

Mill Springs Baptist Church Wednesday Adult Elective series

THAT the WORLD MAY KNOW (Focus on the Family with Ray Vander Laan)

Spring/Summer 2012

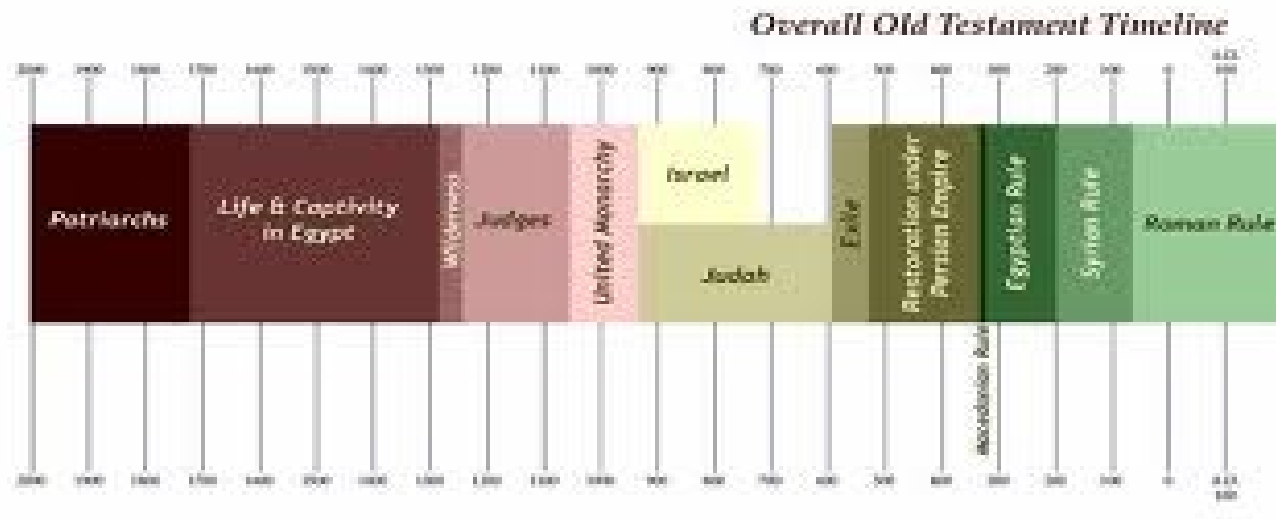
Volume 1 Crossroads of the World

Section 1 Standing at the Crossroads

There can be no doubt that God does want His people to influence His world. This is clear by the aggressive and loving marching orders given in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8. As we consider the progressive revelation of God given in the OT, it is interesting to note how He places people (not Christians at that time, mind you) in positions of influence (like Daniel, Joseph, Jonah, etc.). But it is also amazing how God used the geography of this world to facilitate that influence. Here is a good map of the OT world at the time of the conquest of Canaan. You will also find interesting articles and all scripture references at [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com).



We will begin by taking a look at our timeline below.



As you can see, our study will be centered on the time frame between 2000 – 1000 BC, the time of the ancients. It was a time when the seeds of great kingdoms had been planted. In the middle stood the focal city of our study, Gezer. And it's a very old Gezer too! Through the area of our study ran a great highway known as the **Via Maris** or the **Way of the Sea**. It was named as such because it connected the great Hamitic and Japhethic kingdoms of Assyria, Babylon and Persia from the northeast (generally Mesopotamia) and east ... to the Hamitic kingdom of Egypt to the southwest. Ol' Gezer was a central point on the Way of the Sea and like Megiddo (just up the road a piece) that we studied earlier, its control was essential to power in the region. Additionally, the city lay at the intersection of the Via Maris and the Jericho Road ... one of the only major east – west routes in the region. This was at the crossroads of the ancient world. Like Ray Vander Laan, I think that this was where God wanted His people to carry out His message to the world.

The Israelites, however, failed to carry out God's will to occupy it

Joshua 10

**33**Meanwhile, Hiram king of Gezer had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him (who?) and his army--until no survivors were left.

Joshua 16

**10**They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor (in spite of either having free access to it, or owning it).

In [tonight's video](#), we'll get some insights from the ruins of Ol' Gezer, not the least of which are the functions of the “city gate”, and the significance of “standing stones”.

## The City Gate

If you've spent much time reading the Bible, you'll, no doubt, wonder at the use of the "city gate" in much OT literature. Oftentimes things happen at the city gate that may make you wonder what all is going on there. Well, as it turns out, the gates were used not only for protection, but for city administration as well. Consider the following.

### Genesis 19

*1*The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

### Deuteronomy 21

*18*If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. *19*They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." *20*Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. *21*All Israel will hear of it and be afraid. and then two more "city gate" occurrences ...

### Ruth 4

*1* Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down. *2* Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. *3* Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech.

*4*I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said. *5*Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property." *6*At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it." *7*(Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

*8*So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal. *9*Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon.

## Ruth 4

**10**I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!" **11**Then the elders and all those at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.

## 2 Samuel 18, 19

**3**But the men said, "You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care; but you are worth ten thousand of us. It would be better now for you to give us support from the city." **4**The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you." So the king stood beside the gate while all the men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands. . . . **8**So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him.

We will see tonight that the city gates of those times actually served as a sort of “town hall” in the shifty scenarios in which people lived. Gezer is known primarily for its 6 chambered city gate (pictured). Much has been learned about the history of the ancient town very recently thanks to Archaeological activities conducted by our very own NOBTS. It is clear that the town was in its heyday around and up to the time that the Israelites marched out of Egypt ca 1400 BC. In addition to the gate, the city featured a reliable “water tunnel” through which water could be accessed in times of trouble. The rise of Egypt just prior to that time signaled the beginning of the end of its prominence. The canaanitic city was forced to pay homage to Egypt. And during the time just before David, Egypt, once again captured, burned and destroyed it.



Later, however, Solomon did control the city. He is credited with constructing the city gates pictured above. Note the drainage ditch running out of the gate and into the valley.

## 1 Kings 9

*15*Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. *16*(Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. *17*And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) ...

### The Standing Stones

We will surely note that God has worked in many of our lives in mighty ways ... much like He did for the Israelites when they left Egypt and came to the Promised Land. To memorialize the action and place, God commanded His people to erect "standing stones". This practice is also carried on in secular ways with the erection of monuments ... like the monument at Yorktown celebrating the Continental Army's defeat of the British. It was/and is also carried out by pagan nations to honor their false gods. Consider the following scriptures and see if you can tell what act of God precipitated the construction of stone monuments.

#### Genesis 35

*14*Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. *15*Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

#### Exodus 24

*3*When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the Lord has said we will do." *4*Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

#### Joshua 4

*4*So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, *5*and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, *6*to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' *7*tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."



## 1 Peter 2

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

In the video, we see an example of the pagan version of this. These stones are one of the only things remaining in Ol' Gezer. What does this tell you about your being a standing stone for God? Do you represent the redeeming work of the Savior?



## Quiz 1

1. What does Via Maris mean?
  - a) Live Long Homerun hitter
  - b) Way of the Sea
  - c) Chicken of the Sea
  - d) Mesopotamia
  - e) Ester-C
2. God wants His people carrying His word at the
  - a) backwoods of society
  - b) city states
  - c) city gates
  - d) at Bible colleges
  - e) the crossroads of society
3. This is an example of a standing stone ...
  - a) The Washington Monument
  - b) The Blue Ridge Mountains
  - c) The Standard Banner
  - d) LP Field
  - e) Someone who exhibits Christ

4. Gezer is about halfway between ...
- a) Jerusalem and Tel-Abib
  - b) Jericho and Jerusalem
  - c) Tel-Abib and Hazor
  - d) Philistia and Egypt
  - e) Old and dead
5. Who eventually rebuilt Gezer the final time?
- a) David
  - b) Solomon
  - c) Pharaoh
  - d) TDOT
  - e) the TVA

## Section 2 Crossing Jordan

At this point we are going to turn our attention east from Ol' Gezer, go across the central Palestinian ridge and down, down, down to the Jordan River ... or [River Jordan](#) as it's sometimes called. It is interesting to note that this river ...

a) has only a 90 mile trek from Mt. Hermon (transfiguration) through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead (or Salten) Sea, although the meandering measures about 200 mile;

b) is in some places only 50 to 75 feet wide (right);

c) does not continue on to the Gulf of Aqaba, but rather dies in the Salt flats of the dead sea;

d) passes Caesarea Phillipi, Capernaum, Jericho, Sodom and Gomorrah along its path;

e) is at its lower end, approximately 400m (about 1300 feet) below sea level ... which constitutes a drop of about 3200m (about 10400 feet) from the source at the top of Mt. Hermon.

f) flows through a fault in the earth's surface known as the Great Rift Valley;



g) is currently dammed up at the mouth of the sea of Galilee to provide for Israel's water needs;

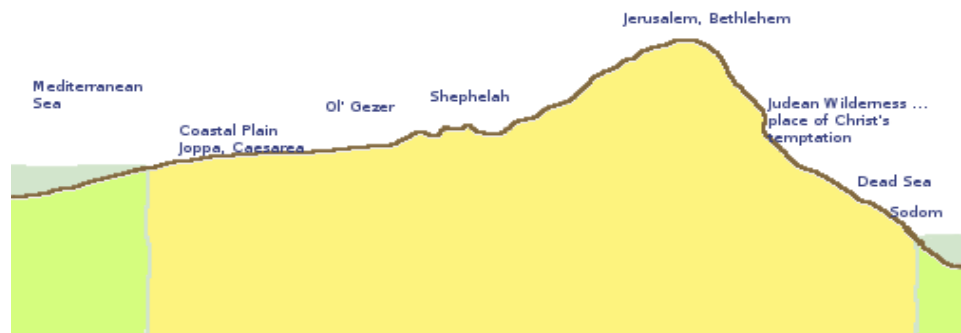
h) is one of the fastest flowing rivers in the world;

i) rises and falls according to the season

j) is enjoined by the Yarmuk river of

Syria just south of the sea of Galilee

k) is in danger today of diminishing because of its heightened use by Israel, Syria and Jordan.



Note the difference (above) between the elevation Jerusalem at 760m and the Dead Sea! That's a difference of about 1160m (3600ft). Some good articles on these geographic features may be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead\\_Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River\\_Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Jordan). It's easy to see that the topography of the holy land is quite diverse!

The aforementioned Great Rift Valley is amazingly barren except for the River Jordan area ... and this can be deceiving. Now when did the Jordan come into play in the Bible?

### Genesis 13

**10** Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) **11** So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: **12** Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. **13** Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

Loth believed this to be the “good land” and (ca. 2000 BC) left the Judean wilderness area, where people must depend on God for survival, to find a “better life”. What ended up happening, of course, is that a) the land could not support him and his family; b) he moved to Sodom and “sat in the gate” as a judge; c) then lost almost everything when God had to rain down fiery judgment on that city.



His descendants became the nations of Moab and Ammon. Many years later the Israelites would cross this same river in anticipation of conquest of Canaan (ca. 1300 BC). Recall that their first attempt had been unsuccessful because of lack 'o' faith.

Numbers 13, 14

**1**The Lord said to Moses, **2**"Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." **3**So at the Lord's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

**21**So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath.

**25**At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. **26**They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ... **28**But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. ... **30**Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." **31**But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are."

**6**Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes **7**and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. **8**If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

**35** I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die."



And keep in mind that attacking from the south was the preferable alternative because of the barrier of the Jordan. After the 40 year had passed, just getting to the point of crossing the Jordan was obtained with great difficulty and bloodshed. Israel had lost the element of surprise and the high ground. See the map above.

Numbers 20, 21

**14**Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: **15**Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, **16**but when we cried out to the Lord, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. "Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. **17**Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory." **18**But Edom answered: "You may not pass through here; if you try, we will march out and attack you with the sword." ... **21**Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned away from them.

**1**When the Canaanite king of Arad (see below), who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured

some of them. **2**Then Israel made this vow to the Lord: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities." **3**The Lord listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.



**10**The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth. **11** Then they set out from Oboth and camped in Iye Abarim, in the desert that faces Moab toward the sunrise. **12**From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley. **13**They set out from there and camped alongside the Arnon, which is in the desert extending into Amorite territory. The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. ...

**21**Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites: **22**"Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway until we have passed through your territory."

23But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel. 24Israel, however, put him to the sword and took over his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only as far as the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. 25Israel captured all the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements. 26Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken from him all his land as far as the Arnon. ... 32After Moses had sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its surrounding settlements and drove out the Amorites who were there. 33Then they turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet them in battle at Edrei. 34The Lord said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over to you, with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon." 35So they struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army, leaving them no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

Make no mistake, the people of that area (both Hamitic and Semitic) feared the Hebrew nation. Israel had not come to that point quietly. They had a winning streak! Let's watch as [Ray Van Der Laan sets the stage](#) on the banks of the Jordan.

At this juncture, they had to camp for some time on the east side of Jordan (ca. Jabbok), withstand attempted curses from Balaam, cut a deal with the harlot Rahab, bury Moses and deal with 2.5 tribes (Reuben, Gad, .5 x Mannasseh) who wanted to stay on the east side. Additionally, they faced the formidable Canaanitic city of Jericho on the west side of the river. So unlike many other eastern nations who worshipped their central river (Egypt, Babylon, etc.), the Israelites viewed the Jordan as a barrier to their conquest. The Israelites also faced another impediment ... the time of year. We suspect that the harvest time is probably in April/May following the probably rainy season of November to March (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Wikipedia). This was probably considered as a good thing by the Baal worshipping Canaanites, who believed that their god controlled water, rain, storm and wind and would protect them from the oncoming mass.

At this point they were prepared to cross this river into the Holy Land proper ... and Who would lead them? They were beginning to know that the Lord provides. To that end the Israelites were led into the conquest by priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant. This elaborate and portable container consisted of the stone tablets, a jar of manna and Moses's never dying staff. And it was covered by a lid that had two cherubim on it. Contrary to what the TTWMK materials say, cherubim are not sphinxes! Read the first chapter of Ezekiel and you'll understand!!!

It symbolized God's presence with Israel. And, commendably, at this point Israel was ready and willing to follow God's leading, and not their own desires. Whatever obstacles faced them, they did learn one important thing from the Kadesh debacle ... God would fight their battles for them.

### Joshua 3

**14**So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. **15**Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, **16**the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. **17**The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

### Quiz 2

1. The geographic length of the River Jordan is about ...
  - a) 200 mi
  - b) 90 mi
  - c) 200 km
  - d) 90 km
  - e) 1000 km
2. The River Jordan drops from the slopes of Mt Hermon to the shores of the Dead Sea about ...
  - a) 200 mi
  - b) 90 mi
  - c) 200 km
  - d) 90 km
  - e) 3200 m
3. The Israelites were to originally enter the Holy Land from the ...
  - a) North
  - b) Mediterranean Sea
  - c) Central Palestinian Ridge
  - d) River Jordan
  - e) South

4. The cherubim are a type of ...
  - a) sphinx
  - b) serafim
  - c) angel
  - d) priest
  - e) pyramid
5. Find the friends of the Israelites in the following list.
  - a) Edom
  - b) Reuben
  - c) Mannasseh
  - d) Ammon
  - e) Moab
6. God provided for Israel by ...
  - a) stopping up the Jordan
  - b) spying out the land
  - c) sending an angel to confront Joshua
  - d) creating the Great Rift Valley
  - e) creating the Hittites
7. Can you name another New Testament event that took place at the Jordan ?

### Section 3 Jericho

Now, on they go ... to Jericho!

The Israelites now had a foothold on the western side of the Jordan and were seeking to move further west across the Central Palestinian ridge, but were close to the ancient city of Jericho. Jericho is probably one of the oldest cities in the world dating to before the time of Abraham. So we might surmise that at the



time of the conquest, Jericho was a well developed Canaanitic city. Above we have a beautiful shot of the city looking north from the escarpment of the central Palestinian Ridge ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)).

There is MUCH to say about this city.

- a) It is the lowest city in the world at approximately 1000 ft (300m) below sea level;
- b) It has a current population of about 19K and the current mayor is Hassan Saleh;
- c) Is the only excavated city in the world with a fallen wall (BibleScience2);
- d) It is at about the same latitude as Brunswick, GA.

Joshua 5, 6: 1

**INow when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.**

**INow Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.**

And here is where the story gets interesting. In ca. 1400 BC, we know that the fear of the Jews weighed heavy on the local inhabitants. At about this time, the Israelites stopped eating manna, and began living off the land. And Joshua began to plan the defeat of Jericho. As stated earlier, the city was well developed in terms of age and this also applied to the defensive posture. At that time, Jericho, was set on a hill (now known as [tel es-sultan](#) or “[hill of the king](#)”) featuring steep slopes (MacArthur commentary). This is visible in the picture above.

In surveying the situation, the *intrepid* commander Joshua probably looked to lay siege to the city since a) he had a superior fighting force in terms of numbers, and b) there would be limited routes of supply to the west of the city, and c) Israel controlled both sides of the Jordan and had defeated all nearby threats, and d) was living off the land. A siege, of course, would've taken some time, but would've gotten the job done. God said, in effect, that He had a more wonderful plan. During one of Joshua's reconnaissance missions, he had a very interesting encounter, in which the plan was revealed.

Joshua 5: 13, 14

**13Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"**

Let's stop here and briefly consider this. It is intriguing to think what this must have been like. Is this an angel (like Gabriel) or is it the Lord? The resources I have checked are unclear on the matter. But the general consensus is that it is not the Lord, but an angel. We know that Joshua demonstrates great faith in approaching and questioning the angel. This is similar to the encounter that Jacob had with an angel some 500 or so years prior. At this point Israel is given the command to ...



### Joshua 6

**2**Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. **3**March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days.

**4**Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. **5**When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in." ... (Joshua commands the people) **17**The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord.

Clearly God wanted this conquest to get on quickly. His timing is perfect and sets the example for us to follow. He tells us (in Mathew 5:37) to let our "yes" be "yes" and our "no" be "no". Where does it occur aside from the book of Joshua? In about 1900 BC we have the following account.

### Genesis 19

**16**And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. **17**and it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. **18**And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my LORD: **19**Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

**20**Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

There is a good deal of speculation about the location of Sodom and Gomorrah (right), but it does appear that the southern Dead Sea area has a stronger argument based on the shallow and slimy basin of its lower reaches, the possible location of Zoar, and the locations of the nations of Moab and Ammon.



In about 586 BC we have ...

Jeremiah 39

**5**But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him.

In about early 28 AD we have two separate accounts ...

Mark 10

**46**Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. **47**When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **48**Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" **49**Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." **50**Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. **51**"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." **52**"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.



Luke 19

**1**Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2**A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3**He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.



**4**So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. **5**When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." **6**So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ... **8**But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." **9**Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. **10**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Now, consider for a moment the term “devoted to the Lord”. The affiliated Hebrew word is “cherem” and is used in conjunction with the flood (Genesis 6-8), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16). It is a last resort, so to speak, in the removal of sin.

We have to believe, based on the use of the term Abaddon in Revelation that the end times will see the earth receive a similar destruction. What is also amazing here is the way in which Jericho would be handed over to Israel.

Notice that not only did the Israelites do nothing spectacular militarily, actually what they did would be considered counterproductive. God is jealous for His own glory. And by doing this, Israel ensured that God would indeed receive the glory for this victory. Below is a picture of a section of the ancient wall of Jericho ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)).

And next we have a picture of eminent archaeologist Bryant Wood indicating the destroyed sections of the wall from ca. 1400 BC ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)). The dating processes on the destruction of the walls (according to Wikipedia) are in “doubt” in that they vary by about 150 yr. And this is based on archaeological research done by John Karstang (1930s), Kathleen Kenyon (1950s), and Bryant Wood (1995). The two men had the destruction dated ca. 1410 BC ... which would be about the traditional time of the conquest. The female dated it ca. 1562 BC.



Later radio carbon dating confirms the female estimate. I say it's much ado about nothing. We're talking about 150 yr in relation to over 3500 year ... come on! That's like arguing about the winner of a beauty contest! Come on!

Additionally, Dr. Chet Roden, OT Ph. D. from Southeastern Seminary. He says: *Wood sides with Garstang and Bimson on the dating. John Bimson did a modern work and shattered most of Kenyon's (conclusions). She had based a good bit of her dating on one type of pottery not represented at Jericho.*

*Bimson and Wood have shown there actually was pottery of that type there and she simply missed it. They use her own drawings and studies to overturn her conclusions. And why haven't we heard about that much? Because too many people would have to revise their own understandings of the conquest/settlement period. Bimson's work was part of a Society of Biblical Literature collection of works (a typically liberal society). It was so good and conservative that most liberal scholars have simply ignored it hoping it would go away. I guess when the foundation shakes you look to hold on to anything you can!!!*

The fact is, we know that this is an actual historical event that took place ca. 1400 BC. This is bona fide evidence of a miraculous deliverance of a wicked city into the hands of God's people. Well ... the earth is His ... and the fullness thereof!



Jericho was to be devoted to the Lord, and a curse was to be placed on the one who rebuilt it.

Joshua 6

**26** At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the Lord is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates."

In the old testament there were three ways in which “things” were viewed: Holy, Common and Abominable. Things associated with, for instance, Leviticus 18, and things that were related to the worship of other gods were considered abominable. Things that were “owned” by humans, generally, were considered as common.

And things that were devoted to Yahweh or used in His service were considered holy ... and the use of such for personal gain was considered as a deep sin.

Although it is worth noting that David consumed the shewbread in the tabernacle, it is also clear that such usage was obviously not cursed per se. The rebuilding of Jericho, however, would not be without cost. We see below that the greedy “Heil” insisted on rebuilding it.

### 1Kings 16

**34**In Ahab's time (ca 860BC), Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

God does work in mysterious ways! And here are a couple 'o' videos on the topic: [d = 3 animation of the fall](#), [Short views home movie](#), and an [Archaeological discussion on the tel](#).

### Quiz 3

1. The people of Jericho were \_\_\_\_\_ of the Israelites.
  - a) ambivalent
  - b) fearful
  - c) loathing
  - d) jealous
  - e) ignorant
2. Jericho is the only ancient city in which excavations have revealed ...
  - a) stones
  - b) Joshua's lost horn
  - c) the tel of a king
  - d) cups of tea
  - e) collapsed walls
3. Jericho is located \_\_\_\_\_ of the Dead Sea.
  - a) east
  - b) south
  - c) north
  - d) west
  - e) on an island
4. The conquest of Jericho by Joshua took place ca. ...
  - a) 1900 BC
  - b) 1600 BC
  - c) 1400 BC
  - d) 1200 BC
  - e) 900 BC

5. Zacchaeus, in order to see the Savior, climbed a \_\_\_\_\_ tree.
- a) Palm
  - b) Date
  - c) Olive
  - d) Fig
  - e) Sycamore
6. What portion of Zacchaeus's goods did he give to the poor?
- a) half
  - b) twicet
  - c) all
  - d) ten percent
  - e) four fold
7. Which disciple of Christ had the same profession as Zacchaeus?
- a) Matthew
  - b) Mark
  - c) John
  - d) Judas Iscariote
  - e) Andrew

#### Section 4 The EVIL in the Land

In this section, we want to look more closely at the people and customs (particularly those of the Philistines) that faced the Israelites once they had defeated Jericho! What is missing is the whole incident at Ai, which I'm "Achan" to tell.

At any rate, as the intrepid leader Joshua and his army worked their way through the land, they provided a more solid anchor for what was supposed to have happened next ... the total annihilation of the Canaanitic peoples of the area ... including the powerful Philistines (and it wasn't as if God didn't give 'em plenty of impetus to get the job done). But, instead, the Israelites were generally content to occupy the mountainous area of the central Palestinian ridge (henceforth referred to as the CPR) and the land east of the Jordan and essentially wanted to "go along to get along".

Of particular interest is the story of Dan, a smaller Israelite tribe that was given a portion of the coastal plain and shephelah (the piedmont of Israel) to occupy. But like "Buster" (from Arrested Development), the Danites avoided the conflict, curled into a ball, and eventually displaced to the far north ... well above the sea of Galilee. There were two exceptions. Samson, of course. And he did take out a good number of Philistines ... but unfortunately, as a result of his wavering commitment, took his own life as well. More on that later. And Oholiab the son of Ahisamach who did a lot of the work for Moses on

the tabernacle.

Now one of the cities we're going to focus in on is Bet Semes (spelling according to the Spanish NVI which maintains the appropriate use of the original letters of the first true alphabet ... the Semitic Alphabet or abgd ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))). Bet Semes (hereto referred to as BS) was a town that formed the western point of what is nearly a 45-45-90 triangle with Jerusalem and Bethlehem and can be seen on the map above. It was located at the base of the shephelah, at the crossing of two routes ... one of which came directly out of the CPR into the coastal plain, the second of which was/is called the “diagonal route” and headed down to the Philistine city of Lachish ([www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com)). Below is a picture of the tel of BS. It is an aerial view from the south. The road in the foreground is probably linked to the “diagonal route”.



The city was founded during the early bronze age (ca. 3000 BC), and was destroyed and rebuilt 6 times (once by the Babylonians in the process of defeating Jerusalem). It was known for olive oil, wheat production and fabric dyeing during David's time (ca. 1000 BC). Today the modern city has a population of over 68K, and it appears to be a hopping place. We want to study it, in part, in the context of its location in the shephelah ... a region of conflict between Israel and Philistia. In the faith lesson, this represents the areas where God's values meet pagan practices.

If you want to see something really funny, go to [www.shemesh.co.il/cgi-bin/index.cgi](http://www.shemesh.co.il/cgi-bin/index.cgi) and check this website out. I laughed out loud when I saw the realty ads! It honestly looks like a commercial website for retirement properties in Dandridge, TN. There is NO mention of any recent wars with Lebanon, or threats from Gaza. It is clearly the place to be in Southern Israel.

Where is the town of BS mentioned in scripture? Well, actually in a couple of

prominent places in the OT.

Judges 1:33

Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Bet Semes or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Bet Semes and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them.

And then there was this other example of an OT hypothesis test:

1 Samuel 6

**1** When the ark of the Lord had been in Philistine territory seven months, **2** the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? ..." **3** They answered, "If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it away empty, but by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, ..." **4** The Philistines asked, "What guilt offering should we send to him?" They replied, "Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers ... **6** Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way? **7** "Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart ... **8** Take the ark of the Lord and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, **9** but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, toward Bet Semes, then the Lord has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us and that it happened to us by chance."

**10** So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. **11** They placed the ark of the Lord on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. **12** Then the cows went straight up toward Bet Semes, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Semes. **13** Now the people of Bet Semes were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. **14** The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Semes, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. **15** The Levites took down the ark of the Lord, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Semes offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the Lord. **16** The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned that same day to Ekron.

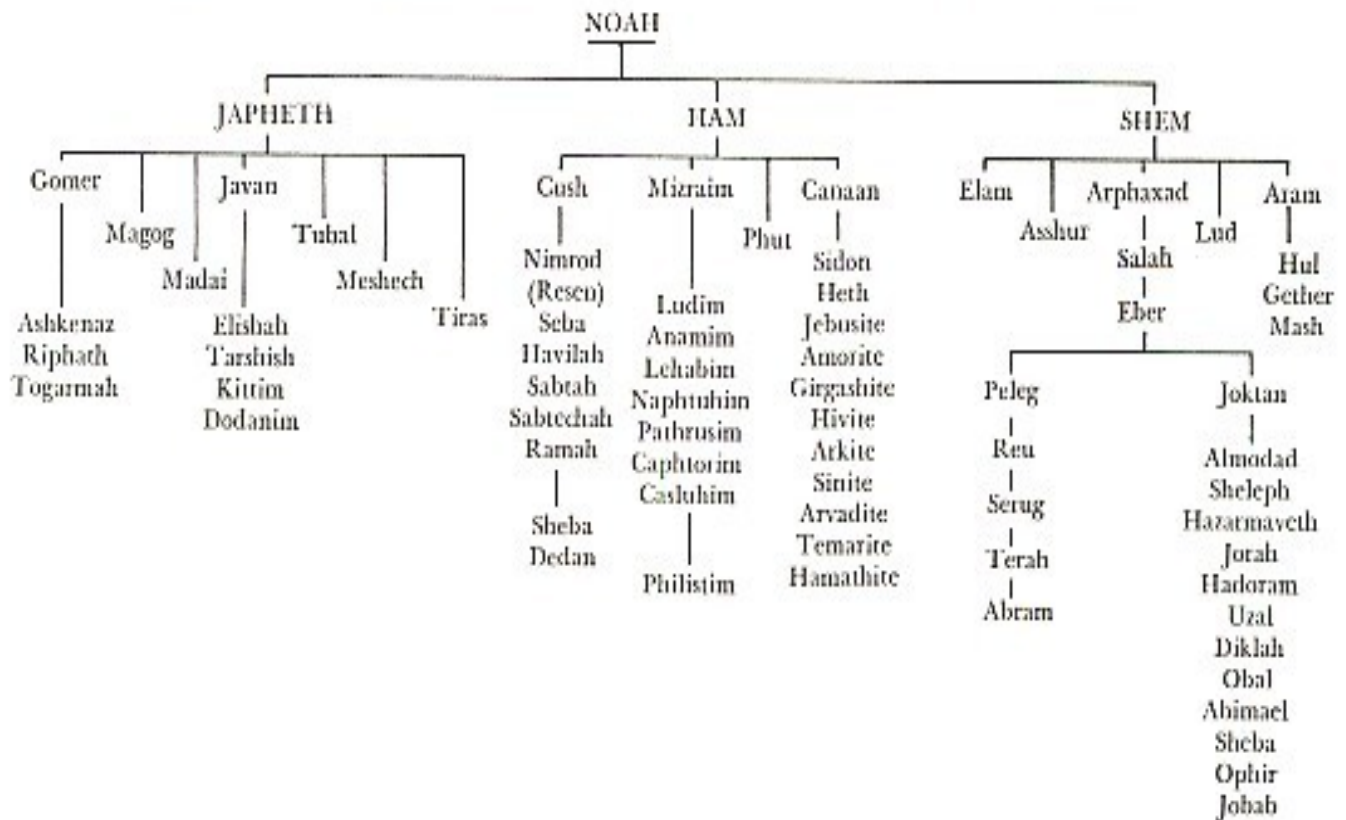
**17** These are the gold tumors the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the Lord--one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. **18** ... The large rock, on which they set the ark of the Lord, is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Bet Semes.

I hope you noticed some of the earlier points we have been making about “things devoted to the Lord” and “standing stones”. These patterns are pretty clear.

There is also an interesting footnote on the name of the town. Bet Semes means, house of the sun. The first word means “house” and is the Semitic (Sinaitic and Wadi el hol) alphabet name of the letter B. It is also interesting that some academicians believe that Semes is the original name of the letter S. Now S has its roots in the Semitic alphabet letter Shin ... which means tooth or teeth and is pictured by a symbol that looks like this: “w”. This got copied by the Hebrews, turned on its side by the Greeks ( $\Sigma$ ), and softened by the Romans into what we see today. But now there are some who (because of the name of the descendant in the Greek, “sigma”) believe that the original letter may have represented our solar system's central star ... semes. We can't be sure, about the origin of S, but at least we can make a “dent”!

It clearly served as a border town between Philistia and Israel. Now the Philistines were an interesting lot of Hamitic Folk. There are about 250 references to the Philistines in the Bible ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)). A good place to start with this study is the writings of Arthur Custance ([www.custance.org](http://www.custance.org)), an expert on the three lines of man. Custance first gives us this table from Genesis 10, which is most informative:

## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH



Dr. Custance makes some very good points about the veracity of such a list. First, it is ridiculous to insinuate that this list is merely a piece of Jewish propoganda, because a) no such list can be found in any other historical writings (most such lists include only conquered peoples), b) much more attention is given to the line of Ham than that of Shem, and c) no mention is given to Amalek ... possibly Israel's most hated enemy. Second, the secularist way of physically separating the races via Caucasian, Mongoloid and Negroid will always have serious limits since individuals from one "race" may exhibit a number of characteristics of another. I agree that this is a weaker analysis. And finally, note that Paul didn't say "In Christ, there is now no longer black or white". He said "Jew or Greek", which is consistent with Genesis 10. The Bible affirms itself. And it's pretty clear God's way is best and also should be taken historically.

So with that in mind let's take a look at the list and observe the Hamitic line. Notice that Philistia is located under Ham ... particularly under Mizraim. This is not the same line as Canaan, so that the Philistines are to be separated mentally from the usual victims of Israel's conquest. Now here is a tricky point. The originating island of the Philistines is thought to be Crete (Caphtor), but the Greeks also have/had influence on this island as well, and they are clearly listed under Japhet (Dodanim is also read Rodanim from



which comes the name Rhodes). But, clearly, the Philistines are Hamitic (Genesis 10, Judges 14). So how do we resolve this?

According to the J. Bosland article at the Netherlandic site ([www.bga.nl](http://www.bga.nl)) (used often in this section), there has even been some doubt as to whether the people in the Judges were the same ones mentioned in Genesis 10, since there is no ancient Egyptian record of the people at that time. Bosland, however, states that more recent work has revealed that Cyprus is more likely the originating point for the Philistines since the ancient structures there use large stone blocks similar to those in Philistia. He says that this island served as one of the first “melting pots” of the world and that both Hamitic and Japhetic peoples inhabited the island early on, and that the Hamitic peoples occupied from the south with an early link to Egypt. This is probably similar to the near simultaneous inhabitation of the Gaza area. It is worth noting that the name Palestine comes from Philistine.

Supposedly, the Philistines, according to Ray Van Der Laan, arrived right around the time the Israelites were crossing the Jordan river ca. 1200 BC. This is confirmed at wikipedia.org and [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org) as well, but contradicted in the NIV Study Bible where it is suspected that the entry was ca. 2000 BC.

Assuming the former, we have two nations entering the promised land relatively simultaneously. Their historical landing was possibly a result of a long period of naval conflict with Egypt, and in particular Rameses III, who ultimately defeated them, but then resettled them along the coast of Canaan to tax them, create alliances and extend his influence up the coast (and especially the Way 'o' the Sea). This may also possibly have been the reason for God to lead the Israelites into the Sinai and Midian since there would have been much activity along the southern coastal area.

Assuming the latter would not negate the possibility of an overall war between Philistia and Egypt. It could be that Egypt got the better of it and sacked the Philistine cities only to lose control around the time of the plagues (they did lose their entire army in the Red Sea). Bosland's arguments make much sense here. If we look at the 3 lines of man chart again, we see a clear pattern emerging in which, from an early time (maybe ca. 2500 BC) the Hamitic people began to establish themselves along the southern coast of the Med. Now here is an interesting note from

Jeremiah 47

**4** For the day has come to destroy all the Philistines and to cut off all survivors who could help Tyre and Sidon. The Lord is about to destroy the Philistines, the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor. **5** Gaza will shave her head in mourning;

Ashkelon will be silenced. O remnant on the plain, how long will you cut yourselves?

Some have identified Caphtor as Crete, but Cyprus is the more likely candidate according to more recent research. Cyprus is not a far shot across the water from Phoenicia, and has a more limited relationship with Greece. So we can imagine that as the Hamitic influence spread to the south and to the west, trading centers were established on the coast and on the way of the Sea that reflected similarities germane to the race and culture. Bosland also states that this is the current shift among archaeologists since there are growing similarities (between Cyprus and Philistia) in metallurgy, pottery (which was often white with red and black markings), architecture and writing!

The latter notion is also consistent with scripture where we see in

Exodus 13

**17** When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." **18** So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle.

So it is scriptural that a) the Philistines were in place at least a year before the Israelites went up to spy out the land the first time (remember that they set up the tabernacle a year after they came out of Egypt), and b) that there was something going on militarily in that area.

We can also surmise that it was here that the Philistines/and or Egyptians set up what is known as the Philistine Pentapolis consisting of Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron. These were major commercial (.com) centers, with Ekron and Gath being located further inland and providing agricultural support and the others being on or near the Med and providing coastal goods. All of the 5 were situated around the major thoroughfare. We also see that Crete, Cyprus, Phoenicia and the Aegean all called at Philistia's ports, which is consistent, too, with Bosland's hypothesis.

It is also important to note that the pentapolis consisted of "city-states", and so there was a good deal of autonomy within each city.

In fact, the region of Philistia was not restricted to these 5 cities, but extended north to

what is now known as Tel Qasile, a city on the Yarkon river (which empties into the Med just above Joppa), and, of course, east ... occasionally ... into the Shephelah, and at one point, all the way to Beth Shean near the Jordan! See map below ([www.biblestudy.org](http://www.biblestudy.org)).

The peak of prominence for this culture occurred from about 1150 BC to 1000 BC (Jephthah to David). By the time of the captivity (586 BC), Philistia had pretty much fallen out of the picture altogether. And with the possible exception of the evil Haman (Esther), who may have been related to the Philistine, they are not mentioned thereafter.

From our TTWMK text we see that the Philistines did, in fact, in their heyday greatly influence that part of the world. What else do we know? They were widely known for olive pressing (ca. 200 olive installations found at Ekron alone), and iron making (which links them to Cyprus). They were quite artistic as indicated by their pottery. Their soldiers were generally tall, clean shaven and had generally Romanesque apparel. They also fought with small shields, straight swords and spears. As a people, they were very sophisticated and immoral.

The geography of the region ranges from sand dunes in the south gradually to a fertile area in the north. This proved advantageous militarily because travel would not have been too easy in coming up the coast from Egypt. Travelers would have pretty much had to stay on the Way 'o' the Sea. *Do you know someone in the NT who may have baptized around here?* At any rate, what we have is prime real estate ... fertile and relatively flat, with a climate similar to that of San Diego! Hey, don't take my word for it ... check out the realtors from Israel.



The

Philistines occupied a significant area of Israel right when the Israelites were going to conquer the land. One must wonder if the Israelites must have thought what might have been had they taken up the conquest 40 years earlier!