



Jordan River



Gen 13:10; Josh 3-4; 2 Kgs 2:6-8, 14, 5:9-14, 6:4-7;
Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22.



Jordan River



- ✎ Fed by four tributaries: (1) Hasbani River, (2) Banias River, (3) Dan River, and the (4) Iyyon Stream
- ✎ The river rises on the slopes of Mount Hermon and flows southward through northern Israel to the Sea of Galilee.
- ✎ From the Sea, it continues south before emptying into the Dead Sea.
- ✎ The Jordan River is more than 223 miles in length, but, because its course is meandering, the actual distance between its source and the Dead Sea is less than 124 miles.
- ✎ The diversion of river water by both Israel and Jordan has significantly diminished the Jordan's flow into the Dead Sea and has been a major factor in the considerable drop in the Dead Sea's water level since the 1960s.

Jordan River (Cont.)



- ✧ The Jordan is mentioned over 180 times in the Old Testament and 15 times in the New Testament. Here are some notable highlights:
 - ✧ First mentioned in Gen 13:10: Lot admires the land “like the garden of Yahweh.”
 - ✧ Joshua leads the children of Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land and sets up the memorial stones from the Jordan (Josh 3-4).
 - ✧ Elijah crosses the Jordan prior to his ascension (2 Kgs 2:6-8)
 - ✧ The river is prominent in Elisha’s miracles – the parting of the Jordan (2 Kgs 2:14), the healing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:9-14), and the floating ax head (2 Kgs 6:4-7).
 - ✧ John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).



Jordan River north of the Sea of Galilee (May 2022)



Jordan River from on top of the Dam at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee (June 2022)



Picture is from the northern part of the river near the Sea of Galilee. (January 2022)



Very popular baptismal site (January 2020)

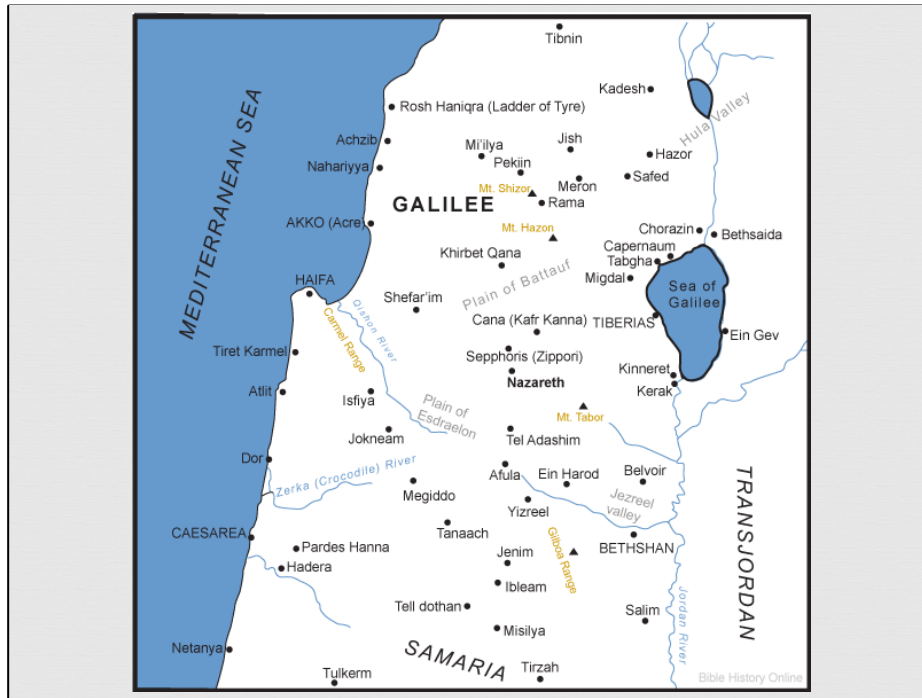


Jordan River Valley – Note the Jordan River on the left-and side of the picture (June 2022)

Bet-She'an



Judges 1:27; 1 Sam 31:8-13; 10:8-12; 1 Kgs 4:12



Bet-She'an



- ✧ Bet-She'an is located about five miles northeast of Mt. Gilboa along the Harod Brook, where the Jezreel Valley meets the Jordan Valley.
- ✧ During the Hellenistic period, the city spread out around the Tel, eventually encompassing 400 acres. During the Hellenistic Period, the city was included in the Decapolis under the name of Scythopolis ("city of the Scythians").
- ✧ Even though this Bet-She'an is mentioned in the Bible, most of the excavations today are from the Byzantine Period during the 4th and 5th centuries AD.

Bet-She'an (Cont.)



- ✧ The book of Joshua first mentions Bet-She'an as one of the cities of Manasseh.
- ✧ According to Judges 1:27, the city was still inhabited by Canaanites during the period of the judges.
- ✧ First Samuel records that after the Philistines killed Saul in battle at Mt Gilboa, they hung his body and those of his three sons on the walls of Bet-She'an and placed his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth (1 Sam 31:8-13). According to 1 Chronicles 10:8-12, the Philistines also hung Saul's head in the temple of Dagon.
- ✧ Bet-She'an eventually came under Israelite control, and according to 1 Kgs 4:12, it became one of King Solomon's administrative districts.



Feral cat in Bet-She'an (June 2022)



View of Bet-She'an toward the ancient Tel (June 2022)



Ancient amphitheater at Bet-She'an. An amphitheater was a complete oval arena and was used for sport (Usually gladiator fights to the death) – June 2022



Example of the “technology” used to move the giant stones used in the construction of Bet-She’an



Greek style theater in Bet She'an (June 2022)



Greek style theater in Bet She'an (June 2022)



Greek style theater in Bet She'an (June 2022)



Public toilets in Bet-She'an...just outside of the theater (June 2022)



This Tel is comprised of 20 strata dating back to 5th millennium BC. It is likely that within one of these strata is the wall where Saul's body was hung. Today, the only significant excavation on top of the Tel is a house of the Egyptian governor from the 12th century. (June 2022)



Row of shops / storefronts on an ancient street in Bet-She'an (June 2022)



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Fallen columns from the earthquake in 749 AD that destroyed the city. (January 2020)



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Palladius Street that was lined with columns and had an underground drainage “pipe” running under the street. (June 2022)



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Pool outside of the bathhouse (June 2022)



A bath house that includes 3 rooms (1) hot room or sauna (2) cold room (3) cool room for transition from sauna to cold. Note the remains of pillars made of mud bricks that were used to lift up the floor. Slaves would burn wood outside through arches to heat the sauna. This was a very large structure. (June 2022)



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A baptismal font on the back side of the bath house. The bathhouse site also functioned as a Byzantine church. (January 2022)



A road behind the bath house where you could see several layers or strata over the centuries. One of these layers contained intricate mosaics. (January 2022)



View of Bet-She'an from the top of the Tel (June 2022)



View across the Jordan Valley into the country of Jordan. (January 2020)

Jericho



Num 22:1, 26:3; Josh 8:2; 10:1, 28, 30; Judg 3:13;
1 Kgs 16:34; 2 Kgs 2; Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52;
Luke 18:35-43; 19:1-10

Jericho



- ✧ Jericho is located approximately 10 miles northwest of the Dead Sea.
- ✧ Area contains a spring, 'Ain es-Sultan, and is considered an oasis in the desert (thus, the designation, "city of the palm trees," Judg 3:13).
- ✧ Herod the Great built winter palaces in the ancient city of Jericho.
- ✧ In Genesis through Joshua, "Jericho" is primarily used as a geographical marker. Phrases such as "opposite Jericho," or "at Jericho" are found throughout the Bible.
- ✧ The book of Numbers uses the phrases frequently to designate the place of the second giving of the Law and the point where the Israelites will eventually cross the Jordan River (Num 22:1; 26:3).

Jericho (Cont.)



- ✧ Primarily known for its famous walls that “tumbled down” in Josh 6 at the blast of the horn and the sound of the Israelite battle cry. This was the first city defeated after the children of Israel entered the Promised Land. The campaign against Jericho created a reputation for the Israelites that became the standard by which subsequent campaigns would be described and measured...“just as he had done to Jericho and its king” (Josh 8:2; 10:1, 28, 30).
- ✧ Other occurrences of Jericho may be found in reference to a rebuilding of the site in the 10th century BC by Hiel the Bethelite (1 Kgs 16:34). The Bible also speaks of a prophetic guild located in Jericho (2 Kgs 2).
- ✧ Two gospel stories are set in Jericho or its surroundings: the healing of the blind man and the story of Zacchaeus’ encounter with Jesus (Matt 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43; 19:1–10).



Jericho is claimed as the oldest city in the world due to the archeological excavations.
(January 2020)



Excavation of a mud brick tower from 1950 to 1650 BC (Right Side) and a stone wall from 1650 to 1550 BC. Both of these would have been from before the time of Joshua. This tower and wall would have been under the walls that were destroyed by God. (January 2020)



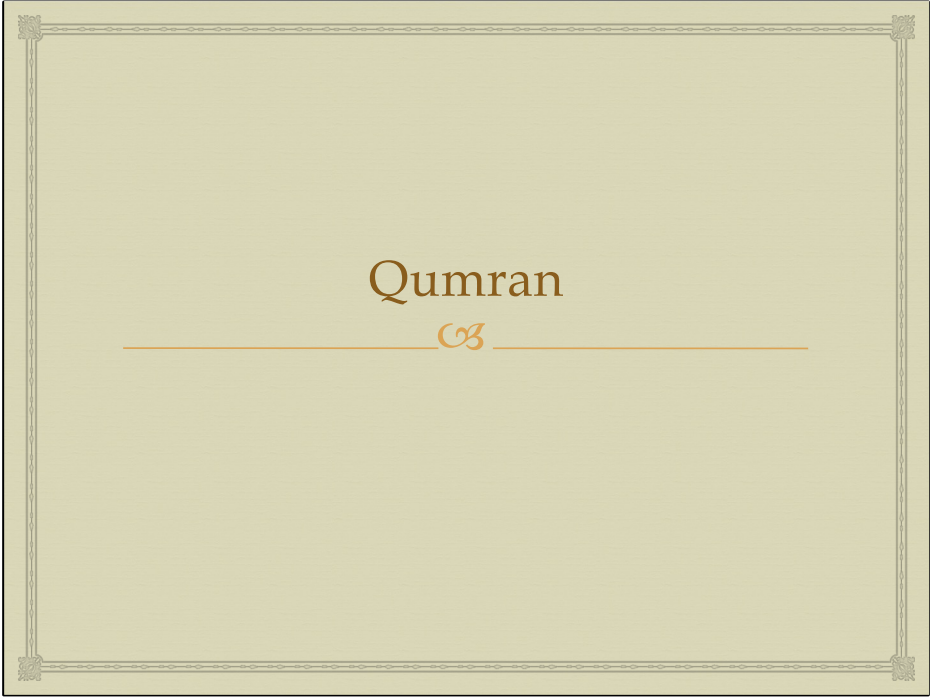
The original excavations in Jericho were done by Kathleen Kenyon, and that she had been unable to find the walls from Joshua's time (my belief is that this is because they were destroyed). She did however find a large, round tower and walls that she dated to 9,500 BC. This has led to Jericho being designed as the "Oldest City in the World." The tower is amazingly intact. (January 2020)



Mountain in the distance known as the “Mount of Temptation,” and is the traditional location of the temptation of Jesus (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-14). – January 2020



My dad and I riding a camel in Jericho (January 2020)



Qumran





Qumran



- ☞ Qumran was home of the Essenes during the time of Jesus, who were one of the three Jewish sects identified by Josephus.
- ☞ A group of scholars who left Jerusalem to setup a new community for themselves in Qumran with no contact to the larger Jewish world.
- ☞ Committed themselves to preserve the word of God. The scribes made meticulous copies with no mistakes. If any mistakes were made, the scroll would be buried because you cannot destroy the word of God.
- ☞ When the confrontation became intense between the Jews and Romans in 66 AD at the time of the first Jewish revolt, the Essenes placed their scrolls in jars and hid them in caves to protect them.
- ☞ When the Romans eventually destroyed the village, they didn't find the scrolls. They weren't found until almost 2000 years later.

Qumran (cont.)



- ✧ This is the site where many “Dead Sea Scrolls” were found beginning in 1947.
- ✧ Qumran is one of the most important archaeological sites, because the Dead Sea Scrolls contain fragments from the time of Jesus and they include representations from all books of the Old Testament, except for Esther and Nehemiah, including the entire book of Isaiah
- ✧ This discovery proves that the Old Testament we have today is essentially the same as what Jesus had during his time. The wordings / translations are very similar to what we have today.



View of the mountains at the north-end of the site (June 2022)



“Cave 1” at the top of the mountain at the northern end of the site where three Bedouin farmers found the first 8 clay jars in 1947 (Including the book of Isaiah). These farmers had no idea what they had found and sold them to a dealer in Jericho for \$16. (January 2020)



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Replicas of the original jars that were found in Cave 1. (January 2020)



“Cave 4” down in a valley at the southern end of the site where they later found 15,000 scroll fragments that made up 530 total scrolls in 1952. (January 2020)



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Climbing up the trail toward Cave 6 at Qumran (June 2022)



Ibex (Wild Goat) at Qumran (June 2022)



First century ritual bath (Mikveh) excavated in Qumran. A scribe would have to fully wash before writing, so there would have been a need for many baths (January 2020)



First century cistern at Qumran (January 2020)