



# **HOLY LAND QUEST**

BY DEAN LADD

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# FORWARD

The motivation for writing this manuscript was to gather all my Middle-East travel photos/ recordings and add the latest archaeological and historical information for my own increased knowledge and for maximum free dissemination and feedback on my website that others of like interest can build upon. The site address is: [theworksofdeanladd.yolasite.com](http://theworksofdeanladd.yolasite.com)

I have always been project oriented from youth on through my employment to retirement as an aerospace project engineer with Lockheed. This is the most recent of my twelve history and biography writing projects. They began in 1983 with my first published book, *Faithful Warriors*. That was about my re-walking all my Marine WWII Pacific battle sites.

Then my writing focus shifted to genealogy (*Hello Ancestors*) and my ancestors' involvement in the Civil War (*Boots and Saddles*), the Revolutionary War (*Sons of Liberty*) and the Medieval period royalty (*Medieval Quest*).

# INTRODUCTION

About 700 years ago, the well-known Italian classical writer, Francesco Petrarch, wrote an imaginary dialogue with St. Augustine (d. 430) in *Cecretum Meum (My Secret Book)*. I used a similar imaginary dialogue approach in writing my manuscript, *Medieval Quest*.

Petrarch is considered the founder of Humanism (much different meaning than as compared to that of the present) which led to the Renaissance. He was also an avid traveler and searcher of the truth regarding the relationship of the individual soul to the observable wonders of creation.

He wrote many poems, wrestling with this theme, as well as *A Guide to the Holy Land*. Learning of this guide, my reaction was that we can go far beyond what was known in his time about those sites. So, I haven't used that guide for this research!

Current tour guides point out that this part of the world has played a great role in human history, leaving ruins of most ancient civilizations that produced three monotheistic faiths. They call the historical sites "traditional" unless confirmed by archaeological discoveries. Jerusalem (meaning peace) is the most sacred of all sites but has also seen the greatest terror, war, and blood of any city in the world during its 4,000 years of history.

The panoramic view on this manuscript cover looks southerly over this holiest city from Mount Scopus which has been strategically important as a base from which to attack the city since antiquity. The Romans camped here in 65 AD and again in 70 AD to carry out the siege of the city. The Crusaders used it as a base in 1099. About 2,500 British soldiers from WW I are buried here in the Jerusalem British War Cemetery.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Hadassah Teaching Hospital and the Mormon University all share this site. Our tour group gazed in awe and contemplated the historical significance of the view as a shepherder filed by with his flock of sheep, reminiscent of youthful David and even the good shepherd, Jesus.

This vantage point shows the locations of the following major events regarding Jesus:

1. Birth in Bethlehem, located about six miles to the south on the Judean ridge sky-line in the photo upper left.
2. Crucifixion and temporary burial, traditionally located at today's Church of the Holy Sepulcher in western old Jerusalem in the photo upper center.
3. Ascension into Heaven from the Mount of Olives in the photo left center.

The concept for my writing this manuscript evolved as I scanned my photo slides into my computer and added captions from my three family trips to many biblical sites in Israel and other trips to Egypt, Greece, Crete, Rhodes and Italy.

This started me thinking that the photos and captions could be the beginning of a manuscript titled *Holy Land Quest*, as I did in writing about my research trip

to the UK in 2007, titled *Medieval Quest*. This writing will concentrate on the latest archaeological information about the sites from many sources but not delve into the various theologies.

So the captions became the starting point about those places I had visited and have become greatly expanded into what Paul Harvey called, “the rest of the story.” This reveals the latest archaeological findings, extending back to about 7,000 years B.C.

Jericho is a prime example, being the world’s lowest-elevation and oldest continuously inhabited city. The earliest known large urban uninhabited site, called Catalhoyuk, is located in Turkey southeast of Ephesus and dates even further back to about 7400 B.C. Other places date from the Byzantine, Crusader and Ottoman periods.

Those civilizations have all left their ruins, layer upon layer, with much material reused during rebuilding. Those civilization’s “fires of faith” remain primarily unchanged though and have caused continual conflict.

When I reviewed my photos of historical sites with their limited captions, I realized my limited concept of the full histories. My personal leaning from the differing researcher opinions will be most influenced by my prime research source, “*Archaeological Study Bible, An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture*”, a production of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. It was last published by Zondervan in 2005. My research sources however extend far beyond this, as shown in the selected bibliography.

I have also used the latest archaeological information from *The Great Courses* produced by *The Teaching Company* such as *The Holy Land Revealed* and *The Origin of Civilization*. Archaeology is now greatly enhanced by increasing use of three-dimensional virtual reconstruction of sites and DNA analysis of organic remains.

I normally started on the Web and then compared that information with many other sources. For example, in chapter 4, I was able to readily develop a helpful summary of the constant Holy Land power struggle since the Jewish revolt against Roman rule in 135 A.D.

# CHRONOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS

Source is from *Israel Pocket Library Archaeology*, Keter Publishing House, 1974  
that I bought in Jerusalem. Dates vary in other sources.

DATE	PERIOD	
12,000-7500 B.C.	Mesolithic	Pre-History
7500-4000 B.C.	Neolithic	"
4000-3150 B.C.	Chalcolithic	"
3150-2850 B.C.	Early Bronze I	Early Caananite
2850-2650 B.C.	Early Bronze II	"
2650-2350 B.C.	Early Bronze III	"
2350-2200 B.C.	Early Bronze IV (III A)	
2200-2000 B.C.	Middle Bronze I	Middle Caananite
2,000-1750 B.C.	Middle Bronze II A	"
1750-1550 B.C.	Middle Bronze II B	"
1550-1400 B.C.	Late Bronze I	Late Caananite
1400-1300 B.C.	Late Bronze II A	"
1300-1200 B.C.	Late bronze II B	"
1200-1150 B.C.	Iron Age I A	Israelite I
1150-1000 B.C.	Iron Age I B	"
1000-900 B.C.	Iron Age II A	Israelite II
900-800 B.C.	Iron Age II B	Israelite III
800-586 B.C.	Iron Age II C	"
586-332 B.C.		Persian
332-152 B.C.		Hellenistic I
152-37 B.C.		" (Hasmonean) II
37 B.C.-70 A.D.		Roman (Herodian) I
70-324 A.D.		" II, III
324-640 A.D.		Byzantine
640-1099 A.D.		Early Arab
1099-1291 A.D.		Crusader
1291-1516 A.D.		Mamluk (Mameluke)

# CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORICAL CIVILIZATION PERIODS

(From various sources.)

DATE	PERIOD
<b>7400-6000 B.C.</b>	<b>Catalhoyuk in Turkey (World's oldest/largest known urban site).</b>
<b>3100-1069</b>	<b>Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (after the pre-dynastic period).</b>
<b>3000-1450</b>	<b>Minoans.</b>
<b>1600-1100</b>	<b>Pre-Greek Mycenaeans.</b>
<b>332-141</b>	<b>Greek rule.</b>
<b>37 B.C.- 133 A.D.</b>	<b>Roman rule.</b>
<b>1 A.D.</b>	<b>History chronology renumbered.</b>
<b>324-638</b>	<b>Byzantium influence.</b>
<b>638-1516</b>	<b>Islam rule.</b>
<b>1099-1291</b>	<b>Crusades.</b>
<b>1517-1917</b>	<b>Ottoman Turk rule.</b>
<b>1948-present</b>	<b>Modern Israel. (Refer to the more detailed chronology from 135 A.D. to 1948 in chapter 4).</b>

# GLOSSARY

## Selections from *The Holy Land Revealed, The Great Courses.*

**Aelia Capitolina:** Name given by Hadrian to his rebuilt city of Jerusalem, combining his name (Publius Aelius Hadrianus and Capitoline Jupiter, the new patron deity).

**Al-Aqsa:** Arabic for “the farthest spot”; name of the mosque on the Temple Mount, built by the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malek or his son al-Walid.

**Antonia:** Fortress built by Herod the Great at the northwest corner of the Temple Mount.

**Arch of Ecce Homo:** Hadrianic triple-arched gateway marking the entrance to a forum, identified in Christian tradition as the spot from which Pontius Pilate displayed Jesus to the crowds.

**Baal:** National deity of the Canaanite / Phoenicians.

**Bar-Kokhba Revolt:** The Second Jewish Revolt against Rome (132-135 A.D.).

**Caesarea Maritima:** The old coastal town of Straton’s Tower, rebuilt by Herod and renamed in honor of Augustus.

**Church of the Sisters of Zion:** Convent located today on the north side of the Via Dolorosa, inside of which are the Struthion pools, Lithostratos pavement and the Arch of Ecce Homo.

**City of David: Eastern Hill: Lower City.**

**Cuniform:** Ancient script made by making wedge-shaped impressions onto a clay tablet.

**Damascus Gate:** The main gate in the north wall of Jerusalem’s Old City.

**Ein Gedi:** An oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea that was the site of an ancient Jewish village.

**Gihon spring:** Jerusalem’s only personal source of fresh water.

**Glacis:** In general, a plastered mound of earth piled around a town, with a fortification wall on top.

**Hanakkah:** Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Jerusalem temple to the God of Israel in 164 B.C.

**Hasmoneans (Maccabees):** Priestly family from the town of Modiin that led a Jewish revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and ruled the kingdom founded after the revolt.

**Hellenistic:** The period beginning with Alexander’s conquests.

**Herodium:** A fortified palace near Bethlehem that is Herod’s final resting place and memorial to himself.

**Hippodrome:** Course for horse and chariot races.

**Hulda Gates:** Two sets of Herodian gates in the southern wall of the Temple Mount that were the main thoroughfares for the pilgrims.

Idumaea: The southern part of the former kingdom of Judah, inhabited after 586 B.C. by the descendants of the Edomites (Idumaeans).

Jebusites: The original (Bronze Age) population of Jerusalem.

Kidron Valley: Separates the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount and the City of David.

Lachish: Important city in the southern part of the kingdom of Judah, destroyed by the Babylonians in 701 B.C.

Lithostatos pavement: Stone pavement of the Hadrianic forum in Jerusalem overlying the Struthion pools; identified in the Christian tradition as the spot where Pontius Pilate sentenced Jesus to death.

Madaba Map: Mosaic floor of circa A.D. 600 in a church in the town of Madaba (Jordan), decorated with a map of the Holy Land as it appeared at that time.

Mausoleum Halicarnassos: Monumental tomb of King Mausolus of Caria (C. 350 B.C.) at modern Bodrum on the southwest coast of Turkey.

Menorah: Seven-branched candelabrum in the Jewish temple.

Merneptah stele: Monumental stone inscription at the Pharaoh Merneptah in Egypt which contains the first reference to the people "Israel" (1209 B.C.).

Mesopotamia: In Greek, literally means "the land between the rivers," referring to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, a territory that corresponds with modern Iraq.

Mount Gerizim: Sacred mountain of the Samaritans, overlooking biblical Shechem (modern Nablus).

Repository: Pit in a rock-cut tomb to collect remains of burials.

Robinson's Arch: A monumental Herodian gate supported on arches that led from the Tyropoean Valley into the area of the Royal Stoa on the Temple Mount.

Rotunda: The circular structure in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher that enshrines the tomb of Jesus.

Umayyads: The first Muslim dynasty (A.D. 66-750).

Via Dolorosa ("Way of Sorrow or the Cross"): The route walked by Jesus from the point where he was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate to the place where he was crucified and buried (today enshrined within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher).

Warren's Shaft: Along with the Siloam Channel and Hezekiah's Tunnel, one of three ancient water systems of Jerusalem.

Western Hill: Upper City.

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5. Whiston, William (translated by). *Josephus Complete Works*. Kregel Publications, 1974
6. The Teaching Company's Great Courses, *The Holy Land Revealed*, 36 DVD lectures, 2010.
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8. Various books published by Reader's Digest and others.

# CHAPTER 1

## OLD TESTAMENT SITES

### SUMMARY OF BIBLE EVENTS

Source is partially from *ABC's of the Bible*, Reader's Digest, 1991

- 3000 B.C. Regional societies and cultures begin to emerge
- 2000 Age of Patriarchs  
Abraham leaves Mesopotamia for Canaan.  
Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed.  
Hebrew patriarchs in Canaan: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers. Joseph is sold into slavery.
- 1700 Sojourn in Egypt  
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream and rises to power in Egypt.  
Jacob's family settles in Goshen. Hebrews enslaved.
- 1400 Exodus and Conquest  
Ten plagues occur. Hebrews, led by Moses, escape from Egypt.  
Moses receives the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai.  
Hebrews wander for 40 years in the Sinai Desert.  
Joshua leads invasion of Canaan, the Promised Land.  
Fall of Jericho and Ai.
- 1200 Period of the Judges  
Twelve tribes settle areas of Canaan; local wars ensue.  
Judges rule Israel during periods of war. Samson is betrayed by Delilah; conquers Philistines.  
Israelites ask the prophet Samuel to name a king.
- 1000 Early Monarchy  
1020—Saul is designated first king of Israel.  
Young David defeats Goliath.  
1000—David becomes king of Judah, captures Jerusalem, and rules over united kingdom.  
961—Solomon inherits throne, builds temple: unpopular tax policies lead to division of kingdom at his death in about 922.
- 900 Divided Kingdom  
922—Rehoboam (Judah) becomes king of Judah.  
Jeroboam 1 (Israel) sets up sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan.  
917—Egypt invades and weakens Judah.  
876—Omri (Israel) builds new capital at Samaria.  
869—Elijah (Israel) denounces worship of foreign deities.  
842—Athaliah (Judah) seizes throne, introduces Baal cult.  
Jehu (Israel) destroys Omni's dynasty; weakened kingdom subdued by Syria.  
837—Joash (Judah) repairs temple, pays tribute to Syria.  
786—Jeroboam (Israel) II regains lost territory; Amos and Hosea deplore social injustice and moral laxity.  
783—Uzziah (Judah) reestablishes peace and prosperity.  
746—Anarchy after Jeroboam's death.  
735—Under Ahaz, Judah becomes vassal of Assyria.  
721—Israel falls to Assyria, and a number of inhabitants are deported; deportees from other provinces settle there.  
715—Hezekiah (Israel) attempts rebellion.

- 700 701—Hezekiah is forced to strip temple to pay tribute to victorious Sennacherib.  
687—Under Manasseh, Judah continues as Assyrian vassal; foreign alters allowed in temple.  
640—With Assyria's power waning, Josiah establishes sweeping religious reforms.
- 600 597—Jehoiachin surrenders to Babylon; Jews deported.  
597-587 Solomon's temple destroyed and Jerusalem falls.  
**Return to the Holy Land**  
539—Cyrus the great crushes Babylonia.  
538—Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild temple under Zerubbabel.  
458—Ezra outlaws mixed marriages and reinstates covenant between God and Jews.  
445—Nehemiah rebuilds walls of Jerusalem.
- 400 **INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD**  
332---Alexander the Great conquers Holy Land.  
330—Samaritans build their own temple, confirming religious schism.  
301—Holy Land under control of Alexander's successor, Ptolemy I of Egypt.
- 300 300-200—Judea is staging ground for several battles between Seleucids of Syria and Ptolemies.
- 200 198--Judea comes under Syrian rule.  
167—Maccabean revolt against Syrian desecration of temple.  
164—Rededication of the temple.
- 100 142-63—Hasmoneans, descendants of Maccabees, rule Judea.  
63—Roman general Pompey captures Jerusalem, extends Roman rule to the Holy Land.  
40-- Parthians invade, put Antigonus II on throne; Herod flees to Rome.  
37— King Herod the Great rules Judea as puppet of Rome.  
34— At Herod's death. his kingdom is divided among his three sons.  
27 B.C.-14 A.D.---Reign of Rome's first emperor, Augustus.  
6-4 B.C.--Jesus is born.
- 1 A.D 26-36—Pontius Pilate governs Judea. Herod Antipas controls Galilee.  
28—Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee.  
30— Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.  
33— Followers of Jesus begin to spread the word outside Palestine. Paul converted.  
46— Paul begins missionary journeys.  
48-68—Paul writes letters to churches.  
68— Christians persecuted in Rome; Paul and Peter executed.  
66— Jewish revolt against Rome.  
70— Romans destroy temple in Jerusalem. Nine years later, Pompeii is destroyed by eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.  
70-80—Gospels and Acts of Apostles are written.

### **Garden of Eden:**

The precise location of the Garden of Eden remains unknown, but several sites are suggested, such as in southern Iraq and even near Mt. Arat. Geologically, the land's drainage system changed greatly after the last Ice Age when habitation started in that region, so that is possibly the reason several of the rivers, mentioned in the Bible no longer exist.

One possible site is south of today's Basra, under the shallow Persian Gulf, which used to be dry land that would have been an extension of the Fertile Crescent. Over the past ten years, archaeologists have identified over sixty quite advanced ancient settlement sites along the present shores of the Gulf, dating back to about 7,500 years ago. That period would coincide with the flooding of the Gulf basin about that same time, due to melting flooding at the end of the ice-age in Europe.

The Black Sea shoreline was also flooded at that time and its water was changed from fresh to salt. Multiple Ice-age floods on the North American continent began about 6,000 years earlier than this however. Most cultures have flood stories.

The University of Birmingham in the UK and others are continuing research into this former landscape, with a broader interest though than searching for Eden. They are investigating the former environment and archaeological remains that could provide evidence of the earliest human migrations out of Africa.

### **Ur, Abram's birthplace (later Abraham):**

Most sources conclude that the site of biblical Ur of the Chaldeans is located in southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) as part of the ancient city-state region of Sumer. *Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* however suggests another location about 100 miles east of Haran in northern Iraq. The specific location of the Ur and Erich (Uruk) in southern Iraq was unknown until excavation started in 1854. I have seen artifacts from there in the British Museum, such as "He-goat caught in thicket" and a board game, dating back to c. 2600 B.C.

British archaeologist Leonard Wooley conducted excavations between 1922 and 1934 and discovered a layer of red soil over eight feet deep that separated two distinct layers of remains that he postulated was deposited by the biblical flood. Later researchers however found similar layers that they considered as dated too late to have been caused by that flood.

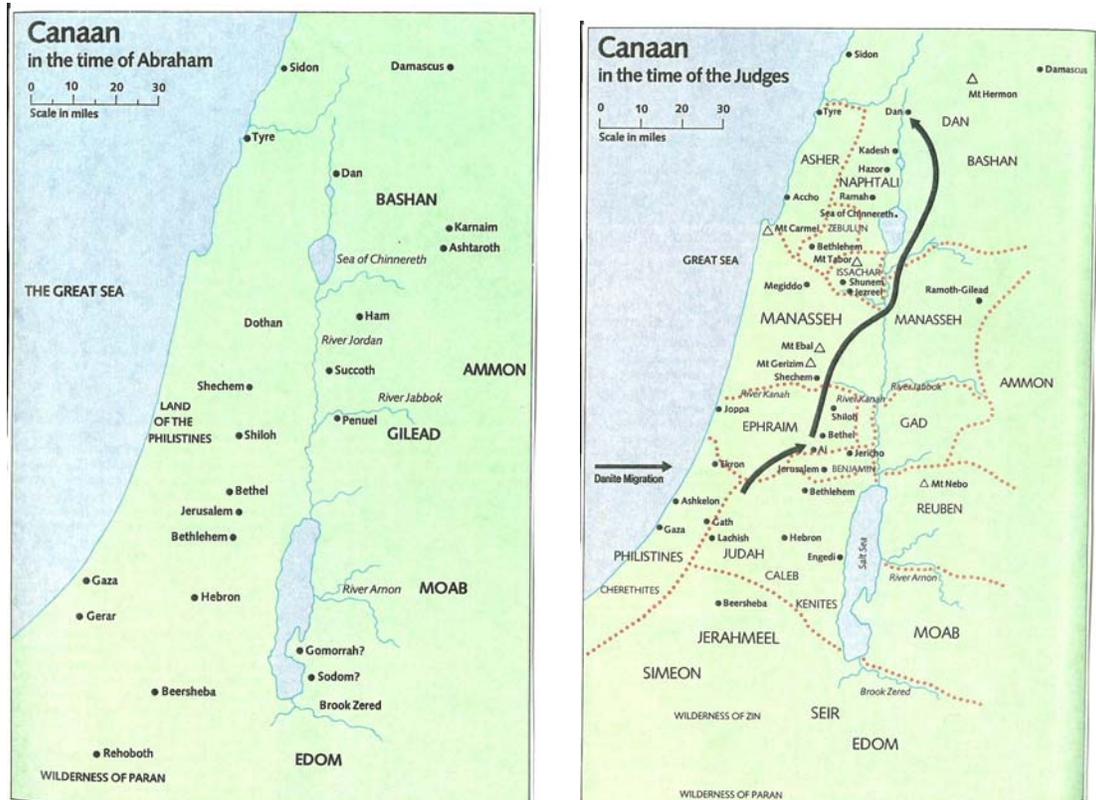
Wooley also excavated Ur's royal cemetery and found artistic treasure from around the 25th century B.C. such as the above mentioned goat, made of gold, silver, lap lazuli, and white shell—standing against a flowering tree, indicating some religious significance. There were also two mosaic panels--one portraying war that shows warriors driving chariots with wooden wheels. The other shows a peaceful scene of music and many animals.

The Sumerians contributed significantly to culture. They created the world's earliest writing system, cuneiform--a method also used with another ancient language, Akkadian. They invented the cart wheel and the potter's wheel and a numbering system--based on 60 as used today. They are also credited with various architectural concepts--such as the arch, dome and vault. Sumerian ziggurats still survive, constructed similar to the Tower of Babel.

Sumerian mythology strongly influenced ancient Near-Eastern religion--including worship of the sun, moon, stars and several dying gods--but there are numerous interesting biblical parallels in Sumerian texts.

### Abram leaves Mesopotamia for Canaan.

**Mari:**



This site was an important crossroads city that was discovered in 1933 by the French on the Euphrates River in Syria near the Iraq border. It is classified as the most westerly outpost of Sumerian culture. More than 25,000 cuneiform tablets in the Akkadian language, were found there, providing information about the culture of the Fertile Crescent habitation dating to 5,000 B.C. These tablets, which are displayed in three Damascus museums, help furnish the background for many details and events in the Old Testament that are not mentioned in Egyptian records such as administration, harems, gift registries, literary works, etc. They refer to pagan prophets and to the city of Hazor, before the Israelites came.

**Haran:**

Evidence of patriarchal sojourning (Gen.11:3), near this ancient city in Turkey about 10 miles north of the Syrian border, was discovered in 1935 that mentions the Mound of Nahor (Rebekah's home). It is an important biblical place, on the trade route that linked the Tigris River with the Mediterranean Sea. This is where Abram remained, after leaving Ur, until his father died and he then continued on to the land of Canaan.

This is also where Abram later sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac. Later on, Isaac's son, Jacob, fled here from his brother Esau and lived here and

worked for his uncle Laban. There, he was finally permitted to marry his loved cousin, Rachel, after having been tricked into first marrying her sister Leah. (Gen. 29:30)



Hebron

### Hebron:

About 19 miles south of Bethlehem, Hebron is one of the oldest towns in the Holy Land--having been first inhabited about 5,000 years ago. The residents are now mostly Muslim. It is also the highest town (3,000 ft), with stone houses and narrow winding alleys, surrounded by a country-side of grape vineyards.



Cave of the Machpelah at Hebron.

The principle place of interest is the cave of the Machpelah where Abraham is buried along with his wife Sarah; their son, Isaac with his wife; Rebekah and their son Jacob with his first wife, Leah (Gen 25:8-10).

The present structure stands over the traditional site of the cave where an earlier structure had been built by King Herod and an even earlier structure possibly existed. These

cenotaphs are not the actual tombs. A Byzantine church, later constructed here, has been converted back and forth from church to mosque. During the fourteenth century A.D. Muslims sealed the subterranean structures beneath the compound.

Also called Kiryat Arba and Mamre--Hebron was an important place of encampment for Abraham, who traversed the mountains from Bethel to Beersheba. At Mamre, he built an altar to the Lord.

Just outside of Hebron, in the Russian compound, is an ancient gnarled tree called Abraham's Oak--supposedly the site where the three angels appeared to Abraham.

David ruled over Judah from here for seven and a half years before being anointed king over all of Israel. Hebron also became the center of Absalom's revolt against his father, David.



Rachel's Tomb.

### The tomb of Rachel:

The traditional burial place of Rachel, the second wife of Patriarch Jacob (Gen. 35:16), is in a small white domed building on the northern outskirts of Bethlehem. The actual location is unproven so this may be only an empty tomb, serving as a cenotaph. She had died near here during a difficult birth of her son, Benjamin.

## **Bethel:**

Settlement began here at the turn of the third millennium B.C. when it inherited the position of neighboring Ai, which already lay in ruins. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. the settlement was enlarged and surrounded by an 11 ft.-high thick stone wall.

Bethel, meaning "The House of God", is where Abraham, the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Muslim faiths, built an altar when he first came to the Land of Canaan and returned, after his sojourn in Egypt.

Later, his grandson Jacob erected a pillar of stone here after receiving the vision of a ladder to heaven, with angels going up and down (Gen.28:18). Also, a voice assured him of God's protection and the promise that this land would be given to him and his numerous descendants

Then, after a long sojourn in Haran, he built an altar here and God renewed His previous promise (Gen. 35:1).

## **Egypt:**

Following, is a summary of Egypt's history from its beginning, through the 400 years that Abraham's descendants sojourned there:

### **Pre-Dynastic Egypt (prior to 3000 B.C.)**

Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted 3,000 years longer than any other, although societies were also originating in the Indus and Mesopotamian regions as well. During this era, regional societies and cultures began to emerge--even extending much further to the west of the Nile River, when there was a wetter climate. Agriculture, pottery making and construction of stone monuments were well established by the end of this period. Loose confederation eventually gave way to more centralized power.

### **Archaic Egypt (First and Second Dynasties; 3000-2700 B.C.)**

Menes, a semi-legendary ruler from southern Egypt, established the First Dynasty. Memphis became the capital city and the pharaohs were preoccupied with holding together their extensive kingdom. Hieroglyphics, the distinctive Egyptian style of art and writing, became established.

### **Old Kingdom Period (Third through Sixth Dynasties; 2700-2160 B.C.)**

The pyramids and the great sphinx were built, the study of medicine flourished and works such as the proverbs of Ptahotep were produced. Pharaohs ventured outside Egypt on military campaigns to the Sinai and Libya.

### **First Intermediate Period (Seventh through Tenth Dynasties; 2160-2010 B.C.)**

Central authority collapsed, dynasties competed and local lords held sway in various areas. This period produced significant works of pessimistic literature.

### **Middle Kingdom Period (Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties; 2106-1786 B.C., overlapping the First Intermediate Period)**

The pharaohs established central authority and Joseph's capable administration later brought much Egyptian land under the pharaoh's direct control. Some historians say that Joseph played a significant role in bringing about the end of Egyptian feudal power.

**Second Intermediate Kingdom period (Thirteenth through Seventeenth Dynasties; 1786-1550 B.C.)**

**Centralized** authority again collapsed. Dynasties Fifteen and Sixteen were ruled by the Hyksos who took control of the northern (Delta) area. They introduced new military methods, using the horse and chariot

**New Kingdom Period (Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties; 1550-1069 B.C.)**

Established by Ahmose who drove out the last of the Hyksos. The powerful New Kingdom became an empire, reaching through Caanan into Syria. The two greatest pharaohs of this period were Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.) and Ramses II (1279-1212 B.C.)



Cairo.

The Pyramids are located west of Cairo across the Nile River.



Vera at Pyramids and Sphinx.



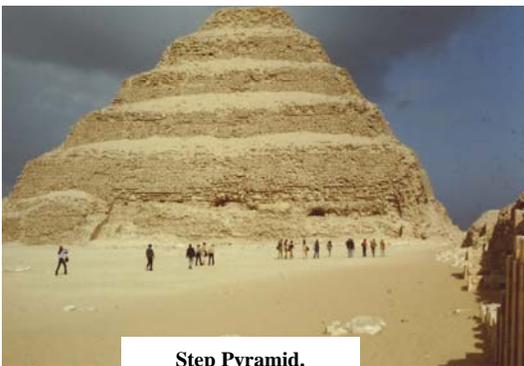
Janet and Dean riding camels at Cheops Pyramid.



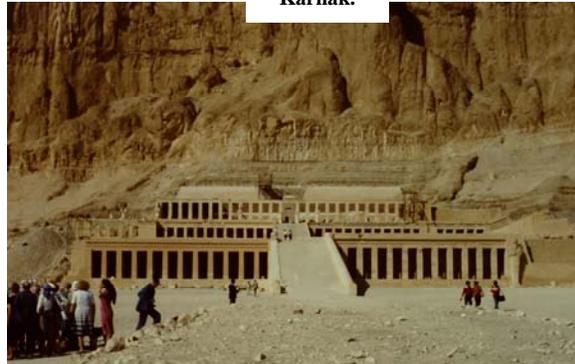
Crossing Nile River west to the Valley of the Kings.



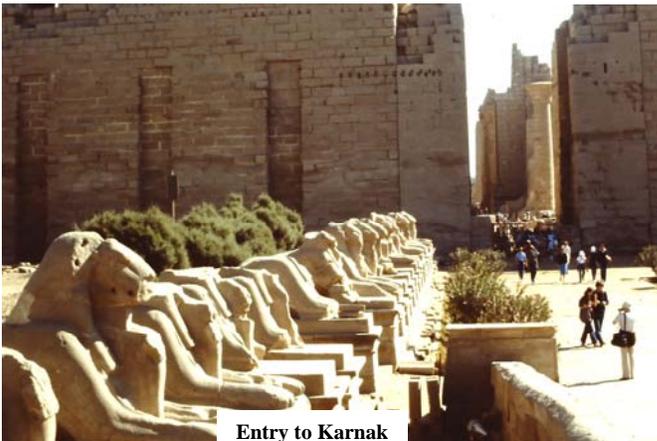
Karnak.



Step Pyramid.



Female Pharaoh Hatshepsut's temple in the Valley of the Kings.



Entry to Karnak

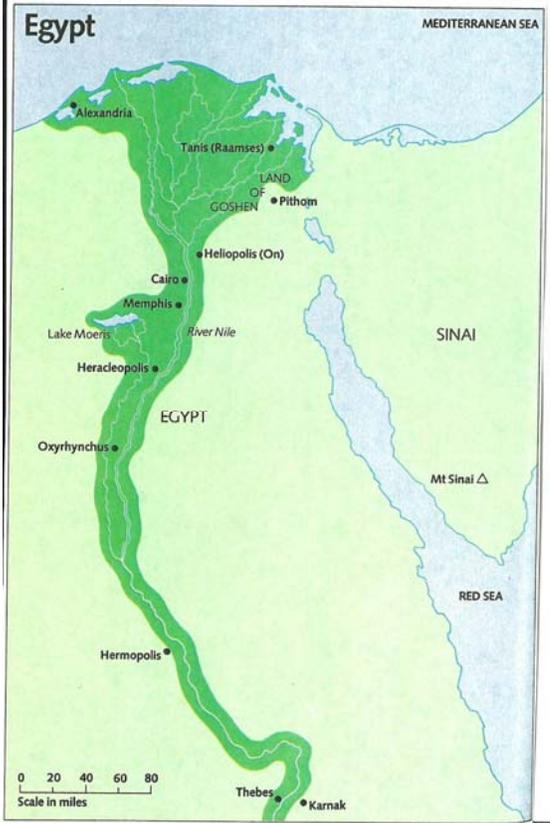
The great Pyramid of Cheops is the only “Wonder of the Ancient World” still standing. It was the tallest building in the world until well into the 1800s. It covers 13.5 acres and contains 2.3 million limestone blocks, each weighing about 5,000 pounds.

Tens of thousands of men labored to build it—but they were not slaves; they were free

farmers and artisans. It was built in 2550 B.C., about 2,000 years before Rome was founded.

I visited Egypt with a tour group in 1978, shortly after Egyptian President Sadat and US President Carter had established friendly relations and peace was signed with Israel. Sadat was assassinated the next year.

That trip included flying south of Cairo about 400 miles to Thebes, which is the location for the sites of Luxor and Karnak as well as the close-by Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens across the Nile River to the west. The restored ruins there are colossal, possibly built by Israelite slave labor. King Tut's tomb is the main attraction in the Valley of the Kings.



I reacted with culture shock, especially while being driven from the airport through the cemetery in the eastern area of Cairo. Called the City of the Dead, it is the largest cemetery in the world, with many Sultans entombed there among the ordinary people. Many living people reside there in small houses watching over the dead.

Cairo, meaning “victorious”, is considered by the Muslims to be as holy as Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Although the earliest settlement here was about 6,000 years ago, the modern city dates back to only 969 A.D., when Muslims invaded from Tunisia and enlarged it. What a paradox that,

while writing this manuscript, a popular revolution toppled the government of Tunisia and triggered a popular revolution a few weeks later in Egypt that caused President Mubarak to resign.

It is now the largest city in the Middle East, with a population of over 12 million in the metro area. About fifty percent are under age 19. It has about one thousand minarets and fourteen mosques. One of the mosques, built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is the largest in the world. The pyramids are six miles west of Cairo, across the Nile River.

Local Coptic Christians claimed traditional sites south of Cairo near Memphis as being where baby Moses was found and where Jesus’ family stayed. I considered them to be just more traditional tourist stops. Later in the 1990s, excavations revealed an enormous royal compound on the eastern branch of the Nile at the Raamses site, (mentioned further on) that is the more likely place for those Biblical events. Moses could likely have wandered about these possibly same buildings from where the unknown pharaoh could have mobilized about 600 chariots to pursue the Israelites.

Recent excavations have revealed that a fortress was constructed at this site on a 230 X 150 foot platform about 100 feet from the eastern branch of the Nile River. A ramp on the east side led to a gate in a fortification wall that provided ready access to the river.

There is common agreement that there are as yet no Egyptian documents or archaeological evidence of the Jews’ sojourns in Egypt and of their exodus, nor of Bible names such as Goshen except for what’s called the Mernepta Stele which is an inscribed stone slab discovered in Pharaoh Mernepta’s mortuary temple in Thebes, Egypt. This stone slab is the earliest record of Israel outside of the Bible and demonstrates that Israel was a recognized people in the land of Canaan in about 1200 B.C. Other than this, many documents found at Mari in Syria do provide much background that lead up to these Biblical events.

During their Egyptian sojourn the enslaved Israelites of Moses’ time were forced to build grain storage facilities at the ancient cities of Pithom and

Raamses. Avaris was the ancient capital of the Hyksos--referred to as either the Sea People or the Shepherd Kings--who had ruled the Nile Delta end of Egypt for nearly a hundred years before finally being defeated by the Egyptians. Some sources consider that the Israelites were treated well during the Hyksos rule from 1637-1529 B.C. and that Joseph could have been in his privileged position with them. Then the conquering Egyptian pharaoh considered them a threat and ordered all their male babies killed.

Some sources suggest Rameses II (1279-1213 B.C.) as being the pharaoh of the Exodus. Both Thutmose III (1479-1425) and Amenhotep II (1427-1400) better align with the Bible date of about 1445 B.C. but there are still other valid uncertainties. It's unfortunate that the Bible didn't name the pharaoh!

The sources I am using, consider Thutmose III the best fit, because of the date. Interestingly, he was possibly the stepson or nephew of the only female Pharaoh, Hatshepsut. Cleopatra--lover of both Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony in the period of Jesus' birth--was actually the last female pharaoh though. Hatshepsut built a very large temple near the bottom of a high cliff in the Valley of the Kings area.

That extensive structure was nearing restoration completion by a Polish crew when I visited there in 1978. Hatshepsut had acted as Thutmose's regent while he was too young to rule but then took over as pharaoh until she died. Thutmose became a formidable warrior, conducting 17 military campaigns and consolidating Egyptian control over Syria-Palestine--as recorded in detail on structures like was recorded about Ramese II, later at Karnak. Later leaders--including possibly even Thutmose--objected to Hatshepsut's previous rule and obliterated all her statues and records.

I have compared various sources for the possible location of the land of Goshen and concluded that it is most likely in the eastern area of the Nile delta, which the Bible describes as a rich agricultural area during the time of Joseph. The ancient names of Pithom, Raamses (or possibly later Rameses named for Rameses II), Tanis, and Avaris are mentioned as possible sites in the Goshen vicinity.

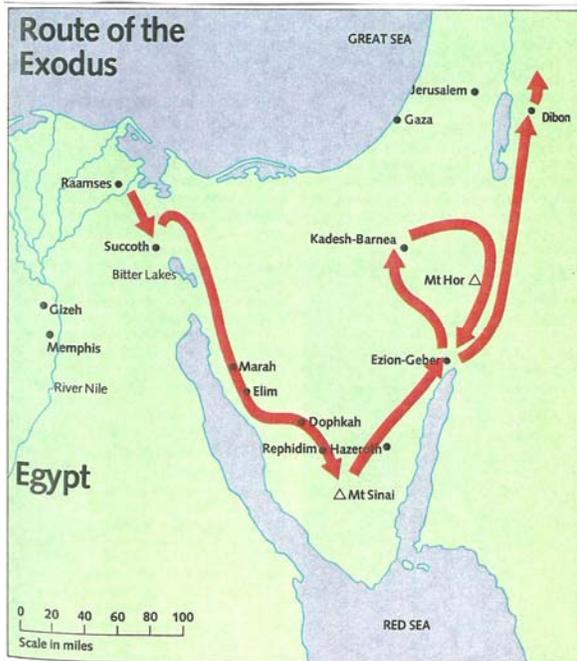
*Archaeology Magazine* published a supplement on Egypt in 2011 about the treasures of Tanis that are comparable finds to those of Tutankhamun. For instance, a falcon-headed silver coffin of Pharaoh Shoshenq II was found that included gold bracelets with the cartouche inscription of his ancestor, Shoshenq I (948-927 B.C.). That was the pharaoh, mentioned in the Bible as Shishak (1Kings 14:25), the conqueror of Jerusalem to whom Jeroboam fled to escape killing by Solomon.

Tanis was the New Kingdom capital during the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasties when Egypt was divided between North and South and it became an important port for Asiatic trade. Existing materials, statues and monuments were moved here from Thebes, Amarna--where the beautiful face of Queen Nefertiti was discovered in the sand of a deserted site--and elsewhere in Egypt. However--due to flooding problems--it declined during the Roman period, was deserted by the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and is now silted-up.

That area is located over 70 miles northeast of Cairo, toward today's entry to the Suez Canal. The traditional site of Raamses is several miles northeast of today's town of Faqus, one of the few shown on present-day maps. The internet reveals it as a relatively small dense complex of dwellings but shows no

information promoting tourism or detailed directions how to even get there. The surrounding area is primarily rural agricultural.

### Exodus from Egypt:



The Biblical account (Ex 16:28) of the Egyptians, on their chariots, being drowned while pursuing possibly over one million fleeing Israelite men, women and children, is generally accepted by Christians and Jews, even though no substantiating Egyptian records have yet been found. The specific location of that event likewise also remains unknown—other than that the Israelites crossed somewhere generally north of the current Red Sea shoreline. Apparently, Moses miraculously accomplished the crossing of that great unorganized number in only one day!

There will always be various opinions about the water crossing

location as well as the subsequent desert wandering route. Scholars may differ whether the Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Red” Sea should instead be “Reed” Sea and therefore that vicinity could have been a shallow (or perhaps then even quite deep) marsh of reeds extending north of the present shoreline. Even if it were a shallow marsh, their chariots could well have become stuck in the mud. A similar situation occurred about 200 years later when Canaanite chariots became stuck in a muddy valley, preparing to attack Deborah and Barak’s army above them on Mt. Tabor (Judges 4:15).

There could also have been a high wind blowing water horizontally, like storms of today. Some have recently suggested a wind phenomenon, known as “wind set-down” that is apparently observed in various water bodies around the world, wherever a strong steady wind blows along a narrow lengthy body of water.

There are a number of lakes, such as Great Bitter Lake and Lake Timsah, in that vicinity that many consider as likely crossing places. The lakes could even have been more nearly connected then, due to a possibly higher water level. Land level can change considerably due to earthquakes and other phenomena such as has happened at the land sinking of Alexandria, Egypt since the time of Christ.

Today, these lakes are indeed connected by the man-made Suez Canal and are now salt water. In spite of all this conjecture, the miracle of such a great number of persons escaping across whatever body of water in such a short period of time, remains just that—a miracle!

### Sinai Vicinity:

Today's city of Ismailia (750,000 population) is on the shore of Lake Timsah at the midpoint of the Suez Canal and the city of Suez (500,000 population) is at the lower end.

Egyptian and Israeli tanks fought in this same general vicinity during the 1973 Yom Kippur War--the year after my three daughters were touring Israel.

Surprisingly, the Egyptians attacked with perhaps 1,000 Russian-made tanks, making it the world's second largest tank battle, exceeded only by that between the Germans and Russians at Kursk in WW II. What a contrast-- between the Egyptians attacking the Israelites in that same general vicinity, with hundreds of chariots compared to using the amazing number of modern tanks!

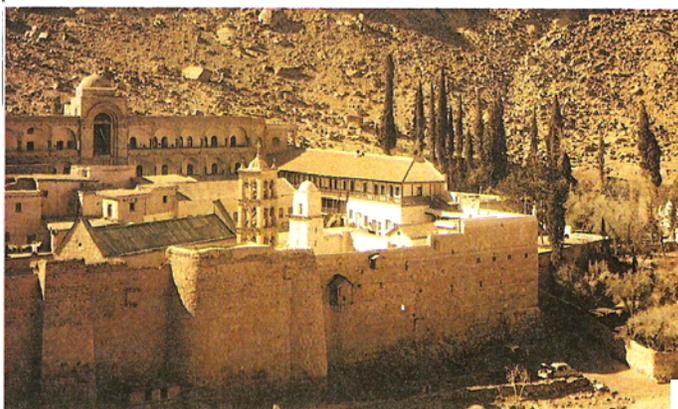
I have not been there, but today's bus tours follow the traditional route through the Sinai Peninsula, where Moses led the Israelites for 40 years of wandering before they arrived at the promised land of Canaan. All suggested exact routes are speculative so I will instead describe a typical tourist route that goes past the traditional location of Mt. Sinai about 240 miles away.

Such a tour route starts from Cairo and heads north-easterly along today's Ismailia Canal which connects to the Suez Canal at the city of Ismailia through a shallow valley route. Interestingly, some maps even note that this east-west valley could have also been the route of an ancient canal. Today's road goes through a tunnel under the Suez Canal and heads south around the northern end of Lake Timsah near where the Israelites could have passed.

It then continues along the east shoreline of Great Bitter Lake and then along the east shoreline of the Gulf of Suez (Red Sea) to the biblical site of Marah, about half way to Mt. Sinai. Marah means bitterness and thus is likely the reason for the name of Bitter Lake. Scripture says that the spring water at Marah was too bitter to drink until it was sweetened by Moses, casting a piece of wood into it (Ex.15:25). Various sources speculate about three other less likely routes further north across the Sinai Peninsula.

The next tour stop is at the shoreline oasis site of Elim. There, the road heads east over a desert mountain valley through the rocky desolate and barren biblical Wilderness of Sin to Wadi El Raha (Rephidim--where scripture tells of Moses obtaining drinking water by striking a rock (Ex.17:6). Near here also, Joshua led the Israelites in driving off an attack by a people identified--only in the Bible--as the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8).

Then the route heads near Mount Serbal, the possible site where Moses held up his arms for victory. Then it continues toward the steep mountains of Sinai and Wadi El Raha, the traditional area where the Israelites camped and forged the golden calf to worship, while Moses was on the mountain, receiving the rock tablet from God containing the Ten Commandments. Strangely, they remained in this area for about a year (Num.10:11).



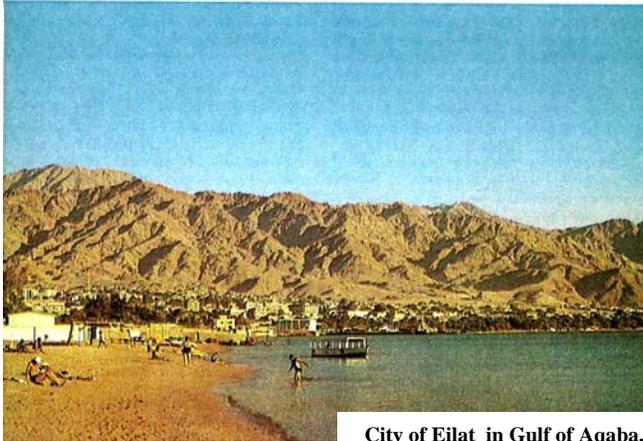
I have talked to travelers who have stayed in a hotel located near St. Catherine's Monastery, below Mount Sinai. Roman Emperor, Justinian, built that monastery in 527-536 A.D.

The oldest Bible manuscript--the Codex

St. Catherine's Monastery at base of Mt. Sinai.

Sinaiticus from the fourth century A.D.--was discovered here in 1844. The nearby Greek Orthodox Church building is claimed to be the oldest continuously used building in the world.

After a long period at Kadesh, the people of Israel took the road to the Gulf of Aqaba.



City of Eilat in Gulf of Aqaba.

Scholars continue to debate the location of Mount Sinai, with arguments for a more northern location or a less likely location in the Arabian Peninsula. Looking at photos of Mount Sinai (today's Mount Horeb), one is impressed by the seemingly non-climbable steep rocky landscape but I have talked to those who reached the summit by an established trail of rock steps.

Leaving this area, the tour heads toward the eastern shore of

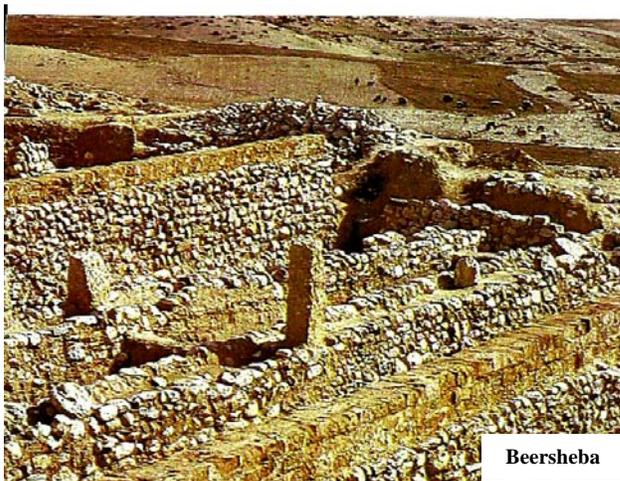
the Sinai Peninsula and on up the Gulf of Aqaba coast to today's Israeli city of Eilat (Biblical Ezion-Geber). That is where Moses headed north toward the Wilderness of Zin and made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Canaan at Biblical Kadesh-Barnea. So he returned to here by way of the east side of Mt. Hor and later again headed north further east on up to the area east of the Dead Sea to Biblical Dibon.

The tour heads north along a similar route to take a side trip through ancient Petra in today's Jordan and then returns to the Eilat airport for return flight.

## **Southern vicinity:**

### **Beersheba:**

In 1981, Vera and I rode with locals on a nearly full public transportation bus, including Israeli soldiers, from the harbor of Jaffa through the city of Beersheba and continued-on to the city of Arad, where we joined the rest of our tour group overnight before continuing-on to Masada.



Beersheba

Beersheba is the capital of the Negev region and has grown from



Abraham's Well at Beersheba.

a desolate waste land in 1948 to a large city, with a large Israeli army

base, a modern medical center and a university.

The present town began its current development in 1900, when it became the regional headquarters of the Turkish army and continued further under control of the British mandate.

In biblical times, it was an important village at the southern end of the Promised Land where Abraham had signed a binding oath with Philistine King Abimelech to observe a treaty for use of a well. Locals benefit by claiming to tourists that the well--called the Well of Abraham--is near today's Bedouin market but the actual ancient biblical site is located about 2 miles east of town. Excavations, between 1969 and 1976, have revealed settlements, extending from the time of the Judges to the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah. A bone carving of a human head, dating much earlier (about 6,000 years ago) has even been found here.

### **Jaffa:**



Jaffa from the sea.

Jaffa, now part of Tel Aviv (established since WW II), has been an important Mediterranean port city since ancient times. The Bible tells about Jonah trying to flee from God by departing from here for Tarshish. Then the sailors--blaming him for a violent storm--cast him out of the ship where he was swallowed by some kind of large sea monster for three days.

Some of the oldest remains found here are pieces of sun-dried bricks in the eastern part of the ancient fortress, dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Other finds are from the period of Egyptian rule, dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Pharaoh Thutmose III conquered Jaffa in 1469 B.C. There are three stones from the fortress gate with the inscriptions of the five titles of Ramses II, from later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Simon Maccabee conquered this city, bringing it under Jewish rule for the first time in 144 B.C. Peter performed various activities here such as restoring life to Tabitha, when staying at the house of Simon the Tanner.

The Phoenicians built the original harbor that was later made into the principle entry port for medieval pilgrims, bound for Jerusalem. Tel Aviv--meaning "hill of spring"--grew out of dunes to the north in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is combined with Jaffa (Yafo), to become Israel's biggest metropolis.

### **Arad:**



Today's Arad, a growing new Negev town 30 miles east of Beersheba, is where we stayed overnight before continuing on to Masada. Arad is a major archaeological site of a temple with a sacrificial altar and a fortress, used for protection of Israel's southern border during the time of the Divided Monarchy.

Hotel Masada at Arad.

The site is actually much older than that though--going back to 3,000-2300 B.C.--and there is uncertainty even as to other possible sites for Arad as well.

### **Masada :**

This very exciting tourist site was first visited by an American missionary in 1842. Herod the Great completed a large fortress here in 4 B.C.--with extensive



View of Roman camps outline from top of Masada.

accommodations and storage buildings that sat majestically on top of an isolated cliff--overlooking the western shore of the Dead Sea, about 1,300 feet below sea level.

It was enclosed within a wall around the edge of the cliff and had two large palace complexes, decorated in the latest Roman fashion. Because Masada was located in such a remote location

in the desert, Herod stored food and water on the site. Water cisterns were supplied by an aqueduct.

Then, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Jewish rebels (called Zealots) captured this site and held it with about 1,000 men, women and children for about two years against attack by 8,000 or more Roman soldiers. The actual siege itself probably lasted less than six months.

This surprisingly large attacking force camped at the foot of the fortification and their slaves built a massive 650 foot height dirt and stone ramp to the top, for access of their siege equipment, but in the end it proved to be a hollow victory--discovering that all the defenders had killed themselves.

Boundaries of the Roman camps are still very evident. Recent excavations indicate that there were eight such camps within high external stone walls. Interior walls were for officers' mess, the headquarters, and soldiers' tents. Previous excavations have revealed military equipment on the top of Masada, such as barbed arrow heads, bronze scale armor and an iron sword.



Top of Masada.

Josephus describes that resistance in his seven-volume, *The Jewish War*, stating that only two old women survived by hiding in a cistern. Today's Israeli armed forces are motivated by that heroic stand and hold graduating ceremonies there. Tourist access is by a cable tram.

## Herodium:

Herod was a ruthless king but is also known as being probably the greatest builder in the history of Palestine. His most important act was to rebuild the Second Temple and expand the Temple Mount.

In 42 B.C.--to commemorate his victory over the revolting Maccabees--he built a massive fortress near Tekoa, five miles southeast of Bethlehem. That fortress looks like a truncated cone--being on top of a natural hill further heightened by debris--emerging like a crater from the Judean desert. Most of the upper portion was man-made and faced with masonry.



The Herodium.

The hollowed-out palace area at the top included a Roman-style bathhouse. At the hill's foot, there was a palace--adjacent to a hippodrome--and terraced gardens, a gigantic pool and 200 white marble steps to the summit. Herod's actual tomb has only recently been discovered here in a solid gold bier, studded with precious stones.

## Central Vicinity:

### Dead Sea:

Earthquakes, associated with earth faulting, have happened frequently in the Holy Land over the past 4,000 years. Many are known from history and are mentioned in the Bible. Geologists have recently correlated their chronology with biblical events by extracting and analyzing cores from the Dead Sea bottom near En Gedi on the west shoreline. Core sediment layer depths have been correlated with known historical dates.

Earthquake date	Sediment depth
Today	0 feet

1927 A.D.

1837

1712

5 feet

1033

33 A.D.  
31 B.C.

10 feet

1400  
2050

15 feet  
20 feet



Vera and Janet, standing in the Dead Sea.

Note that the one in 31 B.C. aligns with the Qumran quake and the one in 1400 B.C. aligns with the collapse of the walls at Jericho. Also the one in 2050 B.C. aligns with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Other dates likewise align with more key Biblical events.

In 1981, I traveled north of the present-day town of Sodom which is located several miles south of the sea, where chemical plants process potash and bromide. Since then, Russia and Jordan have been searching the bottom of the sea further northeast at two under-water sites in Jordan for possible remains of the ancient towns.

NASA photographs indicate that the sea bottom there appears littered with debris, so investigation continues with underwater equipment that can cope with the very salty water. There is evidence of several Early Bronze Age occupation levels with a layer of ash and burned debris. The most dramatic evidence comes from a nearby cemetery where the dead had been interred in above-ground mausoleum-type structures. Five of these structures were excavated and found to have been burned. An earthquake had added to the destruction.

The Dead Sea surface is the lowest point on earth, being 1312 feet below sea level. The water level has been dropping, partly as the result of water diversion projects to Jordan and Israel.

### **En Gedi:**

David fled to a cave near the top of this steep canyon, on the west shore of the Dead Sea, to escape King Saul's wrath (1 Sam. 23:29)

Copper and ivory ritual artifacts, nearly 5,000 years old, have been found here, as well as scrolls and letters in these caves, remaining from refugees of the Bar-Kokhba revolt. (132-135 A.D.)

Looking up from the Dead Sea, I could see nothing but another dry canyon but further up there is a beautiful waterfall and tropical vegetation where a present-day kibbutz harvests crops at the site of an ancient Jewish village.



Canyon leading to En Gedi.

### **Moab vicinity:**

#### **Destruction of the Midianites**

Numbers, Chap. 31 in the O.T. is difficult for our present-day culture to reconcile with concern about current genocide warfare. Scripture says that God commanded Moses to defeat the pagan Midianites in battle and to kill all inhabitants, except virgin females. Interestingly, Moses' wife, Zipporah, was also a Midianite!

The specific battle site is unknown because they were roving Bedouins, but it was likely somewhere in the biblical Moab area, southeast of Jericho and possibly to the east of the southern end of the Dead Sea. A clue is that the returning Israelite army brought their captives (many against God's command) and booty to their camp, east of Jericho on the plains of Moab.

Moses subsequently died and was buried somewhere near Mt. Nebo. Joshua then took command and captured Jericho. Today, a modern highway follows a Roman road through that vicinity, built over a route called the King's Highway.

### **Mt. Nebo:**

Shortly before he died, Moses had climbed this mountain--located about 16 miles southwest of Amman--to gaze upon the promised land of Canaan, across the Jordan River. He passed leadership to Joshua before dying and being buried at an unknown valley site.

A large church complex sits on the mountain summit. Excavations--extending into the 1970s--have unearthed a 4<sup>th</sup>-century church with well preserved colorful mosaic floors that depict the Temple of Jerusalem, and an altar for burnt sacrifices. There are also remnants of 6-7<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine churches.

### **Gilgal:**



In vicinity of Gilgal.

The Israelites camped here after crossing the Jordan River—also here, had their first Passover in the Promised Land and circumcised all males. Then they made it the base of their conquest operations for the next six years. There is still no conclusive archaeological evidence regarding the time and circumstances of the conquest.

The actual site is also unknown but several locations have been considered. One is 3 miles southeast of Jericho, where excavations in 1950 revealed several walls of the Byzantine and early Moslem period and a church that was first built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and survived until the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The other is 5 miles north of Jericho, near a present settlement, named Gilgal.

### **Jericho, the City of Palms:**

Jericho is the world's oldest continuously inhabited city but little remains of the ancient site of Jericho, called Tel al-Sultan, which covers an area of less than nine acres.

Joshua captured Jericho first in his conquest of Canaan, with the walls miraculously crumbling--possibly aided by an earthquake such as destroyed the city much later in 747 A.D. Archaeological evidence still leads to differing

conclusions about details.

In 1868, Charles Wilson sank several of the first shafts at the old Jericho site, but narrowly missed a Neolithic tower and concluded that nothing was to be found. In 1909, German excavations, on the northern section of the site, uncovered a



View looking east from Jericho ruins toward present city.



Wall watch tower at Jericho Ruins.

portion of the lower city wall that did not fall as had happened elsewhere. The still-standing section was about 8 feet high, with houses built against it, like could have provided a convenient escape route from Rahab's house for Joshua's spies.

In the mid-1960s, Kathleen Kenyon and others continued excavations and discovered a watch tower, a crumbled mud-brick wall and other structures, dating back at least 7,000 years ago--as well as 23 layers of civilization that could go even further back another 2,000 years with round shaped brick houses, defensive walls and irrigation farming.

The Romans destroyed the old city in the first century A.D. but it was rebuilt by the Byzantines at its present adjacent location to the east of the site. Caliph Abd el-Malik ushered the city to its full glory again in 743 A.D. However, an earthquake destroyed most of the new city four years later and it remained mostly in ruins until after WW II. Then, following the UN partition decision, many Arabs relocated to the vicinity from other parts of Palestine.

The area was subsequently captured by Israel in the Six-Day War and these relocated Arabs were evicted. We drove by that large deserted village near the south western approach to the current city of Jericho, realizing the seeds of unrest that continue to the present. How history has changed this once prosperous place!

The most prosperous times in the history of Jericho were during the Hasmonean-Herodian period. Extensive archaeological excavations of that period on both sides of Wadi-Kelt, near here, have unearthed palaces, a hippodrome and a theater.

Mount Quarantal (Temptation Mountain), overlooking the Jericho Valley and Dead Sea, was part of a chain of Hasmonean-Herodian fortifications that were conquered by the Romans in A.D. 68. A steep path leads through the monastery to the summit for a spectacular view from that fortress location.



Bethel. Jacob's vision of ladder.

### **Ai and Bethel :**

Joshua captured this Canaanite city of Ai, during his second attempt, by an ambush near its rear western side. Although a prominent ruin at the site of El-tell--near Bethel about ten miles north of Jerusalem--is usually identified as the location of Ai, there is as yet no archaeological agreement that determines a specific site.

Abraham built an altar between Ai and Bethel. His grandson Jacob later spent the night at Bethel where he dreamed of seeing a ladder reaching to heaven, with angels ascending and descending (Gen 28:12). Then he heard a voice that assured him of God's protection and confirmed that this land would be given to him and his descendants.

Bethel ("house of God") became one of the religious centers of the Northern Kingdom after Solomon's realm was divided. A royal sanctuary, to rival the Temple of Jerusalem, was built about 920 B.C. Remains, dating even about 500

years before this, surprisingly reveal high quality houses, streets with flagstone pavements, and sewers.

## Valley of Aijalon:



Vally of Aijalon.

About half way up the old strategic trade-route road, between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem--in the foothills of the Judean Mountains--is where Joshua fought the five Amorite kings who had attacked his Gibeonite allies. This site is also identified with the modern Yalu, east of Emmaus. It was known in the Roman period as Jalo.

The Bible describes the day of battle--possibly figuratively by Joshua in his prayer in Josh. 10:12-14--as being lengthened by God to achieve victory as the battle of "Joshua's long day". It truly was a miraculous defeat of the Amorites with the help of cooling clouds and a severe hailstorm that killed more of the enemy than Joshua's army did.

The nearby ancient town of Gibeon (meaning hill) was previously a far more important settlement than Jerusalem, about six miles to the southeast. In 1956, archaeologists discovered a massive 37 ft. diameter, 82 ft. deep rock-cut dry pool with a tunnel connecting to a cistern at a spring outside of the city walls. I have descended to the bottom, using the cut spiral staircase steps, without a hand rail! It was constructed in the early eleventh century B.C. and was used for about 500 years. The book of Samuel tells of much fighting in this vicinity between the house of David and the house of Saul which began in a confrontation around this pool.

The south-eastern edge of this same valley was also where the beginning battles of the 1948 war between the Israelis and Arabs were fought, shortly after British troops had pulled out, Arab soldiers--including some from the British-trained Jordanian Arab Legion--held a commanding position at this strategic road junction of Latrum to prevent Jewish access to Jerusalem.

A large prominent monastery, surrounded by agricultural land and a vineyard, had been built here in 1890 by French monks near the remains of an earlier crusader castle. The poorly armed and trained Israeli youth--most having just arrived from Europe--were thrust frantically at Arab machine guns, dug-in at this strategic position. Turkish troops had defended that same position against British General Allenby in 1917. The Israelis hoped for a miracle such as in Joshua's time near here to relieve Jerusalem, but were instead overwhelmingly repulsed.



Solomon also fortified Hazor, north of Galilee.

## Hazor:

This was the largest city-state in Canaan, dominating the upper Galilee Region about 8.5 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It had a separately walled upper city of over 15 acres and a lower walled city of

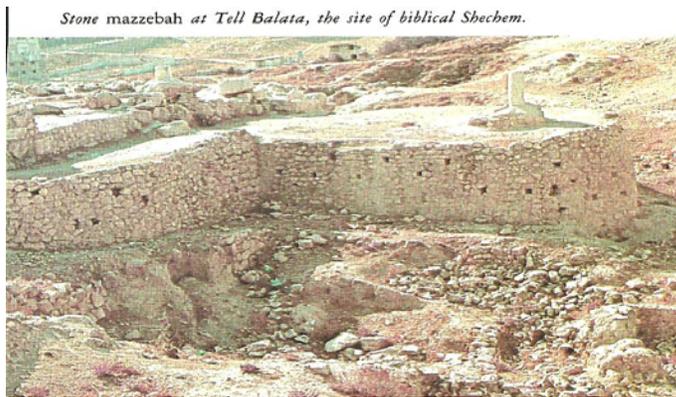
Hazor.

about 162 acres. The walls were built of stone and mud brick up to 24 feet wide. In 1962, a clay tablet was discovered there with the name of that city. Hazor is also frequently referred to in Egyptian documents of the new Kingdom under Pharaoh Thutmose III.

After the northern Canaanite armies were defeated at Merom--a likely site 9 miles east of here--Joshua captured this city (Josh.11:13) and put it to the torch, leaving it in ruins until the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. King Solomon later rebuilt a portion of the upper city as a royal garrison from which he could control the northern approaches.

It was again destroyed by fire and, about 100 years later, replaced with an impressive new city by probably Israel's King Ahab. That city was destroyed by the Assyrians in 733 B.C. and has remained buried and forgotten for 27 centuries. Evidence of that destruction has been found for the Long Temple in the upper city and Square Temples in the lower city.

## Shechem:



Stone mazzebah at Shechem.

Shechem--also likely the Sychar mentioned in John 4:5--is considered as one of the oldest and most important ancient cities in the Holy land. It is located at Tel Balata, east of present-day Nablus. The site was inhabited continuously from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. to the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Evidence of massive destruction from the time of Abimelech has been found throughout the site. Important remnants of fortifications and temples, uncovered in the excavations, as well as written documents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C., reveal that this was the most prosperous and active Canaanite city in the mountainous region of Canaan. The eastern gate, with stairs leading down into the city, was first constructed in the late Hyksos period (1650-1550 B.C.).

Both Abraham and Jacob built alters here to God. Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel here to make a covenant with God. Jacob purchased land here and it became the burial place of Joseph, whose bones had been brought back from Egypt.

The exact locations, associated with Abraham and Jacob, are unknown but the traditional site of Joseph's tomb and also Jacob's well--also where Jesus met the Samaritan woman--are located on the eastern outskirts of Nablus--refer to Chapter 2 for more detail and photos. Also, a Canaanite temple of worship, with a standing stone (mazzebah) has been unearthed nearby.

For a short period, Shechem became the capital city of the Kingdom of Israel. Then, after the destruction of that kingdom, foreign captives from other countries were settled here and intermingled with the remnants of the local Israelites and constituted the Samaritan sect.

After old Shechem was destroyed by the Romans, a new site was selected to the west between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, near a Roman town named Flavia Neapolis (today's Nablus). Impressive remnants of that Roman/ Byzantine city include a large theater, a building for musical performances and a hippodrome.

Today's Nablus is a compact city in the Arab West Bank area, with an old center and new suburbs built on the lower slopes of the surrounding hills.

## Samaria-Sebaste:



Samaria palace columns.

Samaria is the name of the former capital of the Kingdom of Israel as well as that region. The ruins, located about eight miles northwest of Shechem, are among the most extensive in the Holy Land, with a long history of regime changes. It was founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. by King Omni and his work was continued by successive kings of Israel until its fall to the Assyrians in 721 B.C.

Excavations have revealed remains of the palace and fragments of carved ivory that decorated the furniture which had been in the "ivory house", mentioned in the Bible. After the destruction of Samaria and the deportation of the majority of its inhabitants, the Assyrians repopulated the area with captives from other countries and made it the center of their province. After that, Samaria became an important non-Jewish city.

A second period of glory came to Samaria in the days of King Herod in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., when he rebuilt Samaria as a Roman metropolis and named it Sebaste ("the Illustrious") in honor of Emperor Augustus. The major attractions today are the restored colonnaded road and buildings of that period.

The city was destroyed and rebuilt many more times after that. It was destroyed during the Jewish revolt against the Romans and subsequently rebuilt after the Byzantine period. Then, it was again destroyed by the Arabs and rebuilt by the Crusaders, who made it into a large and important city. Then, it again declined into a small, poor village. The magnificent structures, unearthed there in 1909-10 and again in 1931-35, have made this site a major tourist attraction.

Just south of this site, there is a traditional location where the head of John the Baptist is claimed to have been kept in a small Byzantine church of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The large Crusader church in the city of Sebaste, now used as a mosque, is also dedicated to John the Baptist. I have visited the Armenian Church, in the compound of the Russian Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives that also makes this burial claim.

## Megiddo:

What a vantage point of Biblical events! I have stood at the summit of this Megiddo site and looked across today's Jezreel Valley, sensing the sweep of the past and its prophesized future destiny.

Megiddo is a major archaeological site on the northern side of the Carmel ridge that was a strategic control location for the Canaanites and later the Israelites. There are about 20 layers of cities in the span from 3,000 to 300 B.C. One of these was Solomon's chariot complex. The major structures are:

1. Gate area.
2. Water installation pit.
3. South stables complex.
4. Silo.
5. Schmacher's shaft.
6. Round high place.
7. Three temples of "megaron" type.
8. North stables complex.
9. Israelite fortifications.



Megiddo from the air.

I stood here pondering Biblical events that had happened within eye-sight. Looking southeast 15 miles is Mt. Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan were slain in battle with the Philistines. Northeast 10 miles is the hill of Moreh, where the Midianites camped, not far from

Shunem where the Philistines encamped two centuries later before their defeat of Saul. Slightly west of Moreh is Nain, where Jesus raised the widow's son to life. The concentric-shaped Mt Tabor is further beyond Nain another 5 miles. That was where Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judg. 4:16, 5:21) and most likely where Jesus was tranfigured. Further left, stretches the long ridge of the Lower Galilee to Nazareth, 10 more miles away, where Jesus grew up.

It is no wonder that so many happenings took place near Megiddo, for it and the Jezreel Valley lie right on one of the most important highways—the Via Maris or coastal route. This road connected the two greatest rivals in the ancient world—Egypt and Mesopotamia, who used this route for either military campaigns or peaceful commerce. Megiddo guarded a strategic pass along this route and blocked invading forces numerous times. N.T. Revelations tells about the final battle of Armageddon to be fought in that battle-stained valley.



Megiddo

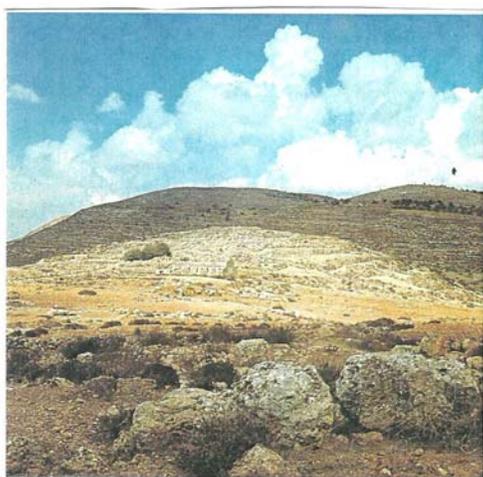


Model of Megiddo at time of Solomon's stables.

The following battles were fought, mostly within sight of this place:

1. 2350 B.C. Egyptians defeated the "sand dwellers."
2. 1470 Pharaoh Thutmose III fought the Canaanites.
3. 1350 King of Megiddo fought the king of Shechem.
4. 1400 Joshua defeated the king of Megiddo.
5. 1350 Deborah and Barak fought the Canaanites.
6. 1300 Gideon fought.
7. 1010 Saul fought the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa.
8. 970 Solomon fortified Megiddo.
9. 609 Pharaoh Shishak captured Megiddo and sacked Jerusalem.
10. 165 Macabees fought Antiochus and others.
11. 90 Antiochus fought Ptolemy IV.
12. 67 A.D. Romans fought the Jews.
13. 634 Moslem conquest.
14. 940-946 Rival Moslem armies fought.
15. 1182 Crusaders fought Saladin.
16. 1250 Mongols fought Mamelukes.
17. 1271 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade Andrew of Hungary fought.
18. 1799 Napoleon fought the Ottoman Turks.
19. 1918 British Gen. Allenby defeated the Turks in WW I.
20. 1948 British held this position in WW II.
21. 1967 Israelis took this position from the Arab Legion.
22. 1973 Israelis defended this position against Syrian tanks.

## Shiloh:



Shiloh

Today's Shiloh is located in central Samaria about 12 miles south of today's Nablus. The nearby mound of ancient Shiloh (Khirbet Sailun) is where the the Ark of the Covenant was kept for 200 years--from the time of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua to the end of the period of the Judges when it was taken in battle from Ebenezer by the Philistines (1Sam.:1-9). Shiloh remained in ruins for about 150 years until it was rebuilt by Jeroboam at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century

B.C. Occupation then continued until the Middle Ages.

Archaeological findings correspond quite well with the Biblical record but tell nothing about the worship there. Excavations have unearthed remnants of a fortified 17th-16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. settlement over structures which are the earliest that Israelites built in the time of the Judges. South of this site, two 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine churches, with mosaic floors, were excavated in 1926-29.

## Valley of Elah:



Valley of Elah

King Saul's army had encamped in this valley (present day Wadi es-Samt), a few miles southwest of Jerusalem, before forming into a line of battle to fight the Philistine army. For forty days, the Philistines stood on a hill at the opposite side of the valley, with their giant Goliath, over 9 feet tall, daring any one of the Israelites to fight

him in single combat. The agreement was that their respective Gods would empower the winner and thus determine the outcome of the battle.

There were no volunteers until David, the brave 16 year-old sheep-herder, stepped forward, with his sling and trust in the Lord, to slay Goliath with a golf-sized brook-stone that struck him between the eyes to win the battle. David then used Goliath's sword to behead him (1Sam. 17).

There are records of other giants. For instance, I have visited the Minoan Museum on the Island of Crete that has a very large spear head and javelin head that only a giant could use.

## Yafia:

This is an Arab village, on the western outskirts of Nazareth, believed to be the birthplace of the Apostle James, the half-brother of Jesus. The village is an ancient settlement, mentioned in Jewish writings of the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. as Yapu. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., it was the largest village in Galilee and one of the centers of the Jewish revolt against the Romans. Josephus, commander of the Jews there in the early stage of the war, built a double wall around the village. When the Galilee fell, Titus killed all inhabitants and razed the village.

A synagogue has been unearthed here that indicates the village was rebuilt and flourished in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two fragments of its 11-colored mosaic floor are exhibited in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Carved stones, from that synagogue, are incorporated in several structures in the village, such as a lintel decorated with a seven-branched candelabrum in the Catholic Church.

Sennacherib, King of Assyria, captured Lachish, a town fortified by Rehoboam.



## Lachish:

The foundations of the first fortified palace here were laid by either David or Solomon in about 1,000 B.C. In 701 B.C., King Sennacherib of Assyria captured this town that had

Rehoboam's fortification at Lachish.

been fortified by Israelite King Rehoboam. Remnants of the siege mound, used in the capture, are still visible but much smaller sized than the massive one at Masada in 62 A.D.

### **The City of David:**

Over 3,000 years ago, David was anointed king over Judah at Hebron. This was after King Saul, and several of his sons, including David's close friend, Jonathon, died in battle with the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa (1Sam. 31:1-2). That battle site is located at the eastern part of the Plain of Jezreel (Esdraelon).

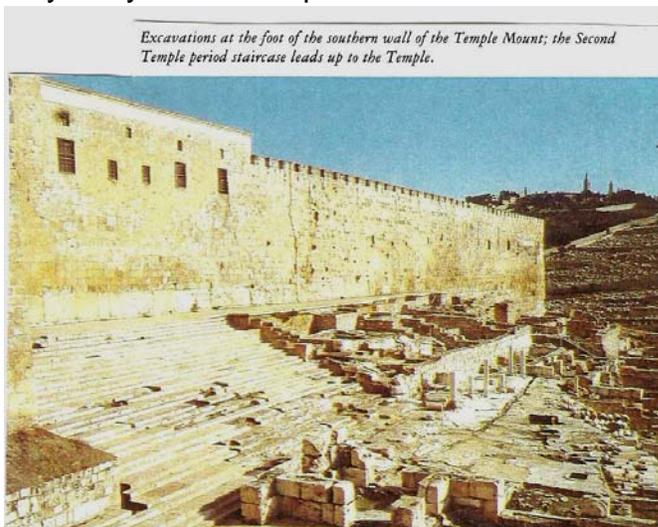
David then unified the tribes of Israel and conquered the Jebusite fortress (later named Jerusalem) to make it his capital. The lay of the land was much different from today--with the current Temple Mount location being an irregularly shaped mound rising at about 2440 feet elevation among the Judean Hills. It was above a small settlement called Jebus, which clung to a ridge surrounded by ravines.

David intended to build a temple there and place in it the Arc of the Covenant, that had been recovered from the Philistines. However, because of David's sin regarding Bathsheba and her warrior husband, God said the construction must wait for a future generation.

So his son, Solomon, later built it at the higher location of the current Temple Mount. That became the First Temple, later known as Beit Hamikdash. King Solomon's unpopular tax policies later led to the division of his kingdom in 922 B.C. Then In 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar totally destroyed this city.

Although there are no traces of its physical remains, the complex has been envisioned, based on architectural remains of other sanctuaries in the region that were built during the same era. It is described as being constructed with richly painted and gilded cedar, fir and sandalwood.

In the first century B.C., King Herod massively reshaped the city site by filling in the small valleys with rubble from previous ruins and built a far more expansive version of the First Temple--enclosing the city within a 100 foot-high retaining wall, constructed of large limestone blocks, quarried from the nearby hills. The current Wailing Wall is a part of that retaining wall--not the Temple. A temporary wooden walkway, leading above the Wailing Wall to the Mughrabi Gate, was the only entry to the Temple Mount for non-Muslims when I was there.

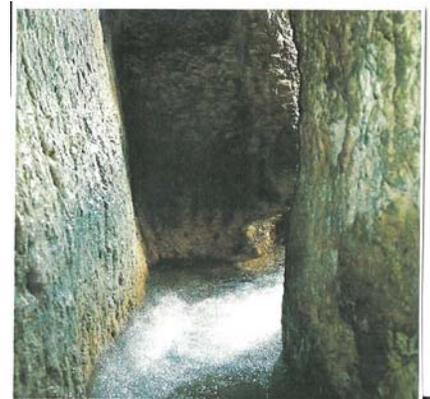


*Excavations at the foot of the southern wall of the Temple Mount; the Second Temple period staircase leads up to the Temple.*

**City of David.**

The 5,000 year-old site of the City of David has only recently been positively identified as such. It is on a surprisingly small area just outside the southeast corner of the present Jerusalem wall. The Bible also uses the term, "City of David", in referring to Bethlehem as being where both David and Jesus were born.

When I first visited



**Gihon Spring**

Jerusalem in 1975, I saw the results of initial archaeological excavation which was started there by Charles Warren in 1867 and continued by others, such as Kathleen Kenyon, known for her key investigation at Jericho. The most important discovery was Hezekiah's Tunnel. It had delivered water into the city from Gihon Spring, a nearby water source outside the city wall.

Warren dug a system of vertical shafts and sloping tunnels, leading from half way up the eastern slope of the City of David down to the spring. The earliest shaft is open to the public as "Warren's Shaft."

A later one, now accessible for the bold tourist, is Hezekiah's Tunnel, which was cut just before 700 B.C. in preparation for the siege of Sennacherib. A Hebrew inscription, cut into the rock wall from the first temple period, tells how the tunnel was dug through from both ends and met. This rock fragment is now displayed in the Archaeological Museum at Istanbul. Other finds are:

- (1) City walls of various periods, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Canaanite wall to the west, destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.
- (2) Enormous Canaanite terraces which supported the eastern slope of the city.
- (3) A stepped terrace wall, preserved to a height of 55 feet, that was the southern entry to Temple Mount and a center of public life during pilgrimage festivals.
- (4) Private Israelite houses, dating to as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., with clay figurines, indicating pagan practices.
- (5) Stone quarries, tombs and many small objects.
- (6) David's tomb site was possibly originally located in the vicinity of the City of David but his cenotaph tomb is presently on the main floor of the same 12<sup>th</sup>-century Crusader building that is also the traditional site of the Last Supper, and where the Holy Spirit came down later at Pentecost.

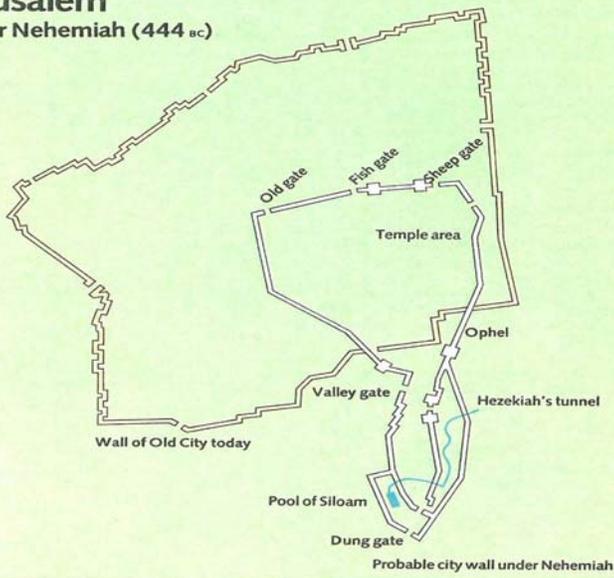
The story of that ancient city continues today with fascinating continuing discoveries. It has been sacred to Judaism for about 3,000 years, to Christianity for about 2,000 years, and to Islam for about 1400 years. The city has about 1204 synagogues, 159 churches and 73 mosques.

Despite efforts to maintain peaceful religious coexistence, some sites such as the Temple Mount have been a continuous source of friction ever since Israel seized East Jerusalem and the Old City from Jordan in 1967. While Israelis saw this as the reunification of their ancient capital, Palestinians still consider East Jerusalem to be occupied Arab land. When Israeli leader, Ariel Sharon, visited the Temple Mount in 2000, many were killed in clashes throughout the region.

During its long turbulent history, Jerusalem has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times. The oldest part of the city was settled in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., making Jerusalem one of the oldest cities in the world. The old walled-part is today divided into four quarters—Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim.

## Jerusalem

under Nehemiah (444 BC)



Jerusalem model.

After the 1967 Arab/Israeli war, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, which had been controlled by Jordan following the 1948 war. As a consequence, over 200,000 Palestinians now live there and seek to make East Jerusalem their future capital over the determined objection of the Jews. All of the Israeli government, including their parliament building, are located in the modern part of the city.

## CHAPTER 2

# FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

Our tour group overlooking Jerusalem in 1981.



The prime interest of a Christian touring Israel is to visit the places associated with Jesus. My three daughters went there in 1972 between times of armed conflict. I went there with my wife, Vera, in late December, 1975 and during the spring of 1981. Vera and I traveled on our own the first time and then with a church tour group the second time. We took many colored slides during those three trips which I have

since scanned into my computer and added captions, based on memory, tour-guide information and subsequent detailed research.

The result of this quest is organized into geographic vicinities that encompass sites where events transpired.

### **Bethlehem:**

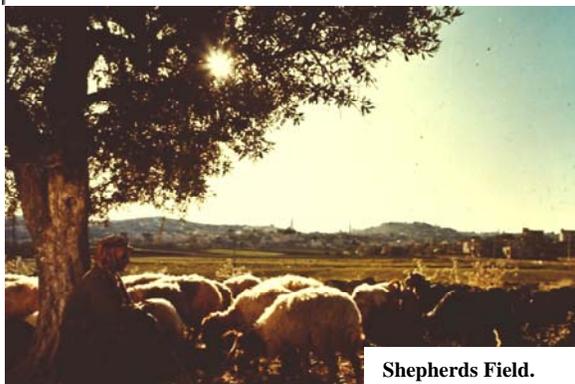


Jesus was born here in a small mountain town, at the edge of the Judean Desert on a ridge, 5½ miles south of Jerusalem. My wife and I visited there in 1975 on Christmas Eve. We first attended an early evening service about a mile further south in a large limestone cave near the YMCA.

We stood there among many hundreds of attendees from all over the world, viewing the valley below called Shepherds Field.

That was also where Boaz was attracted to Ruth who later became the great grand parents of King David and the maternal ancestors of Jesus.

I gazed to my left, up toward Jerusalem which was arrayed like a picture on the skyline, reflecting the orange light from a setting sun. That was by far the most memorable place I have visited during all of my world travels—a pilgrimage event that very few travelers have experienced.



Shepherds Field.

While so awed by the significance of this vantage point, I was also watching and listening to an interesting dialogue between young Christian attendees and Israeli

soldiers who were guarding against terrorist attack. Then the spell was broken by the sound of machine gun firing in the distance that the soldiers brushed-off as being merely a training exercise.

A Swedish speaking pastor spoke and then, in their various languages, many hundreds sang *Silent Night* (which was first performed in Oberndorf, Austria in 1816). This was a setting in which one could best visualize baby Jesus lying in a cattle manger, similar to in this cave (Luke 2:7).

In comparison, the Church of the Nativity, enclosing a grotto festooned with many lamps, stands on the “traditional” site of the birth as urged by Emperor Constantine’s mother, Queen Helena. She had traveled throughout the Holy Land and the eastern provinces under imperial sponsorship.

In 135 A.D., Hadrian had desecrated the cave of the Nativity and surrounded it by a temple, dedicated to Adonis. The actual specific location for this and many other Biblical sites, however, may never be agreed upon by the various faiths and scholars.

This church was first built in 330 A.D. by Emperor Constantine and has seen many changes. It was badly damaged in 527 by a Samaritan uprising and was restored by Emperor Justinian. Later, high protective walls were placed around it by the Crusaders in 1099. The current structure survives intact from the Byzantine period and follows an arrangement similar to that of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Sepulchre) in that both structures enshrine a main point--in one case the place of Jesus’ birth and in the other, his crucifixion and brief tomb.

The church entry is through a small doorway because the Crusader’s original arched entrance is partially sealed. The Basilica’s wall mosaics, columns and large stone floor are Crusader additions. The previous mosaic floor, from Justinian’s time, can be seen through a viewing window in the floor.



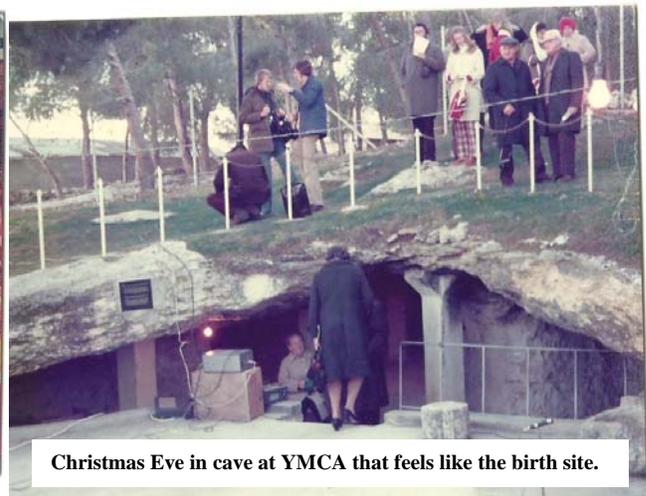
The Church of Nativity. Small entry is at the lower left of the building.



Birth site grotto in The Church of Nativity.



Youth choir at Bethlehem Manger Square.



Christmas Eve in cave at YMCA that feels like the birth site.



Israeli soldier at cave site guarding against terrorist attack.

Following the earlier cave event, we listened to singing by youth groups from around the world at Manger Square, adjacent to the Church of Nativity while Israeli soldiers were positioned on various building tops guarding against possible terrorists. Interestingly, nearby attendees remarked that the Mayor, presiding over

the Manger Square event, was actually a communist!

While the choirs were performing, I overheard an argument between a nearby Franciscan monk and an Israeli policeman about Judaism and Christianity perspectives. A well-dressed middle-aged man was acting like a moderator, who we later learned was a prominent Israeli attorney originally from Vienna, Austria.

After the performance, that attorney drove us to his home in the modern section of Jerusalem where we talked for many hours into the morning of Christmas day, a normal work-day there. I discovered that he had an early association with the founders of present-day Israel, such as President Ben Gurion, and seemed to be well-informed about the Bible. Although he had acted as a well informed go-between during the argument between the monk and the policeman, I was very surprised to find that he claimed to be an atheist!

Although the ancient history of Bethlehem has not been archaeologically documented, it has been immortalized by biblical events. The prophet Samuel came here to make a sacrifice to the Lord and much later King David was born here 1000 years before Jesus. This town was the principle setting for the book of Ruth, the great grandmother of King David, as well as the home of David.

St. Jerome, an early bishop who translated the Old and New Testaments into Latin, spent 30 years here. The population here had been predominantly Christian since the 5<sup>th</sup> century but most have left since my 1975 visit, due to the current Israeli/Arab unrest.

## **Sea of Galilee vicinity:**

### **Call of the fishermen:**

While I was aboard a boat cruise on the Sea of Galilee, heading toward the Capernaum site at the northern shore, we passed near where Jesus had walked along the northwestern shore and watched fishermen clearing their nets of fish, as they do today.



Cruise on Sea of Galilee.



Fisherman on the Sea of Galilee

## Vera on Sea of Galilee .



He began teaching them and others nearby and convinced four of the fishermen (Simon, Andrew, James and John) to come with him to become fishers of men instead (Mark 1:16-20). In 1986, a fishing boat from the time of Jesus was discovered in this vicinity. It was about 26 feet long and 4.5 feet wide, made of cedar and oak. Other events also make this an especially important location to Christians.

This location is today called Tabgha (there is also another place with that same name on the eastern side of the sea) named for the seven nearby springs that are mineral, hot and cold. One of those springs, that supplied water to the surrounding valley, is referred to as Job's Spring where local tradition suggests that Job had washed himself.

Jesus performed two miraculous events near here. The first was near the present Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes, where he fed over 5,000, using



View toward the west from Sea of Galilee. Sermon on the Mount in center. Jesus met his first disciples on this shore.

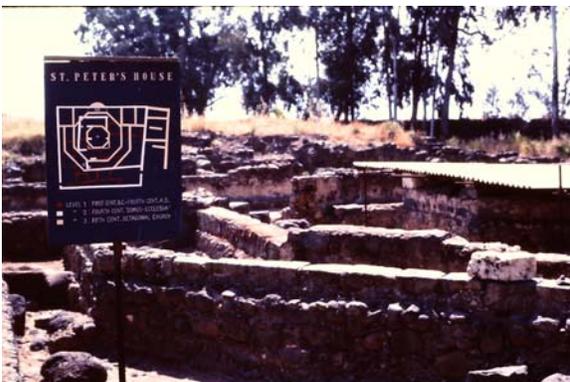
only a few fish and five loaves of bread (Matt. 14-21). The second event was during his third recorded appearance after his resurrection, when he stood on this shore and called to his disciples while they were fishing (John 21:1-22). He told them to throw their nets on the other side of their boat for fish and invited them to join him here for breakfast.

At that event, he instructed Peter to feed his lambs. The present Church of St Peter, commemorating that event, stands close to the shore, supposedly directly over the actual rock. A previous church was also built here during the middle-ages.

While on the boat cruise, I also looked toward the eastern shore country of Gadarenes where scripture describes Jesus driving evil spirits out of a man and into a herd of swine that then jumped into the sea and drowned (Luke 8:26-39). That site, near the present-day village of Kursi, is an important tourist attraction with 5<sup>th</sup> century ruins restored in the 1970s. The ruins were a church and monastery, with well-preserved floor mosaics in a compound that covers 4.5 acres.

## Capernaum:

Capernaum was an ancient town on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, but it has been uninhabited since the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Jesus settled here after he left



St. Peter's house at Capernaum.

Nazareth and it was here where he selected his first disciples--Peter and his brother Andrew, as well as James and his brother, Matthew. He preached at the synagogue (John 6:59) and healed various persons, such as the following: A demon-possessed man, Peter's mother-in-law, a paralytic that was lowered through the roof, raised the daughter of

Jairus from the dead, and healed many of the sick.

His teaching here included many of the parables such as: the sower of tares among the wheat, faith of a grain of mustard seed, of leaven, of the treasures hidden in the field, and of the fishing net. So, Capernaum played a major role at the very beginning of Christianity.

The town's exact location was identified in 1835 by an American explorer but archaeological excavations didn't begin until after the area had been purchased by the Franciscan Order in 1886. Remains of the impressive synagogue were found in 1905 and partial reconstruction was then begun. It is now known that settlement began here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. and that it remained a peaceful small fishing village which grew in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.--however it declined after the Arab invasion in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when it was abandoned. Its ruins have remained buried until recent excavations.



Site of synagogue where Jesus taught.

The most conspicuous structure and main attraction today is the white limestone synagogue, built about 300 A.D. It has been partially reconstructed over the likely foundation of the earlier one where Jesus taught. The house of Peter was located near this site. About 12 homes have been excavated that were constructed of black basalt rock and small pebbles arranged around a central courtyard, containing ovens

and grinding stones.

I visited Capernaum a second time in 1981, again visualizing walking in the footsteps of Jesus and inspecting ancient stone carvings scattered about. One of these includes the star of King David and another is the likeness of the Arc of the Covenant.

While contemplating this, our group was suddenly startled back into the present by a supersonic boom from two Israeli jets streaking by overhead close to the water's surface, toward the Syrian border and then streaking straight-up and returning with a roll maneuver. We were informed that this was done to test the response of the nearby Syrian anti-aircraft gun positions located just east of the Golan Heights! Later that day, the Syrians shot down an un-manned Israeli drone doing reconnaissance over Lebanon. That was fairly close to the west of where we visited Caesarea Philippi at the base of Mt. Hermon.

## Sermon on the Mount:



Mount of Beatitudes. Sermon on the Mount.

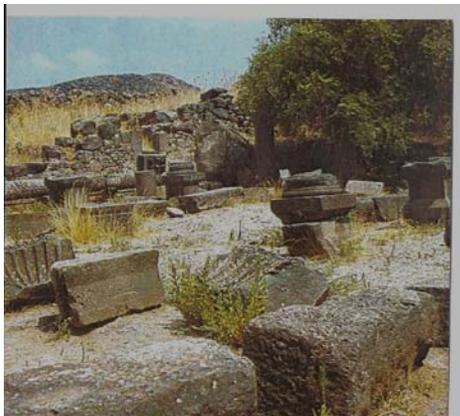


Looking south over the Sea of Galilee from Mount of Beatitudes.

The specific location where Jesus taught his disciples the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) is unknown with certainty but the traditional site overlooks the Sea of Galilee from a small hill-top west of Capernaum. This hill is the site of a present-day Roman Catholic chapel, called the Church of the Beatitudes with an adjacent monastery, hospice and garden. The crusaders on the other hand had considered that the beatitudes sermon was delivered at the Horns of Hattin, where they were finally defeated by Saladin.

## Bethsaida and Chorazin:

Bethsaida was an ancient town, located on the northeastern shore area of Galilee but the exact location remains unknown. It was the home of the apostles, Peter, Andrew and Philip and where Jesus taught and performed many miracles, including restoration of a man's sight. Its inhabitants rejected Jesus and his teachings, as they also did in nearby Chorazin, so Jesus predicted that these towns would be destroyed. (Matt.11:20-24) They no longer exist to the present.



Ruins at Chorazin

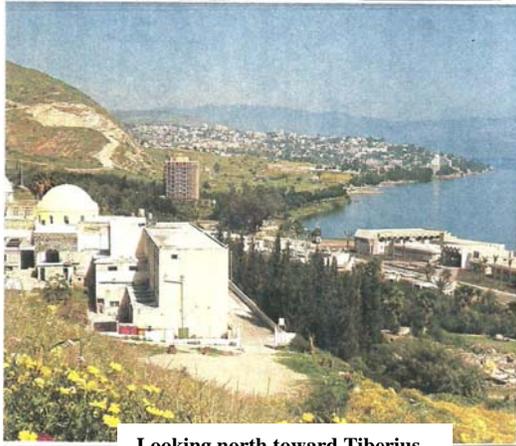
The **Chorazin** ruins, covering an area of about 80 acres, are located on a low basalt hill about two miles north of Capernaum. It had been a large Jewish community when Jesus was there but was in ruins



Our group relaxing on the shore at Tiberius near where I had eaten at the restaurant 6 years before.

by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, it was rebuilt and survived the Arab conquest of the 7<sup>th</sup> century but was again destroyed at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, leaving the existing ruins. I saved a stone building fragment to add to my collection from this and other Bible sites.

## Calming the storm:



Looking north toward Tiberias.

**Tiberias** was founded about 20 A.D. on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee by Herod Antipas and named after the ruling emperor Tiberius who ruled 14-37 A.D. It was possibly built on the site of biblical Rakkath, just north of today's city. After the destruction of the temple by the Romans, Galilee became the chief Jewish center when the Sanhedrin moved to Tiberias and continued writing the Talmud.

In 1975, we stayed overnight there and experienced a St. Peter's fish meal in a shoreline restaurant, while watching a brief

but lively wind and rain storm. The wind whipped toward us from the Golan Heights on the opposite eastern shore, stirring up turbulent wave whitecaps as we ate and watched. We could easily visualize the scripture that describes Jesus calming those waters and walking on the surface and Peter attempted to walk on the water also. (Matt. 14:22-33).

Our attention returned to the present by an angry (apparently local) young couple who were complaining to the waiter about the small size of their serving as compared to ours. They reminded the waiter that they were not just ordinary tourists. The waiter responded in an uncompromising manner, "Yes, the size is smaller now that you have eaten part of it!"

## Galilee vicinity:

This area includes the northern extension of the mountain chain that forms the watershed of Israel. It is a rather disjointed area of broken hills and valleys that have been altered by earthquakes, making it a secluded area with difficult accessibility. Galilee became the home of tough mountain people who held out against enemies. General Flavius Josephus led the resistance here against the Romans--he was eventually captured, became a Roman citizen, and is a prime non-Bible source for Jewish history.

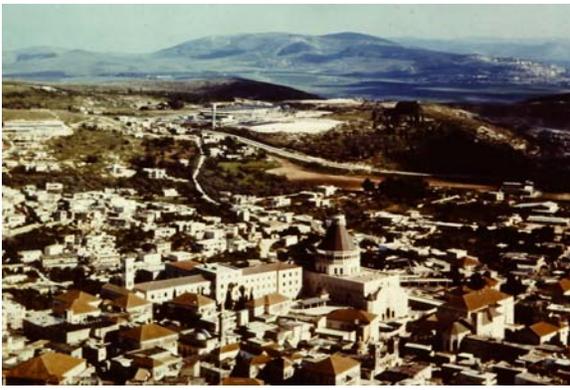
Tourist pamphlets, about the greater Galilee region, mention pre-historic caves and events that involved Joshua, the Babylonians, the Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Romans.

## Nazareth—annunciation and pre-ministry life:



Church of the Annunciation.

Today's Nazareth is the largest Arab town in the Galilee area, with its still small old houses and winding alleys in the ancient center where the market and main churches are located. The new Jewish town of Upper Nazareth is located above the old town. Archaeologists have recently found remains of a small village house, dating to the time of Jesus in Nazareth,



Nazareth.

with rooms around a central courtyard. This modest dwelling gives an insight into the lifestyle of that period and forms a valuable stage backdrop in understanding the life and ministry of Jesus.

The lower site has been occupied since the Middle Canaanite period. Remnants of the earliest church, with mosaic floors that

were built here about 427 B.C., have been unearthed under the present Church of the Annunciation. Various other churches have also been previously built at this site by the Byzantines and Crusaders. There are four other present-day churches at other traditional sites in Nazareth where more biblical events occurred.

The Church of the Annunciation (the largest and most prominent structure) is at the traditional site where the angel appeared to Mary, informing her she was to give birth to a son and should name him Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). It was completed in 1969 and is most recognized by its high dome.

The Church of Gabriel and Fountain of Mary, on the northern end of downtown, is the traditional site where Mary drew water from a fountain before she returned home to where the angel appeared. This is a Greek Orthodox Church, built in 1769 over the remnants of a Crusader church with unique tiled wall paneling, brought from Armenia. The water, coming from the fountain here, is actually conveyed from a spring located further up the hill.

The Church of St. Joseph is located opposite the Church of the Annunciation over a cave which is claimed to have been Joseph's carpentry workplace or possibly even the family dwelling-place. Remains of earlier Byzantine and Crusader churches are nearby.

The Franciscan Church of the Rock—Mensa Christi (Table of the Lord)--was built in 1861 over a huge rock on the slope of the hill, west of the Church of the Annunciation. According to tradition, Jesus dined here after his resurrection.

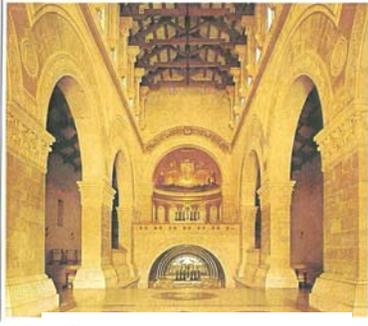
The Church-Synagogue (presently Greek-Catholic) is also nearby, where--according to a 6<sup>th</sup> century tradition--a synagogue once stood where Jesus' preaching antagonized the community. They then forced him out of the city and intended to cast him off the brow of a nearby hill to the southeast of Nazareth, but instead Jesus "passed through the midst of them and went away" (Luke 4:29-30).

The traditional site of this rejection is a popular tourist view point on the top of Jabal Kufsi which is also called Mount of Precipice or Mount of the Leap. Archaeological excavations on the top have revealed the remains of a small medieval church and several rock-cut tombs as well as a cave that contained prehistoric human remains and pottery.



Jabal Kufsi , also called other names such as "Mount of Precipice" and "Mount of the Leap".

## Mount Tabor:



Church of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. exterior and interior.



Access to top of Mt. Tabor.



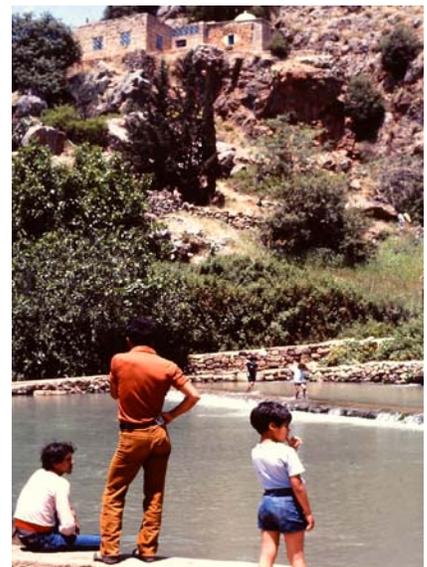
Crusader Gate of the Wind on Mt. Tabor summit.

**Mount Tabor** is the traditional site, since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, where Jesus was transfigured before his disciples-- Peter, James and John (Matt:17:1-13). The symmetrical dome-shaped mountain is located several miles east of the Mount of the Leap and Nazareth, near an important intersection of ancient roads between Egypt and Damascus. This mountain captured the imagination of ancient peoples who also attributed divine qualities to it, regarding this as a sacred seat of the gods and a place of worship. Remnants of a Canaanite place of worship have been unearthed here. It was also a strategic military land-feature long before and after Jesus' time.

Deborah and Barak positioned their army on this mountain slope during their battle against Sisera's 900 war chariots. The chariots were positioned to attack from the below Jezreel Valley until a cloud burst limited their maneuverability and they withdrew. This site was also mentioned in the battle of Gideon against the Midianites.

The Crusaders recognized this mountain's importance in 1099, when building a fortress on top that had been fortified about a thousand years earlier by Joseph Flavius during the first Jewish war against the Romans.

The most prominent structure today is the beautiful Franciscan church, completed in 1925, that displays a mosaic above the altar depicting the transfiguration. Fragments, from the earlier Byzantine church, are located in a crypt below today's Church on a Rock.



Caesarea Philippi.

Locals claim that Jesus stood here in the presence of Moses and Elijah.

Some suggest Mt. Hermon as an alternate site. The arguments against that are its 9,232 ft elevation in snow and its more remote location from Jesus' ministry.

### **Caesarea Philippi:**

Caesarea Philippi was the most northerly site that our tour group visited in Israel, next to the Syrian and Lebanon borders. It is located at the base of snow-capped Mt. Hermon, the source of the Jordan River.

It was not yet a city during Jesus' lifetime but Jesus and the disciples frequented the villages in the region. The site is particularly important to Christians because this was where the true nature of Jesus "the Christ, the Son of the living God" was first recognized by Simon Peter (Matt. 16:13-20). Jesus blessed Simon here and changed his name to Peter (the Rock). Peter's response there set the stage for human events that ultimately led to the crucifixion, the beginning of Christianity and the renumbering of the calendar. The spot where Peter is believed to have received this blessing is in front of a rock-cut niche that had previously been dedicated to the god, Pan. Jesus traveled from here to Jerusalem and his crucifixion.

That area was first known in 200 B.C. by the name of Panion, meaning "sanctuary of Pan"-- a pagan god associated with fields and herds. In 23 B.C., Augustus assigned the area to Herod I to rule for the Romans and then his son, Philip, took control of the region after his father's death. Philip constructed an administrative building there and changed the name to Caesarea Philippi, honoring both Caesar and himself.

About 54 A.D., Agrippa II transformed the area into a Greco-Roman village. In 70 A.D., the city was the scene of notorious savagery where Roman General Titus had a large number of Jewish prisoners massacred in games as a public spectacle.

Systematic excavations beginning in 1988, discovered that much of the Roman-period architecture had been destroyed during the Middle Ages, when the location was used as a military outpost by both Muslims and Crusaders.

### **Caesarea Maritima:** (Mediterranean coast)

This is the other Caesarea, where Paul was detained by the Romans for two years before being sent on to Rome for trial and eventual execution. It was the most important port on the coast of the Holy Land until the Crusaders left and became reduced to ruins. It is one of the main tourist attractions that I have visited.

It was established in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. as a Phoenician port, named Straton's Tower, for ships sailing between Syria and Egypt. In 96 B.C., it was occupied by the



Crusader fortification at the harbor entry.



Roman aqueduct.

Hasmoneans, who opened it to Jewish settlement. In 22 B.C., King Herod constructed a beautiful new show-case city and harbor, and named it in honor of Caesar Augustus. It became Herod's main port from his kingdom to the rest of the world.

It was a very ambitious project—especially with its wave-breaker harbor that had huge statues and a lighthouse, modeled after the famous Pharos of Alexandria. Overlooking the harbor was a temple dedicated to Rome and Augustus, situated on a large artificial platform that served as an acropolis.

The city was well planned with markets, public baths, a theater, a stadium and a hippodrome. Another enormous construction was the aqueduct for transportation of water to the city from the Shuni springs on the Carmel mountain range about 8 miles to the north east. The Romans used this city as their administrative capital and seat of the Roman procurators such as Pilate, who ruled from here from 26 to 36 A.D. In 1961, a piece of ruins with an inscription, bearing his name, was found during excavation of the theater.

During the Jewish war against the Romans, this was the Roman army headquarters where captives were paraded and forced to fight wild beasts as entertainment. It is claimed that as many as 20,000 Jews were killed in one day but this could be greatly exaggerated.

Christianity was accepted here very early and by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century it had a bishop. Origenes who headed its famous library in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and Eusebius compiled the *Onomasticon*, with its place names, here in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The Crusaders built a new well-fortified city here much smaller than the previous cities but included a protective ditch around it with towers, gates, and secret passages. Currently, there is a suburban town east of the ruins and a kibbutz to the south.

### **Carmel vicinity:**

The **Mt. Carmel** range juts into the Mediterranean at a location about 30 miles north of Caesarea to form the Bay of Haifa. This militarily strategic range stretches 14 miles to the southeast with three passes for north-south travel. Because of these restricted approaches, the location of Megiddo became the key military control location. Refer to the Megiddo description for more details about this aspect.

The **Carmelite Monastery of Elijah** is at the site of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal. It is located on the heights of Carmel, overlooking the **Plain of Jezreel**,



Port of Haifa with ships waiting to enter.

The Crusaders lost the **city of Haifa** to the Mamelukes after a prolonged siege that caused it to deteriorate into a fishing village. It was rebuilt and fortified in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Beduin ruler Taher el Omer and further revived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

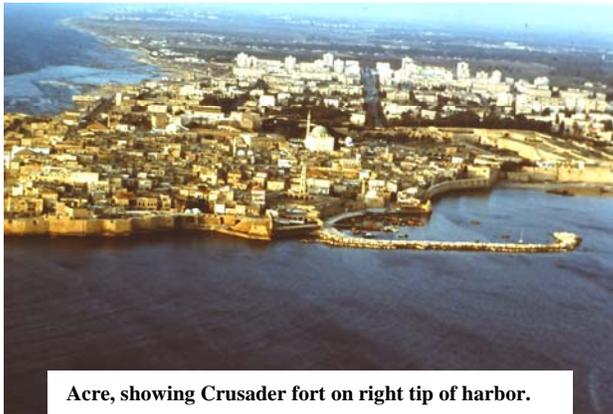
The modern city of Haifa is Israel's principle port that is built on the

slopes of Mt. Carmel in three levels, extending to the Mediterranean shore. The top of Mt. Carmel provides a panorama view of such features as:

The gold domed Bahai Faith Shrine of the Bab at the Bahai World Center, containing the remains of both Bahauulla and his successor that the Bahai Faith consider to be the last of the divine messengers.

The busy harbor, with ships waiting outside the breakwater for their turn to unload.

The red-roofed houses of the former German Templar Colony.



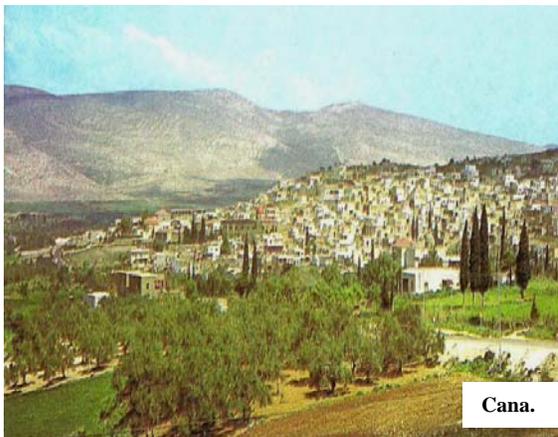
Acre, showing Crusader fort on right tip of harbor.

A large grain silo along the dock-side.

The ancient city of **Acre (Akko)**, about 14 miles north of Haifa, has a turbulent history under the same turnover of empires as the rest of that area. It became the capital of the Crusaders' eastern empire after the fall of Jerusalem but fell into neglect under Turkish rule.

It withstood the assaults of Napoleon during his ill-fated attempts to make Palestine a French satellite when he was turned back by el Jazzar, with the assistance of the British Navy. Today's old town was built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by el Jazzar

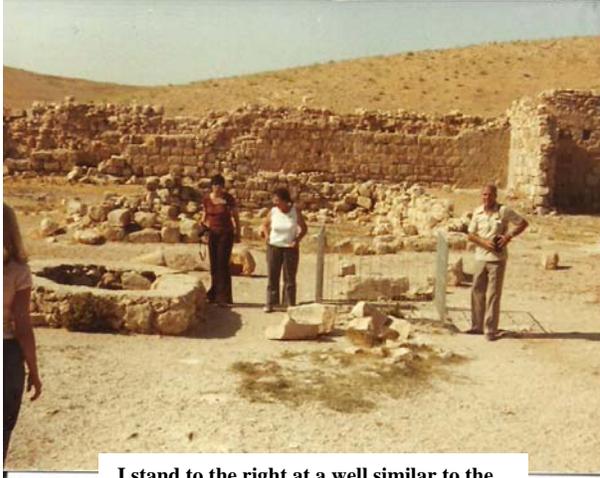
### **Wine at Cana:**



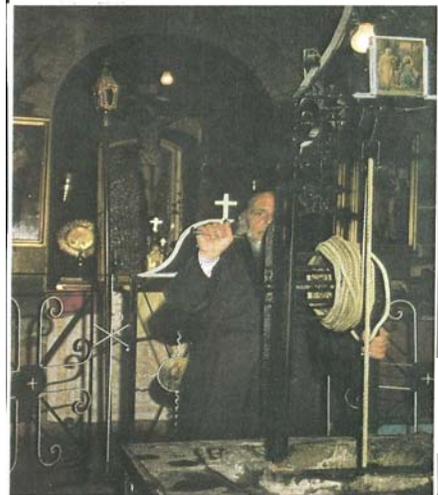
Cana is a small Christian/Moslem village about 9 miles north of Nazareth, known today as Khirbet Qana, which is now considered the more likely site where Jesus performed his first miracle. He was attending a wedding with his mother and disciples here when they ran short of wine. (John 2:1-11) His mother urged her son to do something about it--so, although he was at first reluctant, he caused the water in the six stone jars to turn into wine.

Excavation began here in 1998 that revealed remains of pottery, coins and housing remains, dating from the Roman through the Byzantine periods. This has been a place of pilgrimage since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. The current church, in the middle of the village, was built by the Franciscans in 1879. A Greek Orthodox Church, standing next to it, has two large stone jars--claimed to be the original wine vessels but they may instead be old baptismal fonts. Another place of worship is the Chapel of St. Bartholomew, honoring one of Jesus' first disciples.

## Woman at Jacob's Well:



I stand to the right at a well similar to the one where Jesus met the Samaritan woman.



The well's traditional site is inside the nearby Russian church.

Jacob's Well is located between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal on the eastern outskirts of present-day Nablus but the exact site is not certain. The O.T. name of Nablus was Shechem and the N.T. name was Sychar. This is the traditional well site where Jesus and his disciples stopped while traveling north from Jerusalem to Galilee through Samaria--a route normally avoided by the Jews. As Jesus rested alone at this well, while the others went for food in the village, he talked to a Samaritan woman drawing water--revealing that he was the Messiah who gives the living water of everlasting life and then forgave her personal life sins (John 4:4-26).

This well is located inside a Russian church that was never completed due to the Communist Revolution of 1917. Earlier Byzantine and Crusader churches have also been built here. I took a picture of another nearby well in the open that helps better visualize that event.

It is also claimed to be the same well that was dug by Jacob on his land that was later apportioned to the descendants of his son, Joseph. Joseph's tomb is seen today east of this site near Nablus--in the village of Balata, where his bones were brought from Egypt by his descendants.

## Jericho vicinity: Baptism:



Janet being re-baptized in the Jordan River.

When we visited the Jordan valley in 1981, several of our group were re-baptized in the Jordan River, including our daughter Janet, near where Jesus began his ministry after being baptized here by John the Baptist. This was also near where the Israelites had crossed over into the Promised Land. I still have a bottle of water from there that had flowed down from the snow on Mt. Hermon! Most such significant Biblical sites have such souvenirs.

## Mount of Temptation:

Scripture says that Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days, where he was tempted by Satan, after John had baptized him in the Jordan River (Matt. 4:1-11). The traditional site where this happened is on the Mount of Temptation to the west above Jericho. It is also known as Mount Quarantal, where a nearly empty Greek monastery with that name clings half-way up its cliff. Previous monasteries have also existed here near caves that had been inhabited by hermits back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.



Mount of Temptation above Jericho.



Good Samaritan site.

## Good Samaritan:

As we traveled half way along the main road down through the desolate narrow Judean Desert valleys toward Jericho, we stopped at the traditional site that represents the place referred to by Jesus in His parable of the Good Samaritan.

That place is known locally by the strange name of Aduumim because of the exposed iron oxide red patches on the limestone there that defined the boundary between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

No remnants from the time of Jesus or earlier have been found on the site but mosaic floors and fragmentary walls have been unearthed in the nearby present-day police station courtyard that probably belonged to a Byzantine monastery.

## Jerusalem vicinity:

### Bethany:

The village of Bethany is on the lower eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, the last stop along the Jerusalem-Jericho road before entering Jerusalem. The village, today named Al-Azariyeh--an Arabic version of the name of Lazarus--has been continuously occupied since the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.



Bethany on Mt. of Olives.

Jesus often visited Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, in their home here. Jesus performed one of his greatest miracles (John 11:1-44) here--bringing his close friend, Lazarus, back to life after he had become sick, died and was placed in a burial tomb. Jesus cried into the tomb with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

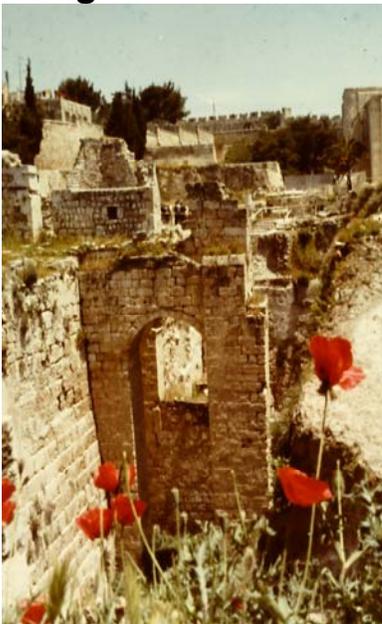
This tomb possibly still exists as a rock-cut sepulcher where a 4<sup>th</sup> century church once stood. It was uncovered in 1881 under a mosque named Al-Uzeir, another version of Lazarus. It is reached by descending 24 well-worn steps from the mosque or from a newer entrance, provided by the Franciscans. In 1883, a Greek Orthodox Church was built where Jesus was met by Martha and Mary.



The final visit of Jesus to Bethany took place six days before the Passover when he was a guest in the house of Simon the Leper along with the resurrected Lazarus, and his two sisters. On this occasion Mary anointed Jesus' feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair. Jesus then proceeded on to Jerusalem, where the final episodes of his life took place, leading to the crucifixion. After his resurrection, he also reappeared and spoke to some of his disciples the final time near here before they watched him ascending from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:6-12).

Entry to Tomb of Lazarus.

### **Curing at the Pool of Bethesda:**



Pool of Bethesda.

Bethesda means "house of mercy". The pool was located on the eastern side of Jerusalem near the Fortress of Antonia and was supplied by a nearby spring. The pool is now thought to be the one found in 1888, while repairs were being made below the crypt of the ruined fourth century basilica of St. Anne to the north of the temple mount. It has a five-arch portico with faded frescoes depicting the miracle of Christ healing the man who had been sick 38 years (John 5:2-9).

## Triumphant entry, last supper and coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

On Palm Sunday, Jesus made his triumphant entry from Bethany on the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem, across the small Kidron Valley and through the Golden Gate. The present gate was built in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by the Byzantines at the original



The Last Supper traditional location.



King David's tomb.

site of the Second Temple's Gate of Mercy, but Sultan Suleiman sealed it off in 1541 to prevent future re-entrance.

Both of the major events--the Last Supper and the Holy Spirit, descending on the Apostles during Pentecost 50 days later, are claimed to have happened in the same upper-floor room at the present Holy Zion Church--called the Cenacle, or in Latin, the Coenaculum. It is located outside of the Old City wall at the highest location in southwestern Jerusalem near the Zion Gate on Mount Zion--although the exact original location of the upper room isn't known. It is claimed that Jesus also appeared twice here to his disciples after his resurrection.

A cenotaph tomb of King David is also located on the lower floor of that same building, which is a restoration of the 12th-century Crusader Church of Our Lady of Mount Zion. The cenotaph tomb is made of stone, covered with embroidered cloth, and carries the silver crown of the Torah.

Previous churches have been located here--one was built by the first-century Christians and escaped destruction by the Romans in both 70 A.D. and 135 A.D. It was then enlarged by the Byzantines, who called it Holy Zion. Then the Persians destroyed that structure in 714.

## Gethsemane, trial, way of the cross, crucifixion and burial:



Garden of Gethsemane.



Sealed Golden gate at top center taken from near the left photo location, looking west toward the Jerusalem wall, near where Jesus entered.

I have stood by this gnarled old olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane (meaning olive press) near where Jesus prayed, before Judas revealed him to the soldiers. The few remaining trees of today could possibly be from the same roots of that time?

Gazing at that ancient growth, I pondered the significance of that very holy place. I thought-- this is very close to where Jesus kneeled in agonized prayer saying, "Father if you are willing, take this cup (of wrath) from me; yet not my will but yours be done."(Luke 22:42)

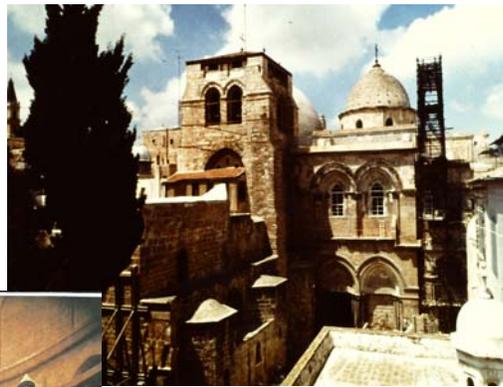
The scripture tells that an angel then appeared to him and strengthened him. He continued to pray more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood. When he arose from prayer and walked back to the nearby disciples, he found them sleeping. After he awakened them, soldiers appeared with Judas, who betrayed him with a kiss.

The exact locations of the trial, the way of suffering (Via Dolorosa), the crucifixion and burial are impossible to determine with complete certainty because of the city's destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Pilgrims have been coming to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher since the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century.



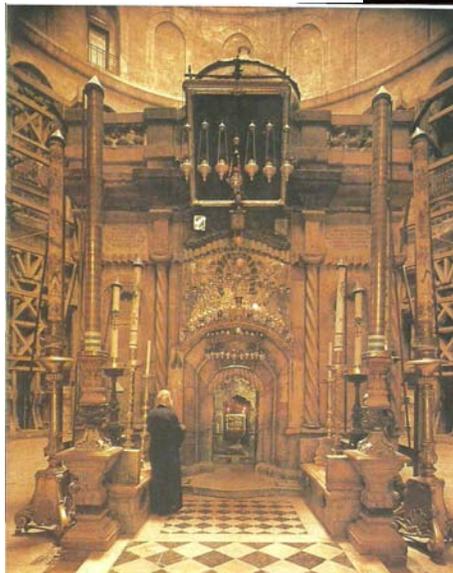
Vera at the Way of the Cross



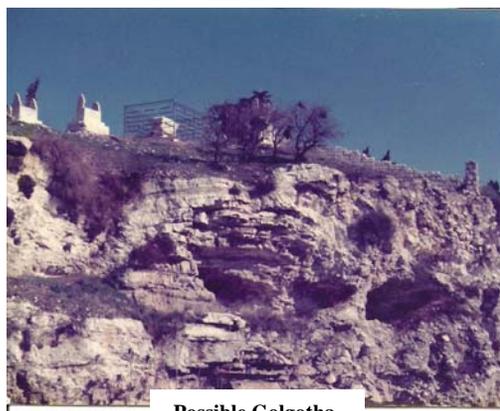
Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



Janet at the Garden Tomb



Inside the Church of the Holy Spulchere.



Possible Golgotha.

The present church stands on the site of a quarry outside of the city walls at the time of Christ and is believed to encompass both where Jesus was crucified and was then buried.

Emperor Hadrian, who built Hadrian's Wall in England, built a temple,

apparently dedicated to Aphrodite, over this site in 135 A.D.--in rejection of Christian belief. That is a good argument for this being the true location.

The church, subsequently built by Constantine, was much larger than the present one but had a similar layout. That building was severely damaged by fire in 614 A.D. during the Persian invasion. Then it came under Muslim control by Caliph Omar,

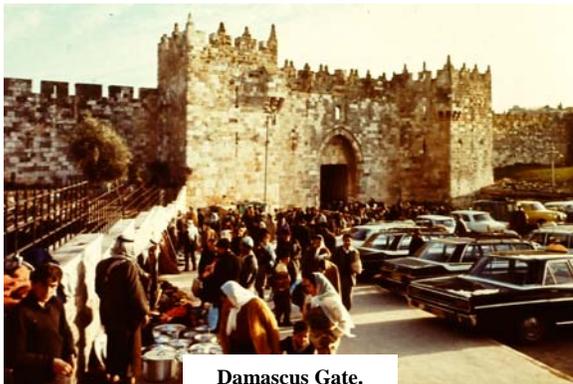
who permitted Christian worship to resume and continued until 1009, when Caliph Hakim brutally destroyed that church.

In 1048, Emperor Constantine Monomachos provided money to partially rebuild the church. Then, during the First Crusade in 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon became the first king of Jerusalem--declaring himself "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre." and beginning renovations that continued until 1170.

The church's chaotic history leaves a structure today that is a mix of Byzantine, Medieval, Crusader and modern styles--with custodianship being shared by Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Catholic churches.

During my visits there, I was more impressed by the setting of an alternative site--first discovered in 1842 and later called The Garden Tomb or "Gordon's Calvary" when the British military hero visited it in 1883 and suggested that Calvary could have been located on a nearby hill.

In 1892, an organization was formed that raised funds to clear the tomb and make the surroundings into a peaceful garden environment. It is located north of the current city wall's Damascus Gate, overlooking today's bus station parking. That current busy gate, built in 1530 A.D. by the Turks, is the most ornate of all the wall gates.



Damascus Gate.

Although there is no definite or agreed upon proof of authenticity for either sites of crucifixion and burial, this one is more popular with Protestants as a place to pray and contemplate. Compared to the traditional crowded Church of the Holy Sepulcher, it remains a natural setting with no intricate shrine, candles and ornate hanging lamps. So it can be best imagined as most similar to the actual place.

Several other factors have been suggested in favor of this site: (1) the nearby rock-cut configuration just north of the bus station looks somewhat like a scull (Golgotha?) and (2) the recent discovery of the tombstone of the deacon, Nonnus, in the nearby Church of St. Stephen mentions the Holy Sepulcher.

The most impressive and central structure in Old Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock with its new gold-coated dome. First dedicated in 691 A.D., it is the oldest surviving building in Islamic architecture. The nearby al-Aqsa mosque was dedicated in 715 A.D. and has been repeatedly damaged by earthquakes.

The Dome of the Rock was built over the traditional large rock claimed by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths to be where Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac, but whom the Muslims believe to instead have been Ishmael. They also

claim that Mohammad ascended to heaven from here during his mystical night journey from Mecca.



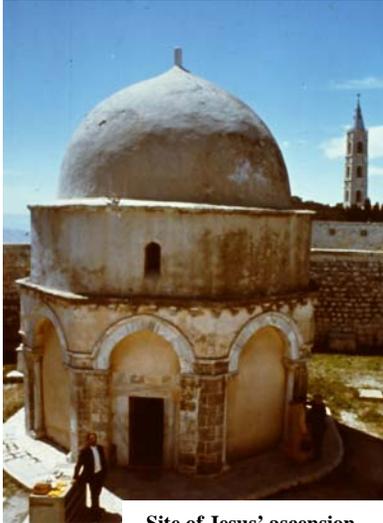
Dome of the Rock. Vera at the lower right.



In the Dome of the Rock.

Rubble of the Jewish Second Temple still remained when the Muslims took the city from the Christian Byzantine rulers in 638 A.D. and began to shape the complex into al-Haram al-Sharif, ("the noble or sacred" enclosure) their third holiest site in Islam. Muslim rule ended with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in WW I. Of

all the issues dividing Israelis and Palestinians, none is more volatile than sovereignty over this Mount Moriah location, which all faiths consider being the final battleground for the glory of God.



Site of Jesus' ascension.

### Ascension from the Mount of Olives:

A small round domed church/mosque, built by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Crusaders, contains the rock which is claimed to be the one that Jesus stood on as he ascended from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 6-12). The first church was built here about 390 A.D. and destroyed by the Persians in 614--but then restored and described in 680 as a round building, open to the sky.

After the fall of the Crusaders, the Muslims added the stone dome and it remained in Muslim hands as a mosque for over 300 more years, after which the building again fell into ruin by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 1620 the Muslims added a mosque and minaret and continued in possession of the entire site.

The slopes of the Mount of Olives have served as a cemetery, dating to the earliest periods of Jerusalem history. There up to 1,000 documented rock-cut tombs of the elite in Jerusalem--such as the interesting row of tombs between the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount that tradition attributes to various biblical persons such as Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat and others. Many may instead be those of anonymous wealthy persons of the Second Temple period rather than of much earlier.

Many other grave stones can be viewed, looking west from the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem--of those who expected to be resurrected at the arrival of the Jewish Messiah or return of Jesus. There is another extensive tomb complex on top of Mount Scopus to the north that has more burial chambers than any other tomb complex discovered in Jerusalem.



Our group sitting by the road to Ammaus.

### Emmaus:

Our tour group sat along the stone curb of a Roman road, about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem, that leads to the ruins of what could have been the town of Emmaus. While we listened to a tape of *I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked*, sung by the Gather Trio we could vividly imagine the resurrected Jesus walking toward us here as he had appeared to Cleopas and another of his disciples. (Luke 24:13-32) He subsequently dined with others in Cleopas' house

and gave them a commission to evangelize. (Luke 24:36)

Although there are two other possible sites, this one at Qubeibeh is considered the most likely. There is also a lot of earlier history about Emmaus. Roman armies camped here on their way to Jerusalem and Judas Maccabee defeated the Seleucid army here in 165 B.C.

Early Christians built a succession of churches, with the mosaic floors still surviving. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Crusaders built a small church here with massive walls over the ruins of an earlier Byzantine basilica. Today these ruins are part of Canada Park and a hostel.

# CHAPTER 3

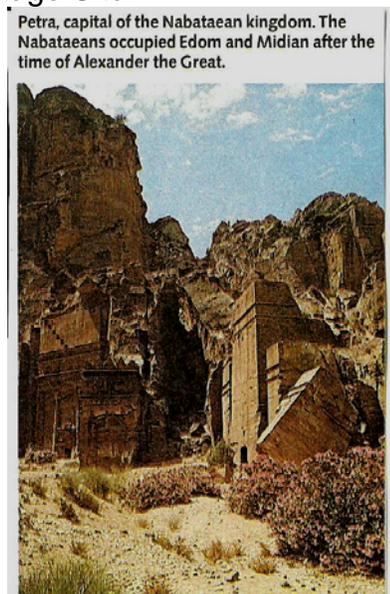
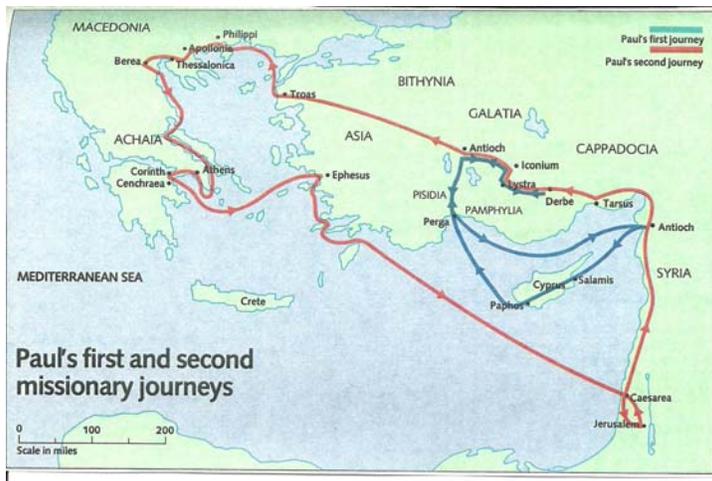
## EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY

The oldest writings in the New Testament are the letters of Apostle Paul, a converted Jewish Pharisee from Tarsus, who traveled about 10,000 miles to tell the good news of Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. A summary of his missionary journeys (46-60 A.D.) will help visualize the sites mentioned in Scripture. His journeys didn't begin until about eleven years after his conversion in about 35 A.D. however he had preached before starting his missionary journeys.

About five years after the resurrection of Jesus, Saul (later Paul) had been converted while traveling to Damascus to round-up Christians for trial. This key turning-point event happened when he was struck by a blinding light that temporarily blinded him and he heard a voice speak out, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5)

Paul waited three years after his conversion before returning to Jerusalem. The Christians greeted him initially with suspicion but they finally accepted him, with the urging of their respected Barnabas. After this, he preached about ten years in the eastern Mediterranean region. He narrowly escaped irate Jews in Damascus, who considered him a traitor. He then preached about two more years in the Arabian kingdom of the Nabateans. They were a wealthy people with their capital, Petra, in present day Jordan, who had established caravan routes through the desert, bringing expensive items from the east to the Mediterranean coast.

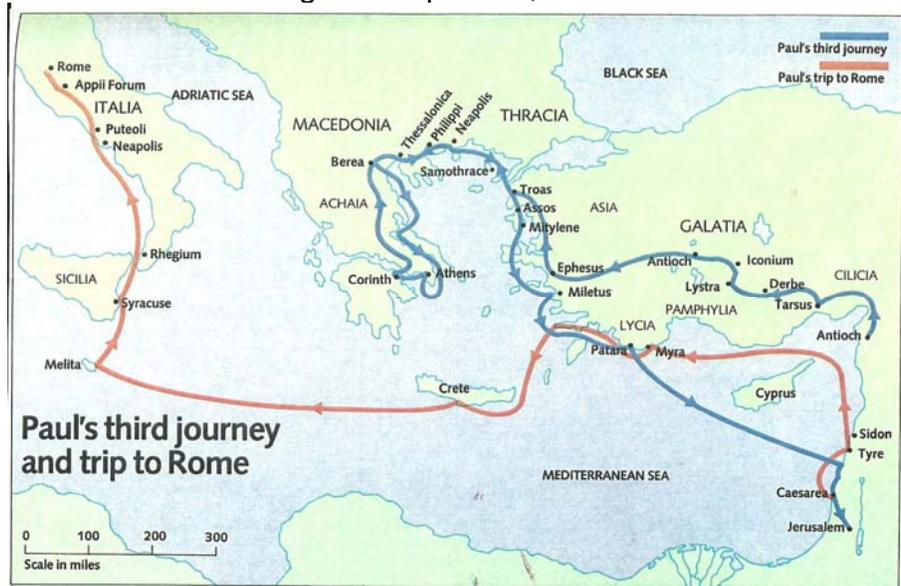
At this site, deep inside a desert gorge, appear a colonnaded street, large temples dedicated to various gods and even a 3,000 seat Greek-style theater. Most spectacular are the rock-cut tombs--miles of them with facades cut to create the illusion of three-dimensional buildings. That site was rediscovered in 1812 and is now designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Petra.

Paul went on his first missionary journey (46-48), when the Antioch Church in Syria sent him and Barnabas to synagogues on the island of Cyprus and then to the regions of Pamphylia, Pisidia and Lyconia. The Gentiles were more receptive than the Jews, who often became violent by driving him out of Antioch in Pisidia, threatening him with stoning in Iconium, and nearly killing him in Lystra.

He launched his second journey (Acts 15:39 and 18:22) during 49-52 with a new companion, named Silas. They revisited the churches Paul had planted on his first trip and pushed onward to the western tip of Asia Minor and over into Europe. There, he traveled through Macedonia and Greece, establishing churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth. He spent a year and a half in Corinth before traveling on to Ephesus, Jerusalem and Antioch in Syria.



On his third journey (Acts 18:23 and 21:17) during 52-57, Paul preached in central Asia Minor where he spent three years in Ephesus, revisited Macedonia and Greece, and returned to Syria. Then, as he was returning to Jerusalem, he was arrested on the Jewish false charge of defaming the temple. He was imprisoned first (Acts 28:30) in Caesarea (58-60) and was then taken to Rome for trial as a Roman citizen. While there the first time, he was held under house arrest (60-61) with limited freedom and released after the trial. About 6 years later he was again imprisoned, but this time he was chained in prison and executed the following year. (2 Tim. 1:16-17)

Paul's activity during the 6 years between the two periods of Roman imprisonment is unknown based on the New Testament. On the assumption that there are hints in Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus that they were written during this time, Paul may have possibly resumed travel to such places as Ephesus, Crete, Corinth and Neapolis. If so, what were the circumstances that brought him back to Rome again and why didn't Luke or others mention it? Luke's book of Acts was completed after that time. Post New Testament tradition is based on other non-canon writings such as the following:

1 Clement 5 speaks about Paul's death after he had given testimony in the west. The Muratorian Canon indicates Paul left Rome after his first imprisonment

and went to Spain. The Acts of Peter 1:3 says that he went back to Rome after his first imprisonment release. Eusebus states that Paul was beheaded by Nero in Rome.

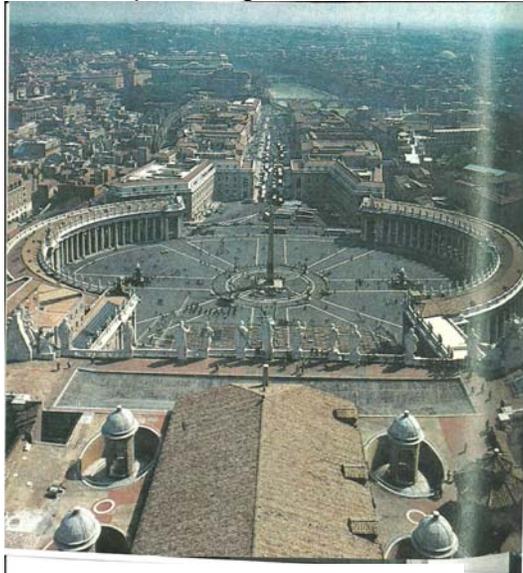
## Rome:

In December 1975, before visiting Israel, I visited a number of sites in Rome associated with early Christianity. They include the following:

1. The Mamertine Prison site at the base of the Capitoline Hill, where both Paul and Peter were confined before their execution by Nero before 68 A.D. Paul likely wrote 2 Timothy from here during his second imprisonment in Rome.
2. The Arch of Titus in the Forum, showing Jewish captives being paraded in Rome from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
3. The Rome Coliseum, where Christians went to their death as Roman entertainment.
4. The Apian Way, the paved road along which Paul and Peter would likely have entered Rome.
5. St. Peter's Basilica, in Vatican City, was one of the first churches built by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. over the traditional site of Peter's grave. In 1950, Pope Pius XII announced that archaeological excavations had confirmed Paul's remains under the altar!

The current structure was completed in 1626. I climbed its long circular Stair case to the top of the basilica dome Cupola for a cityscape view of Rome, similar to that in the photo below, as well as a view of the Vatican area in the other direction.

There is an entry door on the right front of the basilica, known as the Porta Santa, that I was very fortunate to enter since it is normally sealed shut except during a "Year of Jubilee".



View from top of St. Peter's in Rome.

The Roman Forum viewed from the Capitoline Hill, Rome.



The Roman Forum from Capitaline Hill in Rome.

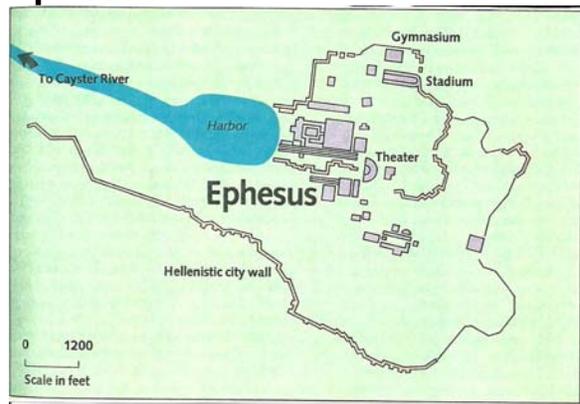
## Antioch:

Antioch, on the Orontes River in Syria, was where believers in Christ were first called Christians. It was founded by Seleucus 1 Nicator 312-280 B.C. as one of 16 that he founded, including another Antioch in the province of Galatia at Pisidia.

In Paul's day, Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. Its suburb of Daphne was known for its low morals. Excavations since 1932, at the present-day site of Antakivech, have revealed churches from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and buildings with gorgeous floor mosaics.

Paul left and returned to here, on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:4 and 14:28) to the Island of Cyprus, and on to several cities in southern Asia Minor. His second trip was a much longer one, which started from here and continued overland to Troas and beyond.

## Ephesus:



The theatre, Ephesus; site of the assembly mentioned in Acts 19.



Ephesus amphitheater.

This was the center of Paul's missionary work. He visited here on his second and third journeys, maintaining close ties to the Christians. Toward the end of his ministry, he left Timothy to care for them.

The history of archaeological research here is fairly recent--with the British Museum starting in 1863 but not finding much beyond the temple pavement. In 1898, German Otto Benndorf founded the Austrian Archaeological Institute which plays a leading role there today. I have seen finds from this site in the British Museum.

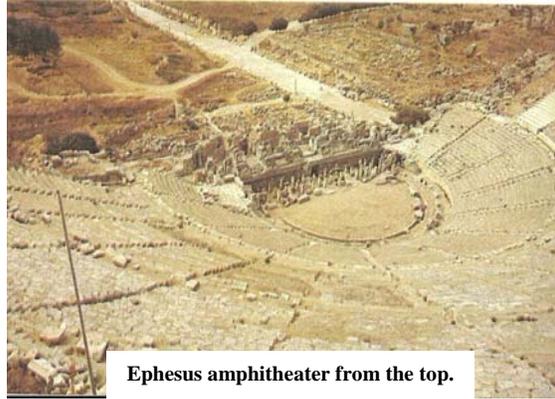
In Paul's day this wealthy port city, at the mouth of the Cayster River, was one of three top cities of the east, along with Alexandria and Antioch. By the medieval period, however, silt from the river had extended to the coastline so far to the

west that the city ceased being a port and was abandoned. Because of this desertion the site is open for excavation. Only a small part has been completed but it is one of the most magnificent ruins of the ancient world.

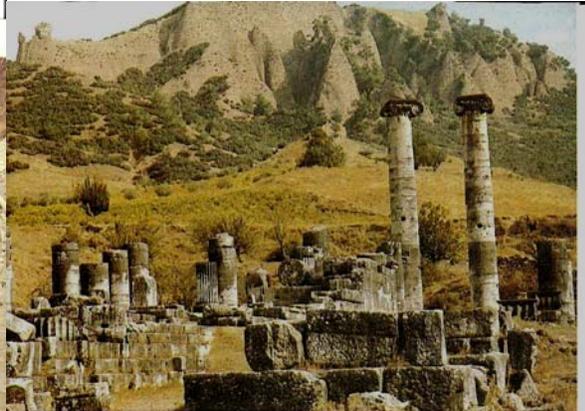
Some of the main tourist attractions are:

**The 2,500 seat amphitheater** has a view below looking down Harbor Street toward the silted harbor. Paul was prevented from speaking here due to a tumultuous protest.

Jesus viewed from the top of the theatre, towards the harbour. Paul reminded the Corinthians of the opposition he met in Ephesus.



Ephesus amphitheater from the top.



The Temple of Artemis, Sardis. Artemis was the patroness of virginity.

Sardis Temple of Artemis.

**The Temple of Artemis**, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world but now has only one partial column left standing, after being sacked by the Goths in 262 A.D. I have seen fragments of its frieze in the British Museum. This was a sacred site for over 1,200 years before becoming the center of controversy between pagans and the early Christians. There were also several other Roman-era pagan temples and shrines such as:

**The Celsus Library**, one of the great libraries of the ancient world, was built after Paul's time in 115-125 A.D.

**The Agoras** (two public squares) One was near the harbor and the site of numerous shops. The other was the **Civic Agora**, which was perhaps also the location of the Temple to Augustus.

**Many other attractions** were also built after Paul's time.

## **Pergamum:**

This site is located in Turkey on the Aegean Sea about 60 miles north of



Pergamum columns.

Smyrna. In Paul's time, it was considered the site of "Satan's throne", (Rev. 12-13) with its center of idolatry and demon--controlled religion, practiced in splendid temples to Zeus, Athena, Apollo and Esculapius (the Greek god of healing).

Germany now has the archaeological finds which Hitler had incorporated as the podium

theme in Nuremburg, from which he had addressed tens of thousands and had reviewed mass torch-light parades in the mid-1930s. I stood there in his footsteps in 2010 and sensed those world-shaking satanic developments that led to WW II

and the holocaust. I wasn't aware of that Nuremburg connection with Pergamum until documented by the *700 Club* program.

**Corinth:** Paul stayed here for 18 months, working as a tent maker and living with his fellow tentmakers, Aquila and his wife Pricilla (Acts 18:11). Paul wrote his letters to the Romans from here. The Corinth of Paul's time was only a century old, but it was then the capital of the province and considerably larger



Corinth canal.



Corinth, looking toward the temple of Aphrodite on the hill.

than Athens. The ancient Corinth was founded in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and became the richest port and largest city in ancient Greece until it was destroyed in 146 B.C. by Roman General Lucius Mummius and finally again destroyed by earthquakes.

The prosperity of the original city was due to its strategic location in the narrowest part of the isthmus which connected mainland Greece to southern Greece (the Peloponnesus), where unloaded small ships could be dragged across along a five-foot wide rock-cut track. Later, a deep-cut canal, four miles long, was finally completed in 1893. That was where Nero had attempted it, using possibly 6,000 young Jewish slaves, who had been captured in Galilee during the Jewish war.

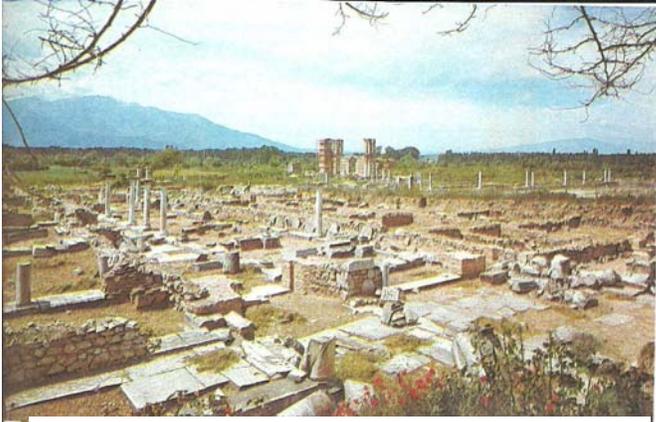
Some of the main attractions are:

**The Acropolis of the ancient city** overlooks the city from a high rocky hill. It was highly fortified during the Middle Ages. Nothing remains there of the fabled temple to Aphrodite that had a claimed 1,000 prostitutes. But remains of the Fortification, which was built on the earlier foundations, is still visible from the western side. At the previously mentioned canal, which saved 200 miles of sailing around the isthmus, I was surprised to look down into a very impressive deep rock-cut, especially considering that the earliest portion was done with crude tools.

**The famous Berma**, on which the Roman consul held court, was where Paul had to defend himself before proconsul Gallio.

**The Temple of Apollo**, where one can look at the few remaining columns and contemplate Paul, confronting that religious culture.

**The Agora**, where there are ruins of arches and entry-ways to shops.



Philippi.

### **Philippi:**

Pauls' missionary work in Europe began here. A theater, from Paul's time, exists here and also a stone crypt is near the forum, which locals claim to be where Paul was jailed. In 359 B.C., Philip of Macedonia had seized the gold mines near the site, fortified the city wall, drained the nearby marshes, constructed a theater, increased the city's size and changed its

name from Krenides to his name. In Paul's time, this was essentially a Roman city in Greece with Latin as the common language.

### **Colossae:**

Paul's close fellow minister Epaphrus, a Colossae native, established the Christian Church here. It is located in the Roman province of Asia Minor at the southern end of the Lycus River about 120 miles east of Ephesus in today's Turkey.

The site is currently occupied so it has not yet been excavated. The historian, Herodotus, in 480 B.C., referred to it as the great city of Phygia, standing on the important trade route from Ephesus to the Euphrates River. It had been visited by the Persian King Xerexs in 401 B.C. and by Cyrus the Younger in 401 B.C.

### **Thessalonica:**

Founded in 315 B.C. as a military and commercial port on the Aegean Sea, it became the capital of the Macedonian province in 146 B.C. It had both a large Roman and sizable Jewish population. Few remains of this ancient city have been found because today's city covers the site. However, a Roman forum was unearthed and I have seen a first century A.D. arch from there in the British Museum.

### **Athens:**

I have visited Athens several times and stood in the vicinity of where Paul brought Christianity to Athens in 54 A.D. as he spoke on Mars Hill (Aeopagus), located below the Acropolis. He began by referring to the altar there dedicated to the "unknown god". Although a monument dedicated to Paul's sermon is there, the actual site remains uncertain.

### **Greece: The prehistoric period, beginning with the Minoan and Mycenaean empires.**

I spent three weeks in 1992, visiting my daughter Michele's family on the island of Crete, the largest of the Greek islands, where her husband was

stationed at Souda Bay as a Navy chaplain. Titus was left here by Paul to organize churches.



The harbor at Sitia, Crete where Titus was left to organize churches.

While there, I toured and studied the ancient Minoan civilization archaeological site at Knossos and various WW II battle sites, where Australian and New Zealand troops were defeated by the invading Germans.

The first great civilization in the area was the Minoans who are considered the forerunner of today's Greece. Eventually, that civilization disappeared by about

1000 B.C. after declining due to a catastrophic volcanic eruption about 1640 B.C. on the nearby island of Thera (today's Santorini).

Around 1400 B.C. the Mycenaean Empire rose to prominence, with its heavily fortified capital city of Mycenae, located on the northeastern part of the Peloponnesian peninsula. I particularly recall the stone Lion Gate entry and the large buried dome building that are outstanding studies in ancient building methods. This empire in-turn collapsed by 1150 B.C., attributed mainly to changes in military strategy and weaponry.

For the next several hundred years, Greece was immersed in a dark age, with settlements being isolated due to poverty and the rugged, mountainous terrain that separated Greece from her neighbors.

### **Qumran:**



Our group looking looking into the Qumran site.



Looking from the Qumran site toward the hill where the scrolls were found.



The caves.

The 2,000 year-old Dead Sea scrolls came to light in the spring of 1947 when a local Bedouin shepherd found the first seven of them in two clay jars, as he was searching for a missing goat among the caves in a cliff overlooking the Dead Sea. A few weeks later, he sold them to an antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, named Kando,

who quickly sold four of them to a representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. He contacted professor Sukenik, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who bought the other three. He received them with considerable difficulty because it was during the period when Israel was about to fight the Arabs to become a new independent Jewish state. Refer to Chapter 6 for more about that period.



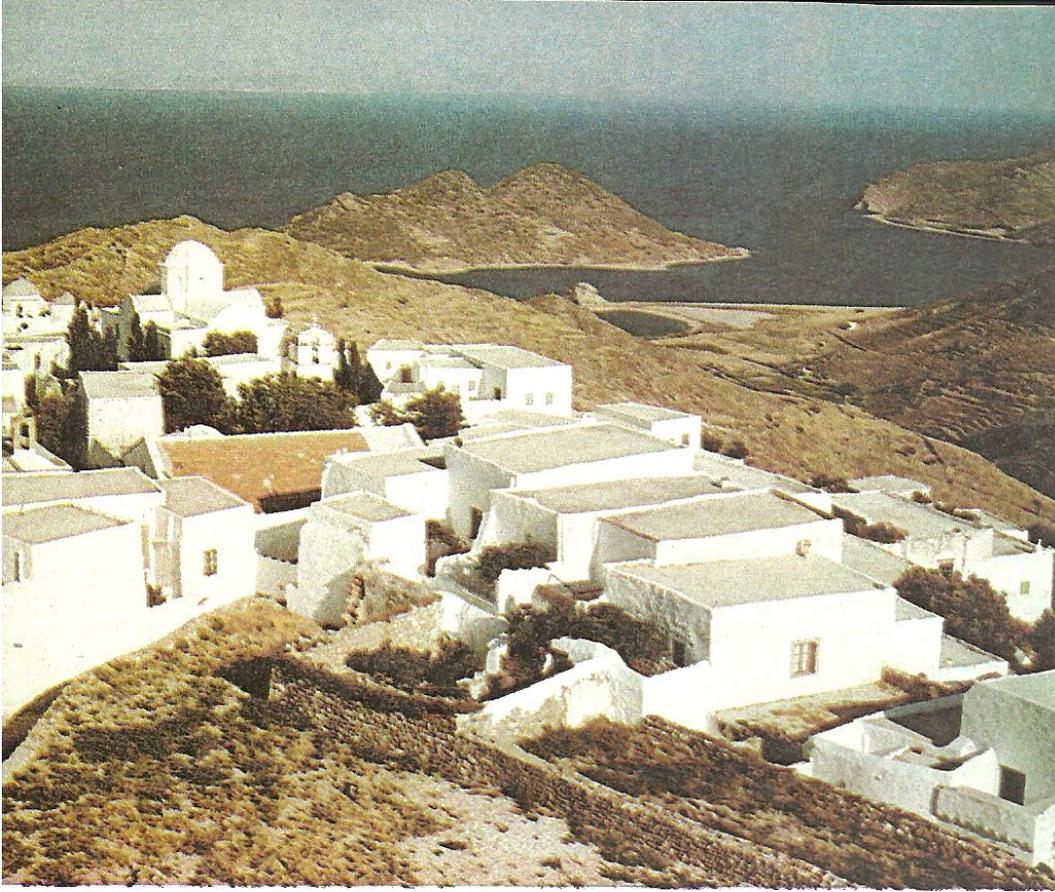
The Dead Sea Scrolls are in the domed Shrine of the Book. The Knesset is in the background.

Approach to the Shrine of the Book.

The content of these first seven scrolls was first published worldwide in 1951 by two separate institutions. One of the three bought by Sukenik is about half of the book of Isaiah which matches very closely with our modern printed editions. The second scroll is called the Thanksgiving Hymns which are a collection of hymns in praise of God, somewhat similar to the book of Psalms in the Bible. The third one is called the War Scroll and describes the coming conflict between the sons of light and the sons of darkness to usher-in the messianic age. The community relied on revelations given to the “Teacher of Righteousness” who had been persecuted by the Jerusalem authorities for his unorthodox beliefs.

Unlike the Qumran community, the early Christians did not withdraw into the desert. Instead they remained within the Jewish communities and reached out to the Gentiles as well, telling about the good news of the gospel of Jesus.

The content of the other set of four scrolls is much different. One is a complete manuscript of all 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah, but the wording and spelling differs remarkably from our later medieval copies. The second scroll is called the Community Rule, which governed the community’s day-to-day life. The third one is a commentary on the book of Habakkuk. The fourth one is very brittle to open and read but is in Aramaic and retells portions of the book of Genesis.



The Island of Patmos, seen from the Monastery of St John; the site of John's exile.

The general consensus is that a community of Jews, known as the Essenes, lived at this nearby site of Qumran and hid their scrolls before fleeing from the Romans shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and never returned. The Jewish patriots, holding out at Masada, killed themselves there three years later rather than being captured.

Apostle John did his writing on the Greek Island of Patmos. The Monastery of St. John is on the site of his exile.

John was exiled.



## CHAPTER 4

# JEWISH /ARAB TURMOIL

The prime source of this complicated Jewish/Arab history is from *Israel at the Crossroads* by Network News columnist, David Dolan. He left his home town of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1980 to live in an Israeli kibbutz and has been broadcasting from there since 1982. In 1975 and 1981, I visited many of the places he mentions, so I can readily relate to what he has written.

I will cover only the period to 1945 when the UN acknowledged the Nation of Israel but not yet a Palestinian home-land. The initial boundary lines have remained in a state of flux ever since and have contributed to unrest throughout the Middle East.

Warfare has been ever-present since A.D.135 when the Romans vanquished the Jewish army that revolted against Emperor Hadrian's hated rule of Judea. The Romans relocated the surviving Jews out of Jerusalem and renamed the city "Aelia Capitolina" where they built a temple to the pagan god Jupiter. This was on the site of the Jewish temple, which Emperor Titus had destroyed 65 years earlier. They also renamed Judea "Syria Palaestina", anglicized as "Palestine" to erase any Jewish connection to the land that the God of Israel calls His own-- however Hadrian's successors allowed a Jewish mini-state to exist in Galilee for several more centuries. The ruling Sanhedrin was then re-established and Jewish religious studies flourished. After the Romans adopted Christianity in the fourth century, synagogues in Galilee were burned by some Christians, who were protected by the state.

After the Roman Empire was divided late in the fourth century, Eastern Byzantine rulers stepped-up persecution of the Jews and Emperor Justinian tried to force remaining Jews to convert to Christianity. The result was that many fled east to Babylon in Mesopotamia which then rapidly became the center of Jewish life and learning.

Many Jews remained in the Holy Land though and more joined them during peaceful periods--growing to 43 Jewish communities in the sixth century, 12 communities along the coast and 31 in Galilee and the Jordan Valley. Despite continued Byzantine persecution, many Jews remained to see Arab-Muslim warriors push out the Byzantine Empire in 638. The new Islamic rulers knew the importance of Jerusalem to Christians and Jews and were fairly tolerant until the Crusaders were defeated five centuries later. The Muslims made it clear that their religion was superior and intended to rule Jerusalem until Allah's judgment day. They completed their shrine, the Dome of the Rock, in 691 with inscriptions from the Koran, ridiculing Christian belief in the deity of Jesus.

The Holy Land was then ruled from 661 by Umayyad Arab Muslims, based in Damascus until 750. Then, the non-Arab Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad ruled for the next century--until a Turkish governor of Egypt defeated that regime in 878 and ruled until Umayyad recaptured Jerusalem again in 904.

The next century was a continuous struggle for the Holy Land. For instance, Egyptian princes overthrew Umayyad rule in 934. Then 25 years later the Fatimid Caliphs of Cairo defeated their Baghdad rivals and began to rule. Byzantine leaders took advantage of these constant Muslim internal battles to invade in 970 but were defeated in 976. Just prior to the First Crusade, Seljuk Turks conquered the land in 1070 and held it for 10 years.

As the centuries progressed under one Muslim rule after another, many local Christians and some Jews converted to Islam to improve their standing. Islam was not the majority religion until the large-scale slaughter of local Christians at the end of the crusades.

Pope Urban's First Crusade forces arrived to throw-out the Muslim "infidels" in 1096. Many Jews, aware of the growing persecution of their brethren in Europe, helped the Muslims and were killed along with the Muslims by the victorious Crusaders.



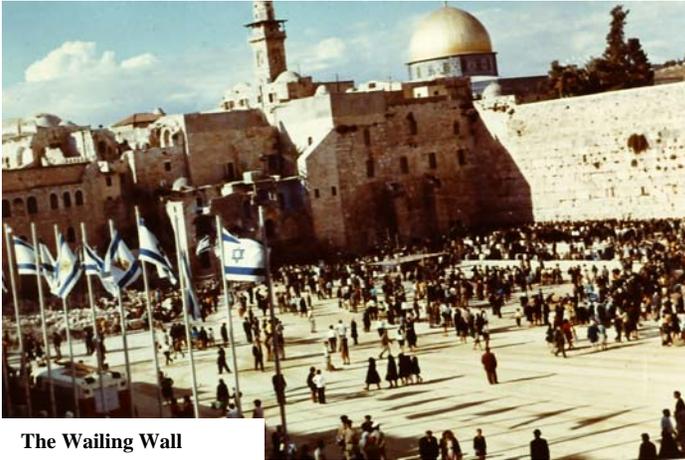
Horns of Hattin.

The Muslims, under the capable Saracen leader Saladin, defeated the Crusader Templars in the major battle on The Horns of Hattin (near the village of Hittin) on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1187 and Islamic rule was reestablished in Jerusalem. The thirsty Templars had become trapped and annihilated on top of this 100 ft. high extinct volcanic twin peaked hill about 6 miles northwest of Tiberias, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Pope's armies subsequently retreated to the coastal plain, where they eventually suffered their final expulsion in 1291 when Acre fell to the Turkish Mamelukes.

As Christians and Muslims fought each other, Mongol forces from Asia swept into the area and sacked Jerusalem twice--in 1244 and 1290--and launched a full-scale invasion in 1299. They were finally defeated by the Muslims in 1303.

Over the next several centuries, the land was ruled from either Damascus or Cairo by various rulers, known as the Mamelukes. They were mostly descendants of Turkish or Cirassian slaves who had settled in one of those cities. They frequently fought each other and kept the land from recovering.

The area was conquered yet again in 1516 by the rapidly expanding Turkish-Muslim Ottoman Empire. So Jerusalem was once again ruled from the ancient city of Constantinople, now renamed Istanbul. At this time there were about 30 Jewish communities, living mostly around the northern towns of Safed and Tiberias.



The Wailing Wall

The Ottomans, whose renowned leader, Suliman the Magnificent, built the current walls of Jerusalem's Old City, treated the Christians fairly well--although most of his successors didn't.

During the second century of the Ottoman rule, a man by the name of Shabbetai Zvi, proclaimed in 1665 that he was the Jewish Messiah. By the next year, many thousands from all over

Europe and North Africa prepared to go to the Holy Land. When he went to Istanbul to lay his claim before Ottoman leaders though, they ordered him to convert to Islam or die. He chose to convert, to the dismay of his followers around the world.

Many of the twenty thousand Jews in the holy town of Safed were massacred by local Muslim officials in 1660 before order was restored by the Turkish ruler. It happened again in 1799 when a sadistic Albanian-born Muslim called "The Butcher" gained power in the region and ordered the beheading of any who displeased him.

Napoleon tried to get Jewish support that same year when he captured the coastal town of Jaffa and continued to the port of Acre, just north of Haifa. But his dreams were shattered when Turkish forces from Syria, with the aid of the British, withstood his siege of that port.

In 1831, Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali conquered the Holy Land, spearheaded by his son Ibrahim, with little opposition from local citizens because the Turkish rule had become unpopular. He had previously gained control of Egypt when French and British forces withdrew. But Russia feared that a new vigorous ruler would occupy Istanbul and sent forces to stop the Egyptian northward advance. Eventually, Britain also became concerned and bombed Ali's positions in Acre and other coastal towns until his forces were finally pushed out in 1840.

A severe earthquake struck the Galilee region in 1837, taking the lives of perhaps half of the ten thousand citizens at Safed and about a third of the twenty thousand citizens at Tiberius. Visitors to the Holy Land in the 1800s described it as desolate, sparsely populated and lawless.

Throughout the years of Ottoman occupation, a steady stream of Jews trickled into the land of their forefathers and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, Jews were becoming the largest group in Jerusalem.

The Zionist Movement began in southern Europe. A rabbi, named Yehuda Alkalay in the Serbian town of Semlin, started drawing up plans in the 1850s for a large scale Jewish migration to Zion. It created considerable excitement among the millions of Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia, who longed to live free of

persecution by starting a new life in the Promised Land. Between 1880 and 1903 about twenty five thousand went with the support of Christian groups throughout Britain.

Then Viennese-born journalist, Theodor Herzl, who had covered the treason trial of Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish army officer in Paris, became a fiery advocate for a Jewish state and wrote a book that became the main inspiration for this movement. In 1897, he convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland to establish a national home in Palestine. Fifty years later, in 1947, the United Nations voted to set-up a Jewish national home there, which the God of Israel had given to Abraham nearly four thousand years ago.

# CHAPTER 5

## ANCIENT WARFARE

While writing about this continuing conflict--being a WW II Marine combat veteran and writer of military history--I have found warfare of the ancient world very interesting. Warfare is the theme of Psalms 144:5-10.

Visiting and reading further about the archaeological sites, especially in Israel, I visualized the many periods of warfare that left the remains of the final configuration of structures for historical reanalysis. Refer to Chapter 1 that lists 22 battles fought near the strategically located site of Megiddo. It also refers to WW II Russian tanks being used by Egypt during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, as compared to using chariots during the Biblical Exodus.

Chariots, carrying a driver and an archer, were not used extensively until about 1720 B.C. by the Hyksos and perfected by the Egyptians and Philistines. The Iron Age revolutionized military technology with massed armies of heavy infantry, holding ranks to withstand and rout the fearful chariot charges.

A prime example of chariot use was at the battle of Kadesh in 1275 B.C. along the Orontes River in western Syria where Pharaoh Ramesses II, with about 2,000 chariots, fought the Hittites with about 3,500. It ended in a stand off and an eventual peace treaty, with Kadesh remaining a Hittite possession.

Earliest warfare involved crude weapons of wood and stone. Horses were of limited battle-use until invention of the stirrup to hold the rider firmly in the saddle while wielding his weapon. Battles were often brief, when one side lost stamina to maintain face-to-face combat and were routed or fled.

The Israelites relied primarily on light infantry, moving in loose fast-moving formations with little armor and using projectile weapons such as stones and arrows. (Judges 20:15-16). Ancient armies were often poorly trained citizen-soldiers such as during the Biblical Judges period but are well trained reserves in present-day Israel.

In contrast, the Greek hoplites (soldiers) of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. employed heavy infantry with full armor, holding a shield on their left side and a thrusting spear (pike) over six feet long in their right hand. They moved in large close phalanx formations, typically eight ranks deep with their spears lowered to form a wall of spear points.

When opposing phalanxes confronted one another they advanced until shield butted against shield and then they pushed with all their weight, while those in the front ranks, wielding their spears over-arm, stabbed at the enemy. In comparison, centuries later the Roman legions used a short sword rather than the long pikes and were very mobile, as well as having the weight and impact of heavy infantry.

Alexander the Great and Hannibal combined heavy and light infantry with cavalry, even including elephants. They were masters at using their heavy infantry as a solid base, while employing cavalry to outflank an opponent. Elephants had been used in Indian armies for about 700 years. Aside from

inspiring terror, elephants were fast and unstoppable on the charge with several archers riding on a canopied saddle.

Between 334 and 323 B.C., Alexander had created an empire all the way to India but, when he died in Babylon of a fever or possible poisoning at age 33, the empire was divided among his generals. This led to numerous future battles between them.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War between Rome and Carthage the Carthaginian General Hannibal crossed the Pyrenees and Alps from Iberia into northern Italy in 218 B.C. Two years later, his army killed about 80,000 Romans compared to losing about 8,000 in the battle of Cannae, about 200 miles southeast of Rome. That was one of the most costly day's fighting in the history of warfare, leaving Rome threatened by siege. Hannibal decided against a siege of Rome though, with the final consequence that Carthage was later destroyed by the Romans in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War.

Typically, city walls were breached, like at Masada, by building a siege ramp for access of a siege tower. How long a city could persevere depended on stored food and access to an underground water supply, such as Gihon spring at Jerusalem.

The details of Assyria's King Sennacherib's 701 B.C. siege of Lachish about 15 miles west of Hebron is well known because of a relief found on his palace walls in Ninevah. He first encircled the city with troops and sent archers forward with powerful composite bows, accompanied by a shield-bearer, to provide cover for engineers as they tried mining under the walls foundation and building a ramp to move a siege engine into position to attack the top of the wall. This structure was a wooden tower on wheels, manned by archers shooting over the wall into the city while one or two battering rams punched an access through the wall.

Archaeological evidence confirms the resulting carnage. In contrast the Assyrians failed to take Jerusalem by assault and stopped after a lengthy blockade, probably because of illness in their camp. By the end of Sennacherib's reign, however, they returned and incorporated Judea into their empire.

Jewish historian General Josephus wrote in his *Jewish Wars* about the final destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 from his perspective of having been on the staff of Emperor Titus after he had surrendered three years earlier to the Romans in Judea. I was surprised to learn that the conflict actually started in 66 A.D., with the Jews considering themselves victorious in the first two Roman invasion attempts. Two principle themes are: the Romans misjudged how to best resolve Jewish religion concerns and the Jews fought among themselves as the city was under siege.

## CHAPTER 6

# PRESENT-DAY ISRAEL

On November 2, 1917, during the final months of WW I, the milestone Balfour Declaration Statement was issued by British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour to the Zionists leaders, favoring a national home for the Jewish people. Soon after this, Sir Edmund Allenby drove the last Turkish soldiers out of Jerusalem, ending many centuries of Muslim control.

In 1920, Arab discontent developed into riots and the resulting formation of a Jewish defense organization known as the Haganah. In 1921, Jewish settlements further east were then banned in that two-thirds portion of Palestine, now named Trans-Jordan, with Abdullah Hussien enthroned as king. Further to the east, the British also created the Arab state of Iraq with Abdullah's brother, Faisal Hussien, enthroned as king.

In 1922, the League of Nations gave the British the mandate for overseeing Jewish settlement in what was then referred to as "Palestine" but later it became known as Israel, Judea and Samaria (West Bank), the Gaza Strip and to the east bank of the Jordan River up to the city of Amman. France received the mandate for the Syria and Lebanon areas. About 11% of the population at that time were Jewish and grew to about 33% by the end of WW II.

After the war, there was an elaborate process of displaced people trying to go home. Tens of millions filled Germany and Western Europe, including many Jews who had escaped the Nazis. Hitler's Final Solution had involved killing six million Jews and some others.

Our country, Britain, and the Jews themselves had varied opinions about the disposition of the Jews. President Truman's policy backed the founding of Israel as a new home. The British didn't want such an inflow of Jews that would undermine their difficult mandate administration, due to Arab opposition. Instead, the Jews should seek a new future in Europe but this view wasn't shared by many Jews..

The arrival of some 200,000 Jews was motivated by the Zionist movement but Israel's three main institutions—the army, the kibbutz movement and the trade unions--had not made adequate plans to accommodate them. So the disappointed new arrivals were left to rebuild their lives much on their own.

In 1947, after difficulties trying to limit the Jewish inflow, the British withdrew from the mandate after they determined that it was impossible to arrive at a position that was acceptable to both Arabs and Jews. Then on November 29, 1947, the newly created UN approved the partition plan which sought to divide and administer the area into two states—one Arab and one Jewish. The plan was accepted by the Jews but not the Arabs. Refer back to Chapter 3 about the Dead Sea scrolls being placed into scholarly hands during these troubled times.

On May 14, 1948, the day before the expiration of the British Mandate, the Jewish Agency proclaimed independence, naming their country Israel. The following day, the armies of four Arab countries-- Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq

---attacked Israel, starting the Arab-Israeli War which lasted one year. It ended with establishment of temporary borders, whereby Jordan annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem while Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip. About 700,000 Palestinian refugees were expelled or fled during the conflict. I saw one of those deserted villages near Jericho.

Israel was accepted as a member of the UN on May 11, 1949 but has had to continue defending itself from unhappy Egyptian and Arab neighbors. This precipitated the Six-Day War in 1949, in which Israel achieved a decisive victory and captured the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights.

My daughters, Kathie, Michele and Janet, visited Israel in 1972 as an extension of a three month tour in their Volkswagen camper throughout the UK and Europe. A year later, on October 6, 1973, the Syrian and Egyptian armies attacked as the Jews were observing Yom Kippur. Refer back to Chapter 1 about the massive tank battle. This conflict ended twenty days later on October 26<sup>th</sup>, with Israel successfully repelling them but receiving massive losses and resulting in the resignation of Prime Minister Golda Meir.

Finally in 1977, a few months before I visited Egypt, Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, had just made a trip to Israel and was the first Arab head of state to recognize Israel as a state. I was amazed to see the outward show of welcome to Americans everywhere I went, by their coming too close to our faces to tell us, "We like Americans". Israel then withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula.

After I visited Israel in 1981, Israel intervened in the Lebanese Civil War from 1982 to 1986 to prevent violence from spilling over the north Israel border. I had sat next to armed Israeli soldiers on the bus traveling near the border. Since then there have been various peace attempts such as the Oslo Accords, Camp David Accords, Scud missile attacks during the Iraq War, and the most recent incursion into Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

What is the prospect for a permanent peace in the Holy Land? The record shows nothing but continuous conflict with such ingrained ethnic animosities. According to the New Testament the end-times will bring on-stage a charismatic person with false promises of peace, eventually followed by the true Prince of Peace. Christians, of course, consider this to be the return of Jesus, as the Messiah. The Jews and Muslims both have opposing outcome perspectives that differ from those of the Christian faith. Surprisingly, even Christians theologically disagree in interpreting Bible scripture, such as Gen.12:2-3 and Deut.7:6, about whether today's nation of Israel should conditionally still be considered God's chosen people.

Our country has consistently supported Israel as the only democratically governed country in the region and has also provided heavy military support to Egypt, starting with President Sadat's peace with Israel. The other regional countries--except presently Iran and Syria--remain our strong allies in striving to control strife.



**A new generation  
posing for me.**



**Tel Aviv with ancient port of Jaffa in the foreground.  
The metropolitan area population is over 3.2 million.**