Harod Valley. It appears that these unconquered cities were controlled by the Philistines, Israel's largest nemesis for over a hundred years until King David.

Study Four: The Tribes

To be used with Study Map Four

DISCUSSION

We are not going to mark this map in detail. The goal is to provide a general idea of where tribes were located and the unique situation that each one faced.

MARKING

- A. Draw the two main ridges that are in the central part of Palestine.
 - 1) Draw the Carmel Ridge: Draw a line from the point of Carmel (between Dor and Acco on the coast) on the southeasterly angle to the "H" in Manasseh. This is the Carmel Ridge.
 - 2) The Judean Ridge runs from above the "H" in Manasseh, starting at the "ee" in Jezreel, to the "H" in Judah at the south.
- B. There are four tribes north of the Carmel Ridge: Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, and Issachar. Draw a line around the outside of all four of these and write to the west of them (in the blue of the sea) "Galilee Tribes".
- C. Draw the International Coastal Highway: Start at Damascus to the northeast and draw a line southward through Dan, then through Hazor, then south touching the north edge of the Sea of Galilee. Continue south just to the right of Mt. Tabor, to Megiddo, crossing the Carmel Ridge and heading south down the coast to Joppa, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, and off the page toward Egypt.

OBSERVATIONS

- A. Note the location of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh. 2½ tribes were east of the Jordan River.
- Manasseh was given the Golan Heights
 - Gad was given the high country of transjordan called the “Dome of Gilead”.
 - Reuben is fairly isolated being east of the Dead Sea with the River Arnon as its southern boundary
- B. Simeon is totally surrounded by Judah – giving rise to being assimilated into Judah as time passed.
- C. Four tribes, noted earlier, were north of the Carmel Ridge which served as something of a natural boundary tending to isolate those tribes. In addition, the economic situation of those four tribes is quite different due to their access to better farmland, the Sea of Galilee, and the best natural port at Acco.
- D. Manasseh and Ephraim are closely related, being the sons of Joseph. Note the geographic relationship of these two tribes versus Judah. Throughout the book of judges and when these tribes formed into a kingdom, there is always a sense of rivalry between Judah and Ephraim/Manasseh. In fact, when the kingdom split in two, Ephraim/Manasseh forms the heart of Israel to the north and the southern kingdom adopts the name of Judah.
- E. Note the location of Benjamin between the two tribal entities of Ephraim and Judah. While the first king (Saul) comes from Benjamin, after him Benjamin is always caught in the rivalry between these two larger tribes.

MARKING

- D. In the tribe of Judah, circle the cities of Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, Ashkelon and Gaza. In the space between these cities, write “Philistines”. Their home was on the coastal plain and they were the controllers of the international trade route during the time of the judges. Because they controlled the trade route, they also had fortresses as far away as Megiddo and Betshean (northern Manasseh) and Hazor (in the tribe of Naphtali).

DISCUSSION

There are four tribes up in the Galilee area, each with their distinctive characteristics and history. The problems facing these tribes were complex. Not only were they separated from the stronger tribes of Manasseh/Ephraim and Judah, they were also plagued by a number of unconquered Canaanite cities, most of which were located on strategic crossroads, keys to the economics of the area. Tribes that were especially affected by this were Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar.

- A. **Zebulun** in lower western Galilee is very good agricultural land, possessing part of the Jezreel Valley as well as the Iphtahel Valley (which would eventually become home to Sepphoris, the capitol of Galilee in Jesus’ day). In it lie two of the ridges in lower western Galilee, the Tiran and Nazareth ridges, so Nazareth is in the tribe of Zebulun.
- B. **Issachar** is a very valuable agricultural zone, possessing most of the Jezreel Valley and the Betshean Valley. Because it is so identified with the Jezreel Valley, a critical juncture for the International Highway, Issachar was frequently conquered.
- C. **Asher** has two traits: A coast and the forests of the substantial mountains of upper Galilee. As a result, Asher was somewhat isolated. Tyre is listed in this tribal allotment, but rarely is it under their control.
- D. **Naphtali** had the blessing of the Sea of Galilee, along with the Rosh Pinna Sill, the Hulah Basin, and the eastern side of upper Galilee. Parts of the territory would be difficult to hold because of the International Highway traversing it. As a result, Hazor was a major fort and the capitol of the area. The Sea of Galilee is a very fertile fishing ground, famous in the ancient world and quite prosperous to the tribe to whom it was given.

Benjamin had a strategic location: First, it included the prosperous oasis of Jericho. Second, Benjamin possessed the easiest east-west route across the land which consisted of the flattest of the areas in the highland (the Central Benjamin Plateau) and the best route down to Jericho. The first king (Saul) came from Benjamin and it held what would be the future capital, Jerusalem. When the united nation of Israel split into two, the boundary between them ran through Benjamin and the original area of Dan. As a result, sometimes Benjamin is listed as being in Judah and at other times it is considered to be in the northern country of Israel.

There were very close ties between **Ephraim and Manasseh**, both being from the family line of Joseph; rather than have a tribe of Joseph, God allotted land to his sons as tribes in their own right. (Levi did not get a tribal land allotment since it was a tribe of priests. Levi was given a city in each of the tribes. This division of Joseph into Ephraim and Manasseh kept the number of tribes at twelve.) Although Ephraim was smaller in size than Manasseh, because it did not control the coastal plain, there was not as much international interest in its territory. In addition, Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim, providing it with a sense of leadership among the tribes. The first of the locations at which the Ark of the Covenant resided was at Shiloh in Ephraim and Samuel the last and greatest of the judges was from Ephraim. When one reads through the books of Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel, you can detect a tension in the struggle for dominance between Judah and Ephraim. Jeroboam, the one who rebelled against Rehoboam and who was the first king of the divided Israel, was from Ephraim.

Manasseh was given difficult land to control. Although the portion that was in the hill country could go unchallenged, it also was given the coastal plain with its international highway, the passes through the Carmel Ridge, and half of the Jezreel Valley with its major fort of Megiddo. Eventually three of the capitols of divided Israel were in Manasseh (Shechem, Tirzah, and Samaria), placing a bull's-eye on it for the major empires that wanted to control this region.

Following the initial triumphs of Joshua, each tribe was given its land allotment and told to go finish conquering it. Based on the importance and location of the international trade route, which of the tribes do you think will have the hardest time conquering their land? Whose land allotment has most of its land along the international trade route?

Read Judges 1:34. (Note: "Amorites" is the generic term for the indigenous people of the area.)

Since the pathway of the International Coastal Highway is the most valuable piece of property to control, those tribes whose allotment is primarily in the vicinity of the highway had the most difficult time finishing the conquest of their area. If a tribe had land allotted near the highway – or a major connecting artery – *and* other land, they always had the option of ignoring the property on which the highway lay. For example, Judah could opt to stay in the highlands, along with Ephraim and Manasseh. The tribe of Dan had little choice and they faced the very difficult task of ousting the Philistines. They were unable to do so and finally opted to move north, in spite of the pesky victories of Samson (Judges 13-16).

Each tribe struggled to be faithful to the Lord; they began to adopt the beliefs and practices of the natives who lived among them. As a result God allowed kings of remaining city-states or raiders from foreign countries to dominate them. When they would finally cry out for help, God would raise up a military leader to rescue them. These leaders, commonly called Judges, mustered the tribes to drive out the enemy. Here is a list of the Judges and the tribes they helped.

Othniel -- from Judah, but fought the king of Damascus

Ehud – from Benjamin, assassinated the king of Moab who was living in Jericho

Shamgar – from Judah and fought the Philistines

Deborah – from Ephraim, but mustered Naphtali and Zebulun to defeat the king of Hazor in the Jezreel Valley

Gideon – from Manasseh and mustered Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali to defeat Midianites in the Jezreel Valley.

Tola – from Ephraim

Jair – from Manasseh in Gilead (east of the Jordan River)

Jephthah – from Manasseh in Gilead; Ephraim became upset that Manasseh did not ask them to help

Samson – from Dan and had personal encounters with the Philistines.

To gain an idea of the spiritual climate of the tribes after Joshua died, read the bizarre and tragic events in Judges 17-18. In the end, the tribe of Dan relocated far to the north and established its own priesthood and religious rites. That was taken away by Solomon when everything was centralized in Jerusalem, but restored by Jeroboam after the kingdom divided. Because of this, throughout Scripture the tribe of Dan is known for its unfaithfulness (and hence omitted from the list of God's people in Revelation 7).

MARKING

Mark the area to which the tribe of Dan relocated. Within the boundaries of Naphtali and East Manasseh, draw a circle that encompasses Mt. Hermon, Ijon, and Dan. Label it "Dan 2".

DISCUSSION

Because of the location of three Galilean tribes close to the International Highway (Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali) and the location of Asher on the coast and ultimately strongly influenced by the Phoenicians, (a sea-faring people), Galilee almost constantly had interaction and pressure from foreign powers. When a world empire came from the north, they were always the first to become subject. While this was the Galilean tribes socio-political situation, God saw a different future for them: The coming of the Messiah and his use of Galilee as his home base. Nazareth is in Zebulun and Capernaum (Jesus' base of operation) is in Naphtali. This led Isaiah to write:

There will be no more gloom for Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he (God) will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan –

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light
On those living in the land of the shadow of death, A light
has dawned . . .

For to us a child is born,

To us a son is given

And the government will be on his shoulders.

He will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(Is.9:2. 6)

Study Five: The Divided Kingdom

To be used with Map Five: The Divided Kingdom

DISCUSSION

The degree of stability and economic prosperity enjoyed under Solomon's rule was attained by a compromise of faithfulness to YHWH that demonstrated itself in trade alliances and treaties with the surrounding nations (1 Kings 11:1-8). As a result, he introduced the worship of multiple gods, supported them by state funds, and ended up worshipping Ashtoreth of the Sidonians and Molech of the Ammonites – a god to whom they practiced child sacrifice. On a purely socio-economic front, the northern tribes had paid a pretty high price by Solomon's control of the routes that passed through their territories. Egypt had also paid a heavy price for Solomon's glory. Due to it going through a relatively weak time in its empire, Egypt had no other choice than to relinquish principal trade routes to Israel, giving the fort of Gezer to him to rebuild and fortify as a "front-door" protection of the route up to his capitol of Jerusalem.

With the death of Solomon and reorganization that took place in Egypt, the land returned to the unstable conditions it had experienced in the days of the judges and Saul. The north rejected the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, throwing off the control from Jerusalem. The leader of that revolt was Jeroboam from the tribe of Ephraim. Earlier during Solomon's reign, Jeroboam showed great promise of leadership and was placed in charge of the work force from the tribe of Ephraim. In some way, directed and inspired by the words of the prophet from Shiloh, Jeroboam attempted a rebellion in the days of Solomon, but was forced to flee as Solomon tried to have him assassinated. Jeroboam took up political asylum with the Pharaoh of Egypt, Shishak. What is known about this period of unrest appears in 1 Kings 11:26-40.

There is a reason that Shishak granted asylum to Jeroboam. They, no doubt, agreed that the control of the kingdom should be taken from the house of David and the tribe of Judah, albeit for probably very different reasons. Shishak would not have discouraged Jeroboam in his quest for northern independence; the logic of divide and conquer was basic to Shishak's strategy. While the country of Israel went through civil unrest, Shishak knew he could attack and reclaim control of the economically important parts of the country.

MARKING

You will be using green for Judah, orange for Israel, and blue for their enemies.

1. First, mark the boundary between Judah and Israel. Using green, start at the mouth of the Jordan River into the Dead Sea and draw a line that travels west following these markers:
 - South of Jericho
 - Between Bethel and Gibeon
 - North of Upper and Lower Beth-horon
 - Just to the north of Gezer, but bending south before the International Coastal Highway (printed in red)
 - The boundary stays east of the ICH, east of Gath, between Lachish and Eglon, and proceeds off the page to the south.
 - Write JUDAH in an open location inside their boundary (on the south side of the line you just drew)
 - Write ISRAEL in the open location east of Shechem.
2. Put a green box around Jerusalem, Judah's capitol
3. Jeroboam established two capitols: Shechem and Penuel (east of the Jordan River). Put an orange box around both and small 1 above each orange box. Having two capitols allowed him two administrative centers, one for the 2½ tribes east of the Jordan.
4. Finish marking the boundaries of Israel (in orange):
 - The border with Philistia: Start on the previously drawn green line near Gezer and arch westerly to the coast between Joppa and Gath Rimmon.
 - The border with Phoenicia: Start between Libnah and Acco on the coast, draw a line east through the ? after Mishal, then bending sharply north around Mishal, staying about an inch from the coast line as you travel north to the edge of the map.

- The eastern border with Ammon; Starting on the eastern edge of the map north of Rabbath-ammon, draw a line west, bending south around Rabbath-ammon, then back east to the south side of Rabbathammon. (Essentially a horse shoe around Rabbath-ammon.)
- The north east boundaries with Aram-Damascus: Starting on the eastern edge of the map by the tip of the arrow for Edrei, follow the canyon shading north westerly, turning more west to follow the river/gorge to the Jordan Valley. When the line reaches the valley, directly below the Sea of Galilee, turn north to connect the boundary to the south shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Finish the north east boundary with Aram-Damascus: On the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, beginning at the inlet of the Jordan River, draw a line straight up the river to the edge of the map on the north.

READ: 1 Kings 11:41-12:33

DISCUSSION

This passage is basic to subsequent developments in the period of the Divided Kingdom. It sets the course for the future in two ways: First, while the south (Judah) would have a succession of kings in the family line of David, the north would be wrought with rebellions, overthrows, assassinations, and coups. Second, it establishes the spiritual apostasy of the north from which they would never recover.

Jeroboam needed a religious revolution to offset the dominance and attraction of Jerusalem. He therefore created a new and alternative religion, complete with new festivals, practice, and priesthood. He erected centers of worship at both ends of his kingdom, at Bethel and Dan. Both sites had rich historical and religious roots. Dan, the gateway of the north, had always been noted for religious fervor ever since Judges 17-18, however misguided. The shrine at Bethel was especially significant if Jeroboam was to protect his kingdom and prevent his subjects from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Jeroboam's explicit policy promoting faith in a god other than YHWH is remembered throughout the Old Testament as *the sin of Jeroboam* from which they never recovered and for which they were ultimately destroyed (2 Kings 17:21-23).

MARKING

5. In orange, underline Bethel (center) and Dan (far north, in the Hulah Basin) and label them "religious center".

DISCUSSION

Coupled with Jeroboam's apostasy, one of the immediate results that the division of the country had was an emphasis on the worship of YHWH in Judah. The Levites who had been given cities throughout the tribes in which to live were no longer welcome in any of the northern tribal areas. Those who wanted to maintain their identity were forced to move to Judah, giving them a renewed emphasis of serving YHWH and identifying Judah with the worship of YHWH in contrast to the northern kingdom. Although they did not get rid of the gods Solomon introduced, in this very clever way, God very quickly drew a stronger witness to the true faith following the confusion that Solomon left.

READ: 2 Chronicles 11:13-17

MARKING

6. In blue, mark the locations of the surrounding enemies of Judah and Israel.
- At the lower right corner of the map (southwest) write EGYPT with an arrow pointing further southwest.
 - On the coastal plain between Gath and Ashdod, write PHILISTINES
 - In the northwest corner of the map (to left), write ARAM-DAMASCUS (SYRIA), north and east of the Sea of Galilee.
 - In the northeast corner, north of Acco on the coast, write PHOENICIA
 - At the eastern edge of the map by Rabbath-ammon (in the horseshoe shape of the boundary marking Israel's eastern boundary) write AMMON.
 - East of the Dead Sea, east of Ar, write MOAB.

Discussion:

At some point Jeroboam decided that Shechem was too exposed as a safe place to keep his western capitol. In 1 Kings 14:17 we are told that Jeroboam's wife left Shiloh (where she had been consulting the prophet Ahijah)

and returned to her home in Tirzah. Therefore, the move of Jeroboam to Tirzah must have taken place prior to 1 Kings 14.

Marking:

7. Place an orange box around Tirzah and mark it with a 2.

DISCUSSION

Notice that the tribe of Benjamin was split in half. Jerusalem was the capitol of Judah, so it was a key part of the southern kingdom, along with cities on the southern edge of the Central Benjamin Plateau (Gibeah, Geba, Ramah, and Mizpah). On the other hand, Bethel and Ai on the northern edge of the plateau were in the northern kingdom. Since this plateau was critical to controlling the highlands and the best way to travel across the ridge from west to east, Israel and Judah continually fought over its control throughout their history. Remember, however, they were not the only ones who wanted to control this territory and its trade routes.

READ: 2 Chronicles 12:1-14

MARKING

7. Shishak's plan worked. Consistent with what is reported in 2 Chronicles 12, on the walls of the Temple of Karnak (near Luxor), Shishak recorded a list of cities that he defeated in Palestine. Place a blue dot by each of the cities in Shishak's inscription
 - A. The main entrance into the land from Egypt, place a blue dot by Gaza.
 - B. On the approach to Jerusalem from the Coastal Highway, placed dots by Gezer, Aijalon, Upper and Lower Beth-horon, Kiriath-jearim, and Gibeon. (Jerusalem was not included in this list, reflecting the fact that Rehoboam was able to negotiate with Egypt as recorded in 2 Chronicles 12:1-12.)
 - C. Shishak then traveled north up the ridge route and east to the Jordan Valley. Place a blue dot by Tirzah, Adam (in the Jordan Valley), Succoth, and Penuel. Note that in this sweep he took control of both of Jeroboam's capitols, having turned on the one to whom he had previously given asylum.
 - D. Shishak continued north up the Jordan Valley, desiring to take control of the forts and routes through the Jezreel Valley. Put a blue dot by Succoth, Zarethan, Bethshan, Megiddo, Taanach, and Gathpadalla.
8. To recap Shishak's campaign, draw sweeping blue arrows. . .
 - A. From the region of Gaza to Gezer via Ashdod.
 - B. From the region of Gezer to Gibeon.
 - C. From the region of Gibeon to Tirzah.
 - D. From the region of Tirzah to Succoth via Adam and up to Penuel.
 - E. From Succoth up past Bethshan, through the Jezreel Valley to Megiddo and back out to the Gath on the coast.

DISCUSSION

In this study you have:

- Been introduced to the geographical setting of the divided kingdoms
- Seen the difficulties each kingdom would face spiritually, militarily, and economically.
- Seen the rise of a northern kingdom that would be racked with internal and external struggles. (Although not in this study, there would be intermittent times of abundance in which they controlled the routes and their own resources. (like in the days of Ahaz, king of Israel).
- The quick fall of the United Kingdom and the loss of its wealth to Egypt.
- The ability and the desire of larger empires to subjugate the region.

Why did God bring about the division of the kingdom? Simply put, Solomon fell in love with the world and its wealth and power, creating a spiritual confusion that forced God to take drastic action.

Study Six: Jesus' Ministry

To be used with Map Six: Jesus Life and Ministry

DISCUSSION

By the time of the New Testament, the political and demographic boundaries of Israel had changed substantially from the end of the Old Testament. They had been through the conquest by Alexander the Great, lived through the subsequent fight over Palestine by the Ptolemies and the Seleucids following Alexander's death, experienced the freedom of the Maccabean Revolt, and were now being governed by the Roman Empire. At first, the entire land was governed by a puppet king (Herod the Great) over a client kingdom (Judea), serving as a buffer to hostile enemies to the east (namely the Parthians/Persians and the Nabateans in the Arabian Peninsula). Following Herod's death, Judea came under direct Roman rule (by procurators), with three of Herod's sons ruling over portions of what had previously been Herod's kingdom. The map is from the time of the ministry of Jesus in his adulthood.

MARKING

As you look at the map, identify the following regions and their characteristics, and mark each region as indicated. You will use blue to indicate capitols, orange to indicate major cities or cities of importance in Jesus' ministry, and green to note other sites related to Jesus' ministry that we will visit.

1. Locate the territory of Herod Philip, northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Below the word PHILIP, write (Trachonotis). His territory included the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley north of the Sea of Galilee, including the Hulah Basin and the very high mountains of Mt. Hermon.
 - Put a blue box around Caesarea Philippi. This was the capitol of his territory at the foot of Mt. Hermon and the location of the "mystical" headwaters of the Jordan River. Jesus' transfiguration most likely happens on Mt. Hermon and it was in Caesarea Philippi that Peter made his great confession of faith (Mk.8:27-30).
 - Underline Bethsaida in orange (the one slightly off the Sea of Galilee). At the time of the printing of the map, this city had not yet been positively identified, but has now been confirmed. It is on the eastern side of the river, so it is in Philip's territory, although being on the border between Gentile and Jewish territories, its population was mixed. It was the original home of at least four of the disciples.
 - Underline Gamla in green. We will visit this site as a way to understand the attitude of some toward the Roman government.
2. Locate the DECAPOLIS, south of Philip's territory, east of the Jordan River. By definition of its name, this was "ten cities" in a league formed as advocates of the Greek culture, hoping to be outposts of civility in the middle of a rather crude Palestine. Underline in orange the cities of the Decapolis shown on this map: Hippus, Gadara, Pella, Abila, Scythopolis (the only one west of the Jordan River, built at the foot of Old Testament Bethshan), Gerasa, and Philadelphia. Jesus first excursion with his disciples into the heart of Gentile territory was in the region of Gadara where he cast out the legion of demons, resulting in many people throughout the Decapolis hearing about him (Mk.5:1-20). Later, Jesus travelled through the Decapolis, teaching about the kingdom of God, healing, and miraculously feeding 4000 (Mk.7:31-8:13). Since Scythopolis was one of the major routes connecting Galilee to the Jordan Valley and beyond to Judea, it is very likely that Jesus visited that impressive, Greek-looking city as well.
3. Locate PEREA and write near it "Beyond the Jordan". When Jesus makes himself absent from Jerusalem following attempts on his life, he travels to towns in this region – the same region in which John the Baptist did his ministry. (See Jn.10:40-42)
4. Locate TYRE on the coast to the north. Place a blue box around Tyre, its capitol. Jesus traveled here and healed a young girl, demonstrating to his disciples that he came for people outside Israel too. (Mk.7:24-30) In fact, Mark describes Jesus as spending time in the region of Tyre, then traveling to the Decapolis (Mk.7:31).

DISCUSSION

So far you have marked areas that were predominantly Gentile and that surround the “Jewish” territories. We turn our attention now to those regions that were heavily Jewish, beginning with Galilee the region under the control of Herod Antipas. Begin by noting the amount of cities shown in the Galilee region. The population of Galilee was about 200,000 -- a density not reached again until modern days. The cities of Sepphoris and Betshean were 20,000-35,000 in population. There were at least 8 cities on the Sea of Galilee reported to be at or near a population of 10,000 people: Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Gennesaret, Magdala, Tiberius, Philoteria, and Gadara, which although it was a distance from the lake, had a port on it.

In Galilee many villages/cities had their own synagogue and considerable contact with the larger cities as the distribution points for agriculture and cottage industries. To date we have uncovered 70 synagogues in Galilee, places Jesus taught on one of his preaching tours. (See Mt.3:23-24) . The trading hubs of Lower Galilee were Sepphoris, Scythopolis, and Tiberias. What had been through the ages a crossroads of various cultures, peoples, and empires was no different in Jesus' day. International exposure and trade were not unusual for Galilee -- the sardines from the Sea of Galilee are even mentioned as a delicacy in Rome! Every village was within 30 miles of one of these trading centers. Though by itself an insignificant village, Nazareth was within eyesight of the booming capital of Galilee, Sepphoris, and overlooked the International Coastal Highway.

MARKING

5. Place a blue box around Sepphoris which served as the capitol. Write a 1 by it. Later the capitol moved to Tiberius which Antipas built as an attempt to rival his father's building project of Sepphoris. Place a blue box around Tiberius and write 2 by it.
6. Underline the following cities in orange, locations noted in the gospels:
 - On the shores of the Sea of Galilee: Capernaum (Jesus' home base), Chorazin, Magdala (also called Tericheae), and Tiberias.
 - In Lower Western Galilee: Cana, Nazareth, and Nain

DISCUSSION

Following the Assyrian conquest of Israel (722 BC), the resettling of the territory resulted in the introduction of Samaritans. They lived in what had previously been called Israel, however, the Roman government considered it part of the Province of Judea. The fact that the best routes to Jerusalem from Galilee were down the Jordan Valley or along the coast and that there was a bitter hatred for Samaritans, caused the Samaria area to be less travelled.

MARKING

7. Place a blue box around Sebaste (the other name for the city of Samaria). Caesar Augustus gave this city to Herod the Great for his help in taking control of Palestine. Herod, in turn, did his usual first-class building job and renamed it after his patron (Augustus, whose Greek name was Sebaste)
8. In orange underline the following cities of Samaria:
 - Sychar, where Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well with the result that all of Samaria got to hear about him (Jn.4:1-42).
 - Caesarea (on the coast), an important location for the spread of the gospel. It was the second busiest port in the entire Roman world. It was also the location where the Roman procurator lived.
 - Antipatris, the place where the Romans hid Paul overnight after snatching him from Jerusalem when a plot to kill him at had been discovered (Acts 23).

DISCUSSION

The other Jewish region of Palestine in the 1st century was Judea. Because of their proximity to Jerusalem and their ability to participate regularly in activities at the temple, the Jews of Judea considered the Jews of Galilee as second rate citizens.

MARKING

9. Draw a blue box around Jerusalem, its capitol.
10. Underline in orange the following cities mentioned in the gospels: Jericho (in the Jordan Valley),

Bethany (home of Mary , Martha, and Lazarus), Bethphage, Bethlehem, Emmaus (west of Jerusalem), Aramathea (home of Joseph who provided the tomb of Jesus), Joppa (on the coast), and Azotus (south of Joppa).

11. In blue, underline the following cities which have bearing on the New Testament accounts and which we will visit: Herodium (southeast of Bethlehem), and Qumran (home of the Essenes, on the shore of the Dead Sea).

READING

With map in hand, read the following passages to become acquainted with Jesus' activities in the various areas and cities. These are listed more or less in chronological order. Find the locations typed in bold print.

Jn.1:24-29	Jesus baptism at Bethany beyond the Jordan
Mk.2:12-23	Jesus temptation in the wilderness of Judea
Jn.1:43-44	Jesus returns to Galilee and calls some disciples from Bethsaida
Jn.2:1	Note the relation of Nazareth to Cana , both in the trading region of Sepphoris
Jn.2:12	Capernaum eventually becomes the base for his ministry in Galilee
Jn.2:13	Jesus travelled several times to Jerusalem ; he attended at least 3 Passovers there.
Jn.4:1-42	He went to Samaritans at Sychar
Mk.1:21-34	Work at Capernaum
Mk.1:39-45	Galilean preaching tour -- remember there were 70 synagogues in Galilee
Mk.5:1-20	The Decapolis city of Gadara had a harbor on the Sea of Galilee
Mk.7:24-30	In the region of Tyre and Sidon
Mk.7:31	Back to the Decapolis
Lk. 7:11-17	His reputation spreads from Nain
Mt.11:20-24	Condemnation for Capernaum, Chorazin , and Bethsaida
Mk.8:27-30	Confession of Jesus as the Christ at Caesarea Philippi
Lk.17:11-19	He meets 10 lepers between Samaria and Galilee
Lk.19:1-10	On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus meets Zacchaeus in Jericho
Mk.11:1-11	Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Bethany and Bethphage

DISCUSSION

It is no wonder that the pilgrim throngs going to Jerusalem from all over knew about Jesus. Nor is it any wonder that this made the leaders in Jerusalem nervous about the amount of power he could command. Given the diverse cultural conditions of the surrounding areas, it makes sense that the sign listing his crime had to be printed in three different languages so that everyone could understand it. Finally, it is because there was this broad familiarity with Jesus that the message of his resurrection and the gospel was quick to impact so many lives in this area.