



Bible Geography

Political Geography of Palestine

I. IMPORTANT CITIES

A. Bethel

1. 12 miles north of Jerusalem
2. Originally called Luz (Genesis 28:19)
3. Abraham's encampment (Genesis 12:8; 13:3)
4. Name means "*house of God*"
5. Later called El-Bethel (Genesis 35:7); means "*the God of the house of God*"
6. Place of Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:10-22)
7. Taken by the children of Joseph (Judges 1:22-26)
8. One of the three places Samuel held court (1 Samuel 7:16); the other places being Gilgal and Mizpeh
9. One of the two places where Jeroboam set up a golden calf (1 Kings 12:28-33); the other being Dan in the north

B. Sodom

1. One of the five cities of the plain (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, Zoar) (Genesis 14:8)
2. Destroyed by fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24,28; Deuteronomy 29:23)
3. Referred to in the New Testament (Matthew 10:15; Romans 9:29; Jude 7; Revelation 11:8)

C. Gerar – (See Palestine Before Conquest map)

1. Ancient Philistine city
2. Ruled by Abimelech (a name which served as a title, like *Pharaoh*)
3. Visited by Abraham (Genesis 20)
4. Visited by Isaac (Genesis 26)

D. Beersheba – (See Palestine Before Conquest map)

1. Name means "*well of the oath*"
2. Located in southern Palestine about midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the southern tip of the Dead Sea
3. Place of an agreement between Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 21:31)
4. Residence of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 26:33)
5. Allotted to the tribe of Simeon (1 Chronicles 4:28 – see verse 24)



E. Hebron – (See Empire of David map)

1. Located between Beersheba and Jerusalem; about 20 miles from each
2. Other names
 - a. Kirjath-arba (Genesis 23:2; Joshua 14:15; 15:13)
 - b. Mamre (Genesis 13:18; 35:27)
 - c. Arbah (Genesis 35:27)
3. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived there (Genesis 13:18; 35:27)
4. Sarah was buried there (Genesis 23:17-20)
5. Joshua took it and Caleb retook it (Joshua 10:36-37; 12:10; 14:12)
6. David made it his royal residence (2 Samuel 2:1-4; 5:5; 1 Kings 2:11)
7. Joab killed Abner at its gate (2 Samuel 3:26-27, 30)
8. Absalom lived there (2 Samuel 15:10)
9. Chosen as one of the cities of refuge (Joshua 20:7)

F. Shechem

1. Located between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerezim north of Bethel and Shiloh
2. Other names
 - a. Sichem (Genesis 12:6)
 - b. Sychar (John 4:5)
 - c. Sychem (Acts 7:16)
3. Jacob lived there (Genesis 33:18)
4. One of the cities of refuge (Joshua 20:7)
5. Made Abimelech king for three years (Judges 9) *not the same as the Abimelech of Genesis
6. Rehoboam was made king here (1 Kings 12)
7. Claimed to be a religious center by the Samaritans (John 4:5,20-21)

G. Bethlehem

1. Name means “*house of bread*”
2. Five miles south of Jerusalem on the road to Hebron
3. Other names
 - a. Ephrath (Genesis 35:19; see 1 Samuel 1:1 (“an Ephrathite”))
 - b. Bethlehem Ephratah (Micah 5:2)
 - c. Bethlehem of Judaea (Matthew 2:1)
 - d. Bethlehem-Judah (1 Samuel 17:12)
 - e. City of David (Luke 2:4; John 7:42)
4. Given to the tribe of Judah (Judges 17:7)
5. Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel after Jephthah (Judges 12:8)
6. Elimelech and Boaz were Bethlehemites (Ruth 1:1-2; 2:1,4,11)
7. David was born and anointed there (1 Samuel 16:1-13)
8. David’s three heroes brought him water from its well (2 Samuel 23:15)
9. Christ was born here (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1)



H. Dothan – (See Palestine among the Tribes map)

1. About 11 miles north of Samaria
2. Joseph was taken as a slave here (Genesis 37:17)
3. Place of Elisha's vision (2 Kings 6:13)

I. Jericho

1. Name means "*place of fragrance*" or "*moon-city*"
2. Located on the wide plain northwest of the Dead Sea
3. Captured by Joshua (Joshua 6-7)
4. Given to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:21)
5. Rebuilt (1Kings 16:34; see Joshua 6:26)
6. Jesus restores sight to the blind (Mt.20:30; Mk.10:46)
7. Home of Zaccheus (Lk.19:1-8)

J. Cities of Refuge – (See Palestine among the Tribes map)

1. References (Deuteronomy 4:41-43; Numbers 35:6-29; Joshua 20:1-9)
2. Three west of the Jordan River
 - a. Kedesh in Galilee
 - b. Shechem in Mt. Ephraim
 - c. Hebron in Judah
3. Three east of the Jordan River
 - a. Bezer in the plain of Moab
 - b. Ramoth-gilead
 - c. Golan in Bashan

K. Levitical Cities

1. Mentioned in Numbers 35:1-8
2. Numbered 48 (this included the 6 cities of refuge)
3. They were scattered throughout Israel
4. They were home for the Levites

II. TRIBES OF ISRAEL

- A. Origin: From the Sons of Jacob (Genesis 29:31-35; 30:1-24; 35:16-20; 48:5)
- B. Jacob's Prophecy (Genesis 49:1-28)
- C. Moses' Blessing (Deuteronomy 33:1-29)
- D. The Tribes Numbered



1. At Mt. Sinai (Numbers 1)
2. Before the conquest (Numbers 26)
3. At the time of David's sin (2 Samuel 24:1-25; 1 Chronicles 21:1-28)

E. The Tribes Named

1. Reuben
2. Simeon
3. Levi
4. Judah
5. Issachar
6. Zebulun
7. Dan
8. Naphtali
9. Gad
10. Asher
11. Joseph
 - a. Ephraim
 - b. Manasseh
12. Benjamin

F. Their Land Allotted (Joshua 13-21)

1. Tribes on the east of Jordan
 - a. Reuben
 - b. Gad
 - c. Half tribe of Manasseh
2. Tribes scattered among Israel (Genesis 49:5-7)
 - a. Levi
 - b. Simeon (Joshua 19:1)
3. Tribes in the south
 - a. Judah
 - b. Benjamin
 - c. Original location of Dan
4. Middle tribes
 - a. Ephraim
 - b. Half tribe of Manasseh
5. Tribes of Galilee (Matthew 4:12-16)
 - a. Asher
 - b. Zebulun
 - c. Issachar
 - d. Naphtali
 - e. Second location of Dan