



Physical Geography – Palestine

I. NAMES

A. Canaan

1. Named for Canaan of Genesis 10:6
2. Land between Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea
3. Inhabitants
 - a. Giants
 - (1) Earliest inhabitants
 - (2) Names of tribes ending with *-im*
 - (3) Source (Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33)
 - (4) Stature (Genesis 6:4; **Deuteronomy 3:1-11)
 - (5) Goliath and family (I Samuel 17:4; II Samuel 21:15-22) – Goliath was six cubits (approx. 108in.) and a span (approx. 9in.). This would have made Goliath between nine and ten feet tall.
 - (6) Tribes of the giants (Genesis 14:5; Deuteronomy 2:10-12, 20-23)
 - (a) Rephaims
 - (b) Zuzims
 - (c) Emims
 - (d) Anakims
 - (e) Horims
 - (f) Zanzummims
 - (g) Avims
 - (h) Caphtorims
 - b. Canaanites
 - (1) Overran the giants (Genesis 10:15-20; 15:18-21)
 - (2) Names of tribes usually ending with *-ite*
 - (3) Tribes of Canaanites
 - (a) Jebusites
 - (b) Amorites
 - (c) Girgasites
 - (d) Hivites
 - (e) Perizzites
 - (f) Hittites
 - c. Israelites
 - (1) Conquered the Canaanites
 - (2) The Hebrew children



B. Palestine (Exodus 15:14; Isaiah 14:28-31; Joel 3:4)

1. Means *Philistine Land*
2. Applied with time to the land occupied by Israel

3. Two sections
 - a. Canaan
 - b. Gilead
 - (1) Region east of Jordan River
 - (2) Also called Transjordan
4. About 12,000 square miles. Compare with the state of Tennessee which has over 42,000 square miles

C. Judaea

1. Originally referred to the tribe of Judah
2. At time of Christ, referred to southern Jewish province as opposed to the northern province of Galilee
3. Sometimes used in reference to all Palestine today

D. Holy Land

1. A prophetic reference (Zechariah 2:12)
2. Hardly applicable to the land of Israel today except as a reference to what God has done and will do there. We need to be careful that we do not think of sites as holy. They may be historically important, Biblically revealing or special because of their association with a particular event. However, holy sites are only one step away from holy relics and other pagan practices. Their emphasis is one of the signs of the growing paganism in our churches and among Christians today. Just visit the latest “Christian” bookstore.

E. Israel

1. Came from the name God gave to Jacob (Genesis 32:28). It means *a prince of God*
2. Originally referred to the Northern Kingdom during the Divided Kingdom Period
3. Title of the Nation since May 14, 1948



II. NATURAL DIVISIONS

A. Coastal Plain

1. Location
 - a. Runs north to south along the Mediterranean Sea – about 20 miles wide
 - b. Broken only at Mount Carmel (1Kings 18:19-20)

2. Sub-divisions
 - a. Plain of Acco (Judges 1:31)
 - (1) Narrow plain north of Mt. Carmel
 - (2) Ancient home of Phoenicians
 - (3) Includes cities of Acco (Acre), Tyre and Sidon (Zidon)
 - b. Plain of Sharon (**cp. 1 Chronicles 27:29; Isaiah 33:9; Isaiah 35:2; Isaiah 65:10)
 - (1) South of Mt. Carmel down to Joppa (Tel-Aviv)
 - (2) Includes New Testament port of Caesarea
 - (3) Averages from six to twelve miles wide
 - c. Plain of Philistia (Obadiah 1:19)
 - (1) Extends from Joppa to Egypt
 - (2) Ancient land of the Philistines
 - (3) Up to twenty miles wide

3. Related features
 - a. Plain of Esdraelon
 - (1) Extends northwest to southeast from the Plain of Acco to the Jordan Valley
 - (2) Also called:
 - (a) Valley of Jezreel (Joshua 17:16; Judges 6:33; Hosea 1:4-5)
 - (b) Valley of Megiddo after the fortress city of that name (2 Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11)
 - b. The Shephelah
 - (1) The foothills between the Coastal Plain and the Central Range
 - (2) Runs parallel to the Coastal Plain between Joppa and Gaza
 - (3) Often served as a buffer zone between the Israelites and Philistines

B. Central Range

1. Extends north to south between Coastal Plain and Jordan River Valley

2. Subdivisions
 - a. Upper Galilee (see Matthew 4:15; Isaiah 9:1)
 - (1) North of the Sea of Galilee
 - (2) Mountains average about 2800 feet above sea level



- b. Lower Galilee
 - (1) Roughly parallel to Sea of Galilee
 - (2) Directly north of the Plain of Esdraelon
 - (3) Mountains average about 1800 feet above sea level
 - (4) Location of Nazareth
- c. Samaria (**Isaiah 7:1-9)
 - (1) South of the Plain of Esdraelon
 - (2) Mountains range from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level
 - (3) Hill country of Samaria called “Mount Ephraim” (Judges 7:24)
- d. Judaea (Matthew 2:1)
 - (1) Roughly parallel to the Dead Sea
 - (2) Called “mountains of Judah”
 - (3) Wilderness of Judah (Matthew 3:1)
 - (a) Directly west of the Dead Sea
 - (b) Mostly limestone and flint formations
 - (c) Approximately 35 miles long and 15 miles wide
 - (d) A desolate and almost lifeless desert area
- e. The Negev
 - (1) Central Range south of Hebron
 - (2) A very dry mountainous area
 - (3) Some winter rains but dry all summer
 - (4) Location of Beersheba

C. Jordan River Valley or Jordan Rift

- 1. Extremes
 - a. Northern
 - (1) Close to Dan/Caesarea Philippi (Judges 18:27-31)
 - (2) About 1200 feet above sea level
 - b. Southern
 - (1) Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea
 - (2) About 1300 feet below sea level
- 2. Dimensions
 - a. Length
 - (1) Jordan River meanders 223 miles
 - (2) Direct distance – 124 miles
 - b. From Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea
 - (1) River length – 135 miles
 - (2) Direct distance – 65 miles
 - c. Jordan Valley
 - (1) Flat plain running on either side of the river
 - (2) Runs from two to fifteen miles wide, widest just north of the Dead Sea
 - (3) Jericho is situated in this valley
- 3. Subdivisions
 - a. Source area – Jordan River has three sources—all at the base of Mount Hermon



- b. Lake Hula – swampy region that has now been drained and serves as excellent farm land
- c. Sea of Galilee
- d. The Ghor
 - (1) Deep valley through which Jordan meanders
 - (2) Floods during March and April
 - (3) A place of thick undergrowth and wildlife
 - (4) Called the “swelling” or the “pride of Jordan” (Jeremiah 12:5; Jeremiah 49:19)
- e. Plain of Jordan (Genesis 13:10-11)
 - (1) Just north of the Dead Sea
 - (2) Called the Plain of Moab on the east side of the river (Numbers 22:1)

D. Eastern Range or Transjordan

- 1. Identity (**2Kings 10:31-33)
 - a. Range of mountains east of the Jordan Valley
 - b. Higher in altitude than the Central Range, averaging 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level
 - c. Extension of the Anti-Lebanons
- 2. Subdivisions
 - a. Bashan (Psalm 22:12; Jeremiah 50:19)
 - (1) Northern Plateau
 - (2) East of Sea of Galilee
 - b. Gilead (Genesis 31:21; Joshua 20:8; Micah 7:14); between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea
 - c. Mountains of Moab; east of the Dead Sea

E. Desert

- 1. East of the Eastern Range
- 2. A wasteland
- 3. Natural boundary and barrier