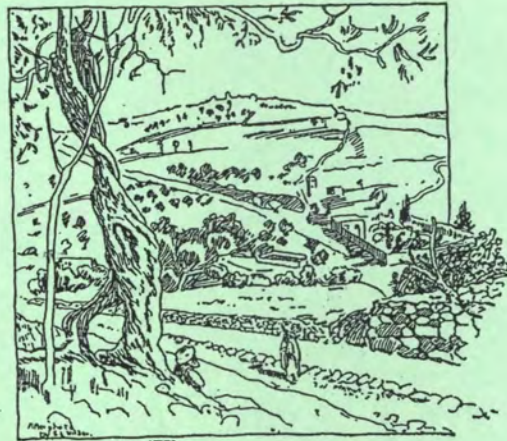


Spiritual Lessons from Scriptural Landscapes



MOUNT OLIVET.



W06. 110. Die Hörner von Galtin.



Fall Bible Conference, Nov. 3-5, 2017

Spiritual Lessons from Scriptural Landscapes

Magnificent and Mysterious Mountains and Lakes

Visiting Speaker: **Dr. Manfred E. Kober**

Fri., Nov. 3, 6:00 p.m. *Soup Supper*

7:00 p.m. **Mt. Hermon - The Messiah and His Kingdom**

Sat., Nov. 4, 1:00 p.m. **The Mt. of Beatitudes – A Misunderstood Message**

2:30 p.m. **The Mount of Olives – Scene of the Climax of History**

4:00 p.m. **The Dead Sea: Its Mysterious Past**

Sun., Nov. 5 9:30 a.m. **The Dead Sea: Its Magnificent Future**

11:00 a.m. **The Sea of Galilee: Marvelous Miracles around the Lord's Own Lake**

12 noon *Family Fellowship Dinner*

1:00 p.m. **The Sea of Galilee: Amazing Archeological Discoveries along Its Shores**

*Wall
Lake
Baptist
Church*

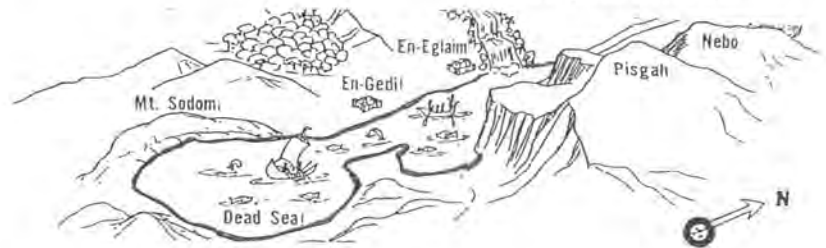
3527 Needham Ave. Box 446
Wall Lake, IA 51466

For Information, call (712) 887-9936

Refreshments served after each session!

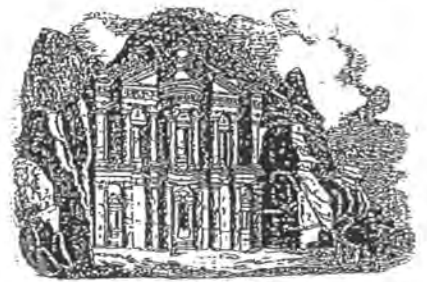
Illustrated Manuals of the Messages Provided

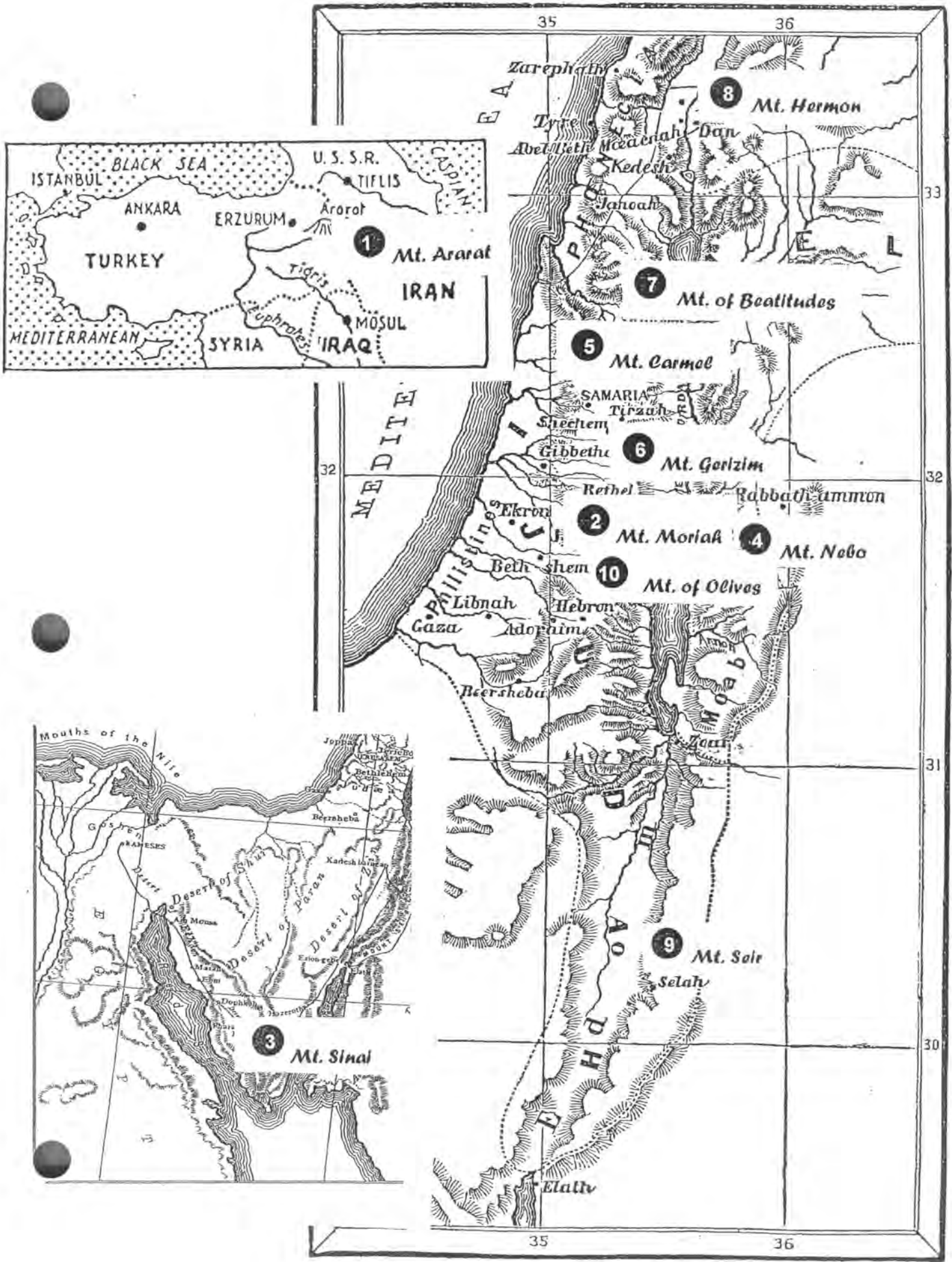
A Warm Welcome to Visitors!



Majestic Mountains of Sacred Scripture

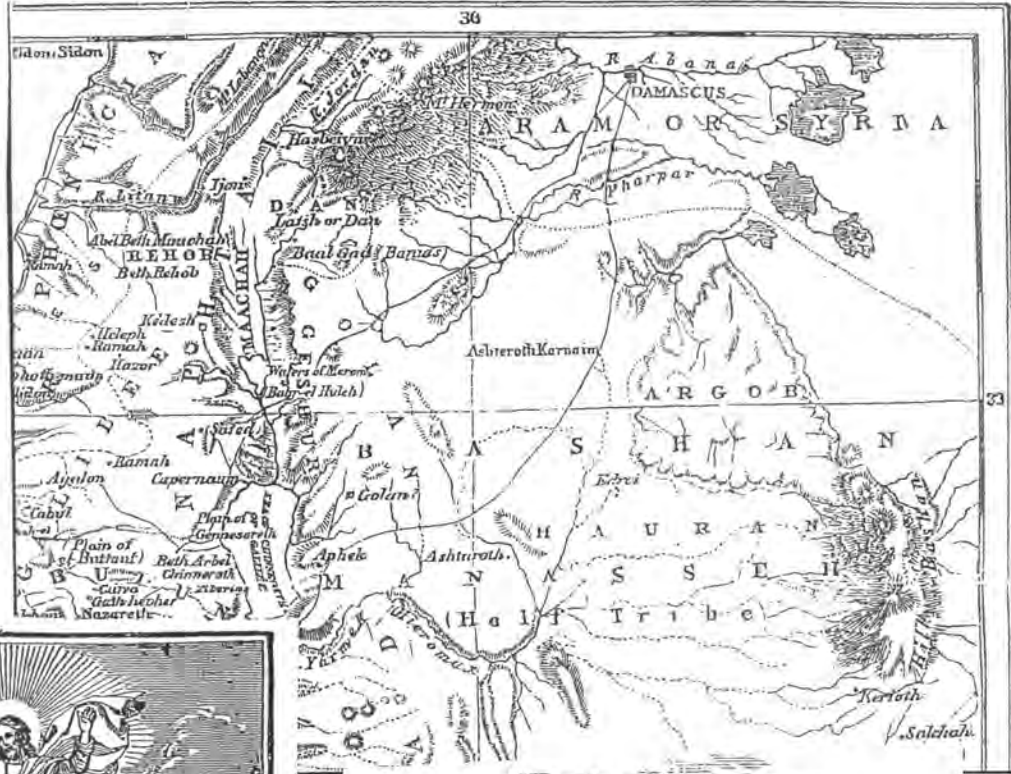
	MOUNTAIN	MAIN MESSAGE	PROMINENT PERSON	PICTURE OF CHRIST
1	<i>Mt. Ararat</i>	SAFETY	NOAH	STEADFAST DELIVERER
2	<i>Mt. Moriah</i>	SUBSTITUTION	ABRAHAM	SUBSTITUTE SACRIFICE
3	<i>Mt. Sinai</i>	STANDARDS	MOSES	SEVERE LAWGIVER
4	<i>Mt. Nebo</i>	SUMMARY	MOSES	SAFE GUIDE
5	<i>Mt. Carmel</i>	SEPARATION	ELIJAH	SOVEREIGN KING
6	<i>Mt. Gerizim</i>	SALVATION	CHRIST	SUPERNATURAL SAVIOR
7	<i>Mt. of Beatitudes</i>	SPIRITUALITY	CHRIST	SUPREME TEACHER
8	<i>Mt. Hermon</i>	SPLENDOR	CHRIST	SUFFERING MESSIAH
9	<i>Mt. Seir</i>	SECURITY	THE WOMAN (ISRAEL)	SECURE REFUGE
10	<i>Mt. of Olives</i>	SECOND COMING	CHRIST	SOVEREIGN LORD





Map of Palestine after the Schism.

Mt. Hermon – Startling Witness to the Suffering Messiah and His Kingdom



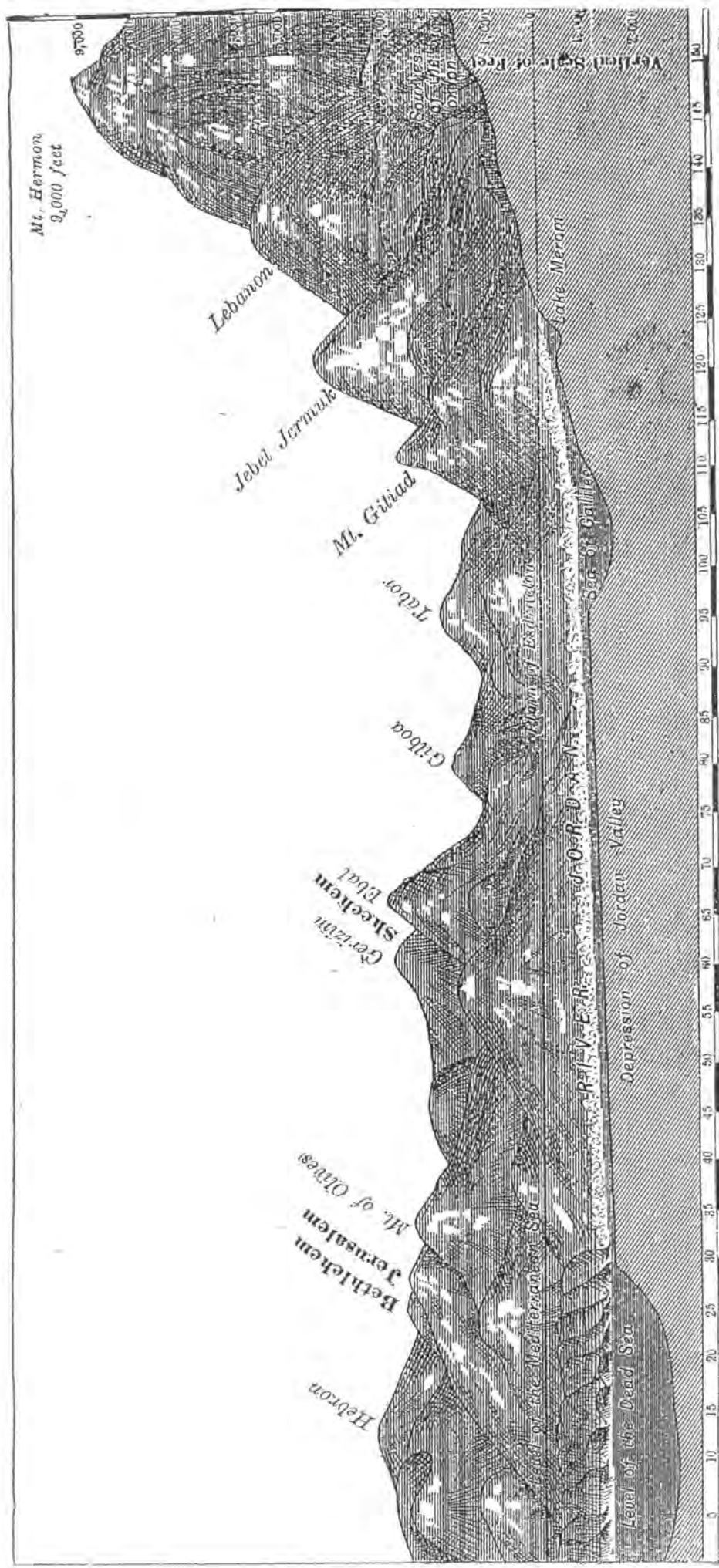
THE TRANSFIGURATION.



MOUNT HERMON.



MOUNT HERMON.



A. Zeiss & Co., Eng., Chi.

SECTION OF PALESTINE FROM NORTH TO SOUTH.

Horizontal Scale of Miles.

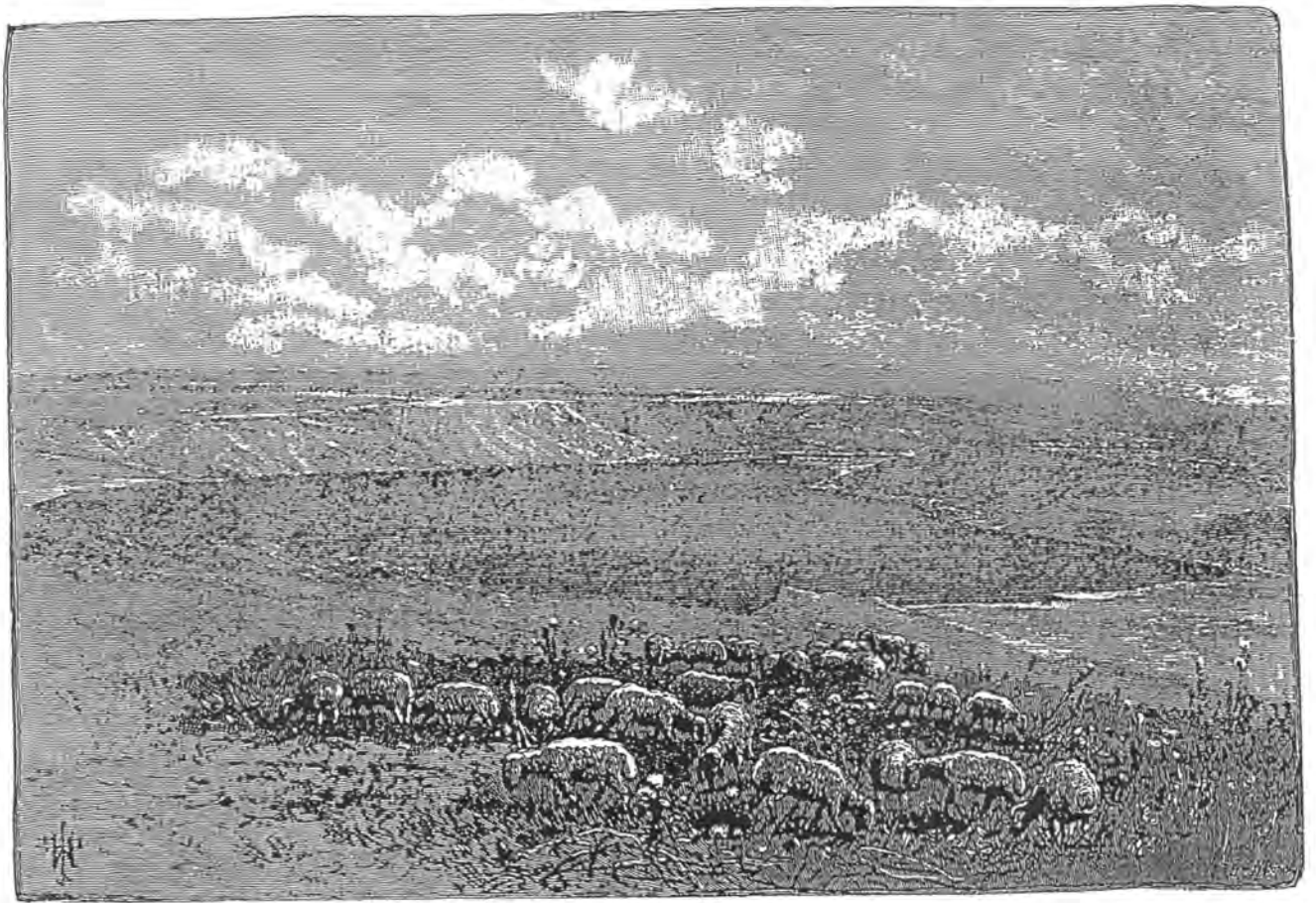
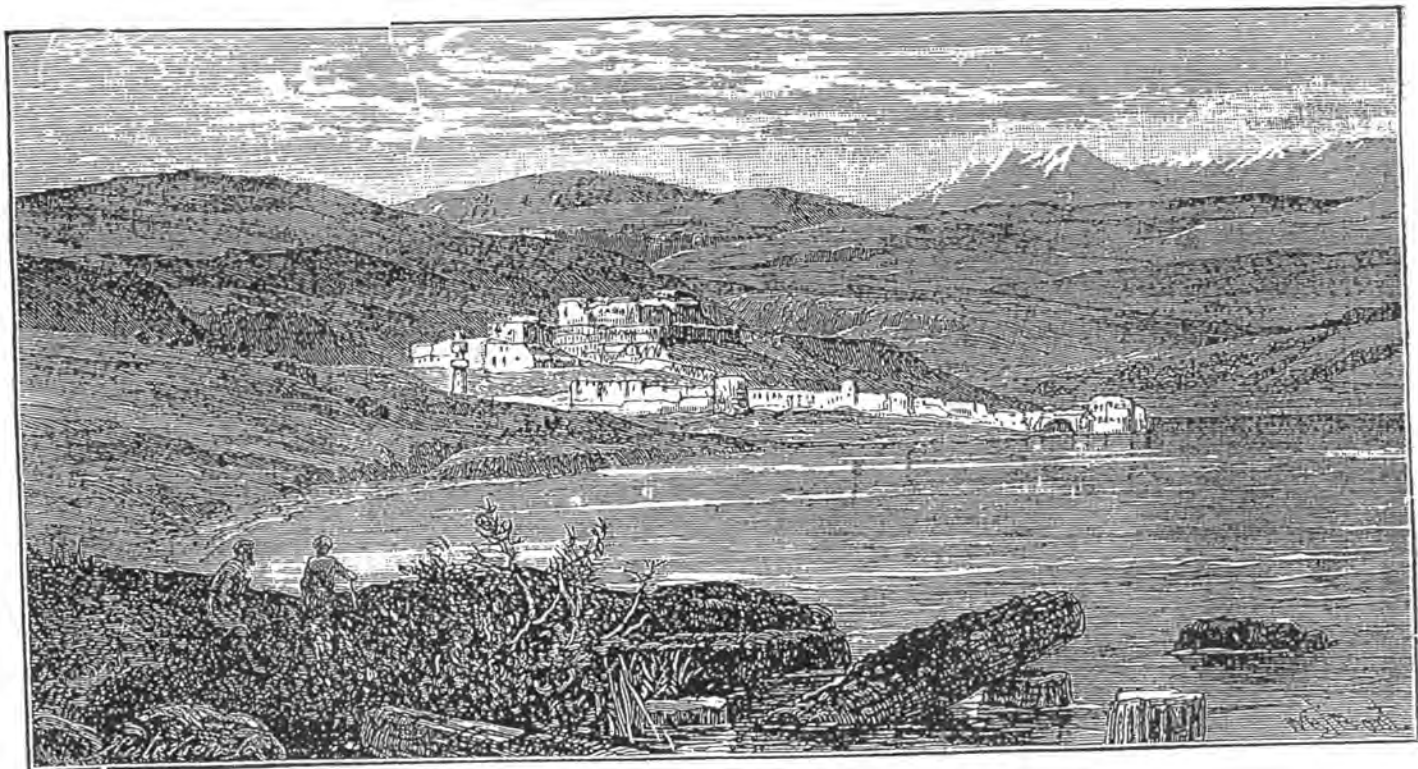


Abb. 121. Der See Genezareth (im Norden). VIEW SOUTH



ON THE SEA OF GALILEE, LOOKING TOWARDS TIBERIAS.



Mt. Hermon – Startling Witness to the Suffering Messiah and His Kingdom



Mt. Hermon From a photograph.

1A. The Extraordinary Prominence of Mt. Hermon:

1b. The commanding presence of Mt. Hermon:

George H. Whitney has given a fine summary of the elevated position of the mountain in biblical history:

Hermon, MOUNT, *lofty or prominent peak*, so called doubtless because it was visible from a very great distance. The Sidonians called it *Sirion*, from the root signifying "to glitter," and the Amorites *Shenir*, ("to clatter,") both words meaning "breastplate," and suggested by its rounded, glittering top when the sun's rays were reflected by the snow that covered it, Deut. iii,9; Sol. Song iv 8; Ezek. Xxvii, 5. It was also named *Sion*, "the elevated," towering over all its compeers, Deut. iv., 48.

Mount Hermon was on the north-eastern border of Palestine, Deut. iii, 8; Josh. xii, 1; over against Lebanon, Josh. xi, 17, adjoining the plateau of Bashan, 1 Chron. v, 23.

It was the great landmark of the Israelites. It was associated with their northern border almost as intimately as the sea was with their western. Hermon rises boldly at the southern end of Anti-Libanus to the height of about ten thousand feet above the more continuous chain. Dr. Thomson describes it as seen from Sarepta, from Tyre, and from the Dead Sea.

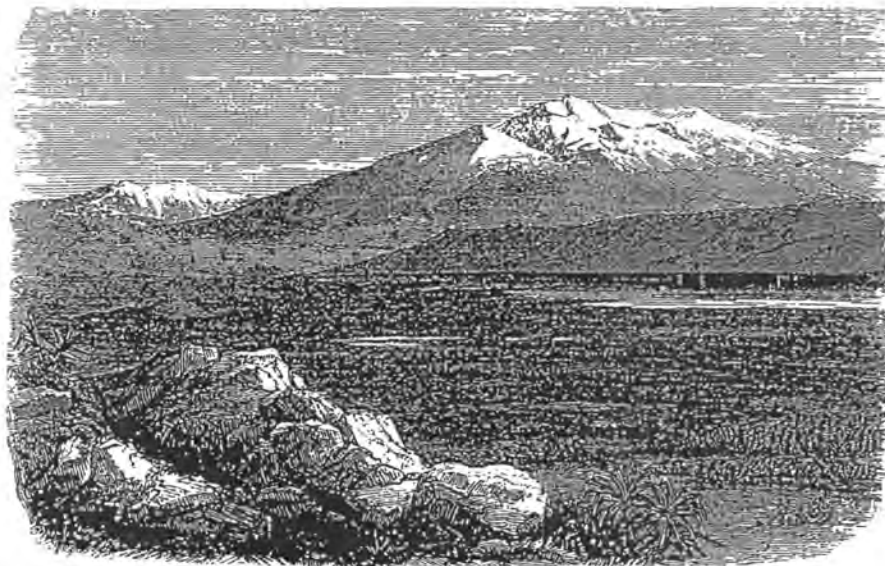
The modern name of Hermon is *Jebel eth-Thelj*, "the snowy mountain." Through the spring till the earlier part of summer the top is covered with snow; but as the weather becomes hotter large masses melt, and the snow remains only in the streaks in the ravines. On one of the summits are the remains of a circular wall inclosing a small, ruined temple. Probably this marks the site of one of the "high places," where worship was paid to idols. "The dew of Hermon" (Psa. cxxiii, 3) was very likely the distillation of the vapors condensed by the snowy crown of the mountain; and "Zion," in the same passage, is no doubt used as being one of the various names of Hermon. It may be added that the ridge *Jebel Ed-Duhy*, on the north of the valley of Jezreel, has been called the "Little Hermon." (Whitney, *Handbook of Bible Geography*, New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1877, 176.)

The *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* has some more up-to-date information on the impressive mountain visible from great distances in Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon:

The word refers to a consecrated place, a sanctuary. Mt. Hermon comprises the southern spur of the Anti-lebanon chain of mountains, which runs parallel to the Lebanon range and is separated from it by the valley of Beqaa. It is about 9,200 ft. above sea level, and is the highest mountain in Syria. It can be seen from many places in Palestine, even from as far away as the Dead Sea. Because snow covers it for much of the year, the Arabs call it the "gray-haired mountain," or the "mountain of the snow." The water from its melting snows flow into the rivers of N Hauran and provide the principal source for the Jordan River. No trees grow above the snow line, but below it the sides are covered with trees (pine, oak, and poplar) and with vineyards. Its forests contain wolves and leopards, and sometimes Syrian bears. It is not a high summit with a distinctly marked base, but a whole cluster of mountains. Its three summits are nearly equal in height and are the same distance from each other. It extends from sixteen to twenty m. from N to S. In Deuteronomy 3:9 it says that the Sidonians call it *Sirion*, while the Amorites call it *Senir*. *Sirion* occurs outside of Deuteronomy 3:9 only in Psalm 29:6. *Senir*

occurs outside of Deuteronomy 3:9 in 1 Chronicles 5:23, the Song of Solomon 4:8, and Ezekiel 27:5. Deuteronomy 4:48 has "Sion" in the KJV and "Mount Sirion" in the RSV. First Chronicles differentiates between Senir, Hermon and Baal-hermon. The Song of Solomon 4:8 speaks of the "peak of Senir and Hermon. . .

Mt. Hermon was the northern boundary of the Amorite kingdom (Deut. 3:8; 4:48), and thus is said to lie in the territory of Og (Josh. 12:5; 13:11). It was the northern limit of the conquest of Joshua (Josh 11:17; 12:1; 13:5), and the northern limit of the territory of Manasseh. The Hittites dwelt at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh (Josh 11:3). It is mentioned in the Bible as the northern boundary of the Promised Land (Deut 3:8). In ancient times it was regarded as a sacred mountain, as its Heb. name suggests. In Judges 3:3 it is called "Mount Baal-hermon," showing that Baal was worshiped there. Remains of shrines are found on the highest summit. (Merrill C. Tenney, General Editor, III, 1975, 125-126).



HERMON FROM THE NORTHERN SHORE OF LAKE HÜLFIL.

2b. The geographical particulars of Mt. Hermon:

The free encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*, has a very condensed and interesting summary of the geographical uniqueness of this mountain:

Mount Hermon is actually a cluster of mountains with three distinct summits, each about the same height. The Anti-Lebanon range extends for approximately 150 km (93 mi) in a northeast-southwest direction, running parallel to the Lebanon range on the west. The Hermon range covers an area of about 1000 square km, of which about 70km² are under Israeli control. Most of the portion of Mount Hermon within the Golan Heights constitutes the Hermon nature reserve.

The mountain forms one of the greatest geographic resources of the area. Because of its height it captures a great deal of precipitation in a very dry area of the world. The Jurassic limestone is broken by faults and solution channels to form a karst topography. Mount Hermon has seasonal winter and spring snow falls which cover all three of its peaks for most of the year. Melt water from the snow-covered mountain's western and southern bases seeps into the rock channels and pores, feeding springs at the base of the mountain, which form streams and rivers. These merge to become the Jordan River. Additionally, the runoff facilitates fertile plant life below the snow line, where vineyards and pine, oak, and poplar trees are abundant.

The springs, and the mountain itself, are much contested by the nations of the area for the use of the water. Mount Hermon is also called the "snowy mountain," the "gray-haired mountain," and the "mountain of snow." It is also called "the eyes of the nation" in Israel because its elevation makes it Israel's primary strategic early warning system.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Hermon, p. 2 of 6)

The wikipedia article also mentions that on top of the mountain is "the Hermon Hotel," in the buffer zone between Syria and Israeli-occupied territory, the highest permanent manned UN position in the world. Wikipedia, (p. 1 of 6)

3b. An atmospheric peculiarity:

There's an interesting reference to the dew of Hermon in Psalm 133:3:

The "dew of Hermon" is once referred to in a passage which has long been considered a geographical puzzle—"As the dew of Hermon, the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion" (Psa. cxxxiii, 3). Some have thought that *Zion* (זִיּוֹן) is used here for *Sion* (שִׁיּוֹן), one of the old names of Hermon (Deut. iv, 48), but this identification is unnecessary. The snow on the summit of this mountain condenses the vapors that float during the summer in the higher regions of the atmosphere, causing light clouds to hover around it, and abundant dew to descend on it, while the whole country elsewhere is parched, and the whole heaven elsewhere cloudless. One of its tops is actually called *Abu-Nedy*, i.e. "father of dew."

(John M'Clintock, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1894, 209).

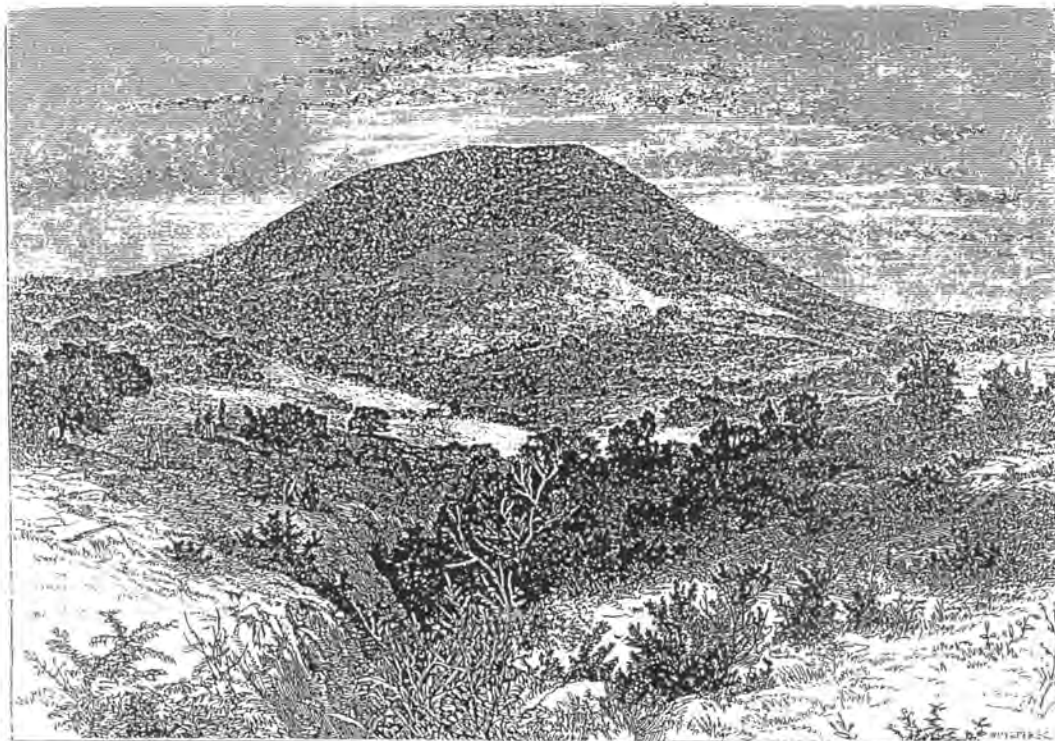
2A. **The Continuous Contest Over the Identity of The Mount of Transfiguration:**

The famous church historian and Christian scholar, Philip Schaff, makes an interesting comparison between two mountains which have historically been identified as the Mt. of Transfiguration:

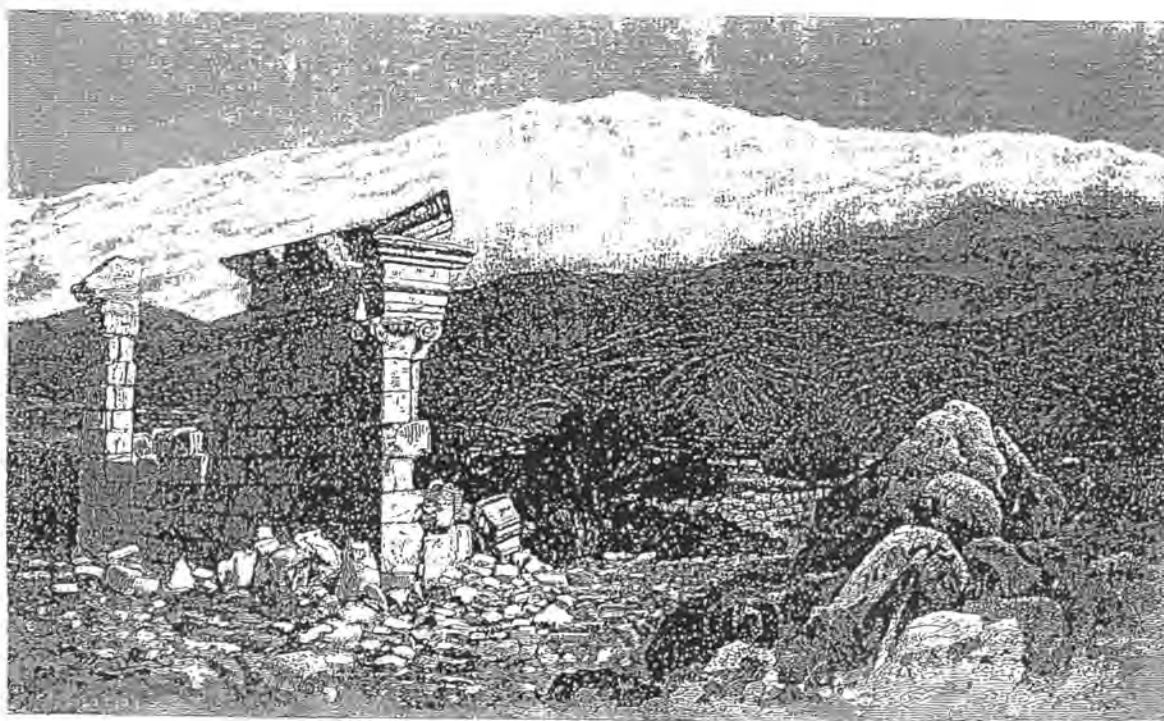
Mount Tabor is the Rigi, Mount Hermon the Mont Blanc, of Palestine. They are the two representative mountains of that country, the one for its gracefulness, the other for its loftiness. They are not mentioned in the New Testament, but repeatedly in the Old. They are associated together by the Psalmist when he says, "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." Some of the greatest events in the history of Revelation, from the legislation of Moses to the Ascension of Christ, took place on mountains. Tabor or Hermon, probably the latter, is the Mount of Transfiguration. . . Mount Hermon is less graceful [than Mt. Tabor,] but more imposing and sublime. It is called "Jebel esh-Sheikh" by the Arabs, i.e., the chief mountain. It rises on the northern extremity of Galilee to a height of 10,000 feet above the Mediterranean, and presents three lofty peaks. It is covered with eternal snow, which gives it a glistening appearance. It can be seen from every direction far and wide, from Gerizim and Tabor in the south, from Damascus in the east, from the northern heights of the Antilebanon and Lebanon, and from the plains of Coelesyria. Moses saw it from the top of Pisgah in Moab, when "the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan." At its southern base lies Baniyas or Caesarea Philippi, one of the most romantic spots in Palestine. Here the river Jordan gushes out from the rocks. Here, on the boundary line between the Jews and the Gentiles, our Saviour spent several days before he entered on his last journey to Jerusalem. Here he elicited from Peter that famous confession, from which, as from a spiritual rock, have sprung the Christian confessions and creeds of subsequent ages. Here he prophesied the founding of his indestructible Church, his passion and resurrection.

Tabor and Hermon are the two claimants for the honor of being the MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION, or "the holy mount," as Peter calls it. It was certainly "a *high mountain*," according to the Evangelists, and the choice lies between these two. Both are in themselves equally well fitted for the event, Tabor rather than Hermon, on account of its central location in Palestine, only a few miles from Nazareth and the Lake of Gennesaret, where our Saviour spent the greater part of his life on earth.

Mt. Tabor and Mt. Hermon



Dr. Baker



RUINED TEMPLE AT THELTHATHA. JEBEL ESH SHEIKH—MOUNT HERMON

Tabor has in its favor the monastic tradition, which goes back to St. Jerome in the fourth century, and which gave rise to a number of buildings on the summit. . . . But two arguments are against Tabor and in favor of Hermon.

(1.) The fact that the summit of Tabor was occupied by a city of the tribe of Zebulon, and was employed without intermission between the times of Antiochus the Great, 218 B.C., to the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, as a fortification, and hence unfit for quiet seclusion and meditation.

(2.) More conclusive than this local objection is the succession of events and the short interval between them. The transfiguration took place "six days" after Peter's confession in Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mount Hermon, and was followed by a journey to Capernaum, and thence to Jerusalem. This is all plain if we locate the transfiguration on Hermon; but it would have been a waste of time if Jesus should have traveled from Caesarea Philippi to Mount Tabor, passing Capernaum on the way, and gone back from Mount Tabor to Capernaum, then to proceed again southward to Jerusalem. Moreover, "it is exceedingly improbable that Christ should so suddenly have left his retreat in the highlands of Gaulanitis, and transferred the scene of one of his most secret revelations to Galilee, where he was everywhere persecuted". . .

(adapted from *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*, New York: The American Tract Society, 1878, 330-335).

3A. The Context of the Transfiguration in the Ministry of Christ:

Henry Van Dyke, in his superb volume, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, has one of the finest summaries found anywhere of the last six months of our Savior's earthly ministry. With just a few strokes he paints a synoptic picture of the events beginning at the foot of Mt. Hermon and culminating at the top of Mt. Calvary. It is worthwhile quoting his excellent observations, beginning with His arrival at Caesarea Philippi, just north of the ancient city of Dan:

The aqueduct carried by the bridge is still full of flowing water, and the drops which fall from it in a fine mist make a little rainbow as the afternoon sun shines through the archway draped with maidenhair fern. On the stone pavement of the bridge we trace the ruts worn two thousand years ago by the chariots of the men who conquered the world. The chariots have all rolled by. On the broken edge of the tower above the gateway sits a ragged Bedouin boy, making shrill, plaintive music with his pipe of reeds.

We repose in front of our tents among the olive trees at the close of the day. The cool sound of running streams and rustling poplars is on the moving air, and the orange-golden sunset enchants the orchard with mystical light. All the swift visions of striving Saracens and Crusaders of conquering Greeks and Romans, fade away from us, and we see the figure of the Man of Nazareth with His little company of friends and disciples coming up from Galilee.

It was here that Jesus retreated with His few faithful followers from the opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees. This was the northernmost spot of earth ever trodden by His feet, the longest distance from Jerusalem that He ever travelled. Here in this exquisite garden of Nature, in a region of the Gentiles, within sight of the shrines devoted to those Greek and Roman rites which were so luxurious and so tolerant, four of the most beautiful and significant events of His life and ministry took place.

He asked His disciples plainly to tell their secret thought of Him—whom they believed their Master to be. And when Peter answered simply: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus blessed him for the answer, and declared that He would build His church upon that rock.

Then He took Peter and James and John with Him and climbed one of the high lonely slopes of Hermon. There He was transfigured before them, His face shining like the sun and His garments glistening like the snow on the mountain peaks. But when they begged to stay there with Him, He led them down to the valley again, among the sinning and suffering children of men.

At the foot of the mount of transfiguration, He healed the demoniac boy whom his father had brought to the other disciples, but for whom they had been unable to do anything; and He taught them that the power to help men comes from faith and prayer.

And then, at last, He turned His steps from this safe and lovely refuge, (where He might surely have lived in peace, or from which He might have gone out unmolested into the wide Gentile world), backward to His own country, His own people, the great, turbulent, hard-hearted Jewish city, and the fate which was not to be evaded by One who loved sinners and came to save them. He went down into Galilee, down through Samaria and Perea, down to Jerusalem, down to Gethsemane and to Golgotha, —fearless, calm,—sustained and nourished by that secret food which satisfied His heart in doing the will of God.

It was in the quest of this Jesus, in the hope of somehow drawing nearer to Him, that we made our pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And now, in the cool of the evening at Caesarea Philippi, we ask ourselves whether our desire has been granted, our hope fulfilled?

Yes more richly, more wonderfully than we dared to dream. For we have found a new vision of Christ, simpler, clearer, more satisfying, in the freedom and reality of God's out-of-doors . . . The Jesus whom we have found is the Child of Nazareth playing among the flowers; the Man of Galilee walking beside the lake, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, cheering the lonely and despondent; the well-beloved Son of God transfigured in the sunset glow of snowy Hermon, weeping by the sepulchre in Bethany, agonizing in the moonlit garden of Gethsemane, giving His life for those who did not understand Him, though they loved Him, and for those who did not love Him because they did not understand Him, and rising at last triumphant over death,—such a Saviour as all men need and as no man could ever have imagined if He had not been real.

(*Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, 283-287).

4A. The Confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi:

J. L. Porter has captured in a few strokes of the pen the scenic splendor of the sacred site where Peter, the spokesmen for the twelve disciples, first professed openly his faith in Him as Messiah:

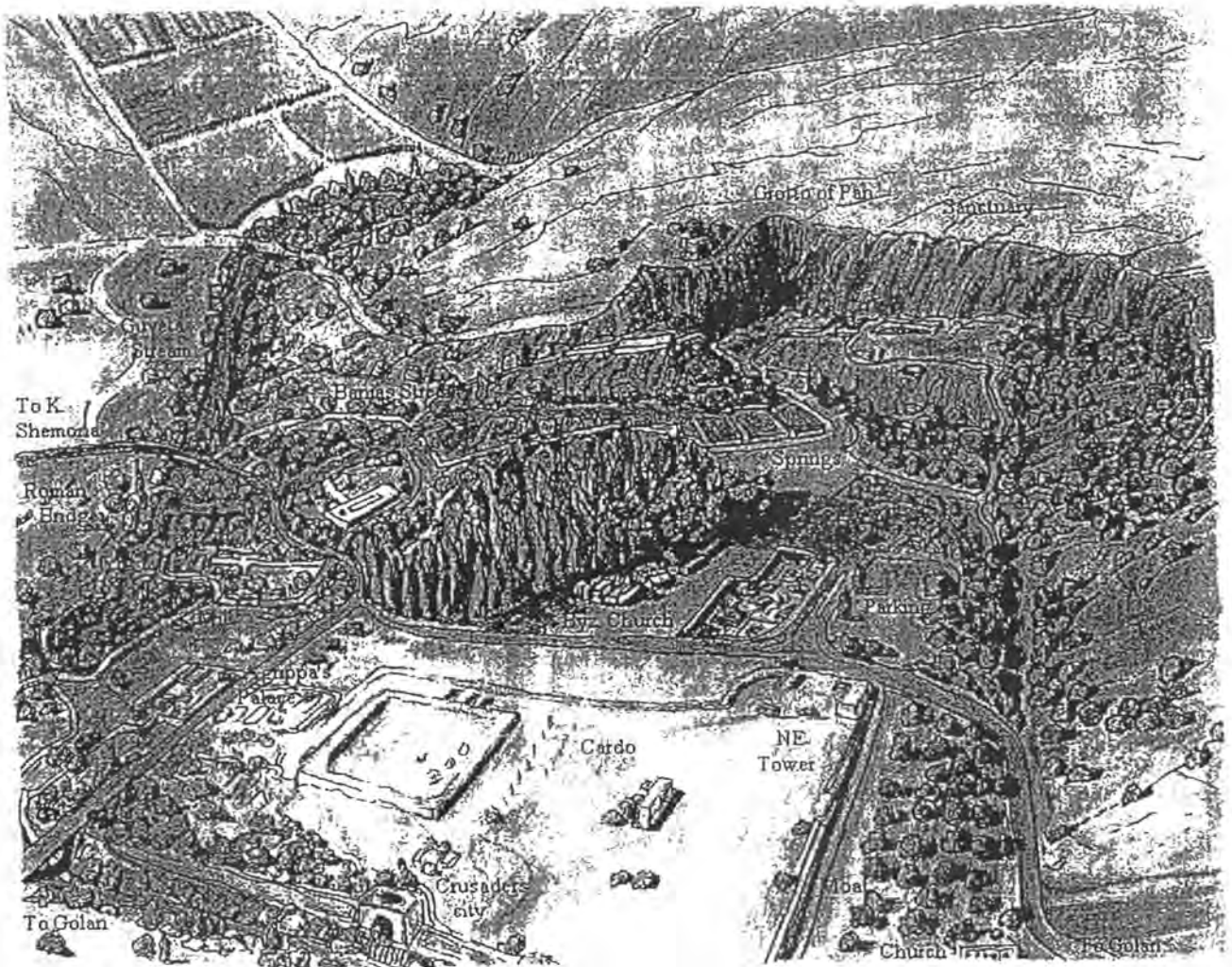
Half an hour across the plain, through pleasant forest glades, bordered with myrtle, acacia, and oleander, and another half hour up a rugged mountain side, beneath the shade of Bashan's stately oaks, brought me to the site of the old Greek city of Panium, which Herod the Great rebuilt, and re-named Caesarea-Philippi. This is one of the very few really beautiful spots in Palestine. Behind rises Hermon, steep, rugged, and grand, one of its lower peaks crowned by the frowning battlements of a Phoenician castle. In front stretches out the broad plain of Merom, like a vast meadow, and away beyond it is the mountain range of Lebanon. The city stood upon a natural terrace, which is interspersed with groves of oaks and olives and shrubberies of hawthorn, myrtle, and acacia, and is all alive with streams of water and miniature cascades, fretting here and there against prostrate column and ruined wall. It is, in fact, as Dean Stanley has happily named it, a Syrian Tivoli.

Behind the ruins rises a cliff of ruddy limestone. At its base is a dark cave, now nearly filled with the ruins of a temple. From the cave, from the ruins, from every chink and cranny in the soil and rocks around, waters gush forth, which soon collect into a torrent, dash in sheets of foam down a rocky bed, and at length plunge over a precipice into a deep dark ravine. *This is the other great fountain of the Jordan.*

It is "holy ground," for Jesus was here. Beside the fountain he uttered those memorable words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. xvi. 13-20; xvii. 1-13). May not the sight of the great cliff overhead have suggested the peculiar form of the expression? And we read that six days afterwards Christ took three of his disciples, and led them "up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them." Standing there amid the ruins of Caesarea, one does not need to ask where the Mount of Transfiguration is. Hermon, the grandest and the most beautiful of all the mountains of Palestine, has established its claim to the title of "holy mount."

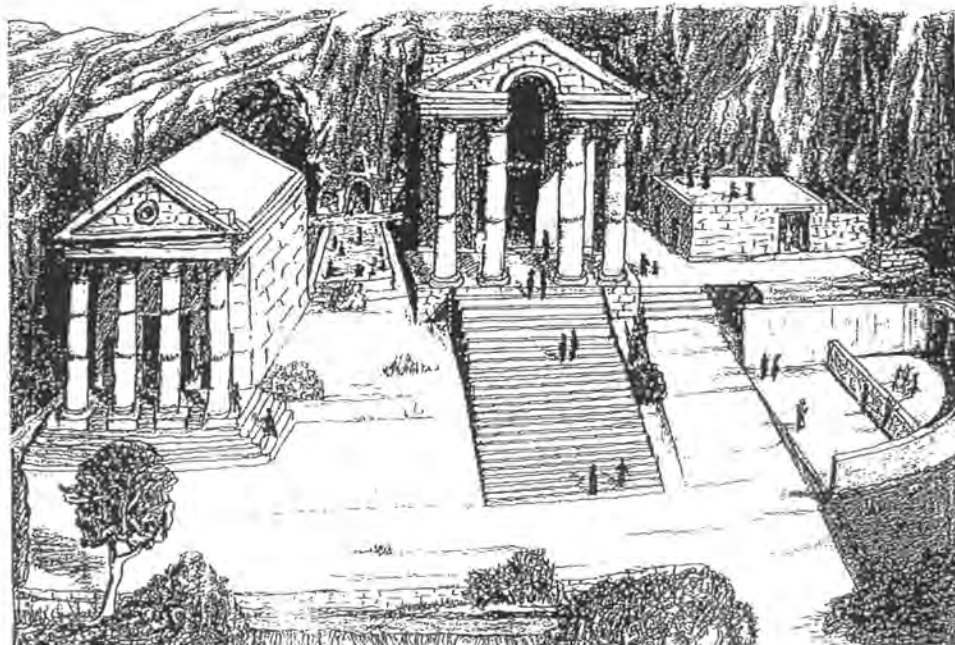
(*The Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places*, London: T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster Row, 1891, 103-104.)

The spectacularly beautiful source of the Banias branch of the Jordan surrounded by Greek and pagan sanctuaries. The second picture below shows the reconstruction of Greek temples near the site of Peter's confession.



Banias_TemplesS.jpg (JPEG Image, 720x501 pixels)

http://www.biblewalks.com/photos/banias_temple.jpg



5A. The Centrality of the Transfiguration in the Incarnation of Christ:

It would be unthinkable to write a book on the life of Christ or the gospel story without commenting one of the highlights in our Savior's earthly ministry and undoubtedly the high point in the experience of the disciples Peter, James and John.

One of the great works on the ministry of Christ is by Cunningham Geikie, who has written widely and with real spiritual insight on a variety of biblical topics. Thus far this writer has not quoted him, but it is worthwhile to reproduce here some of his excellent comments on the transfiguration of Christ. The points of the outline are added by this writer for the sake of clarity.

1b. The companions of the Savior:

Taking the three of His little band most closely in sympathy with Him, and most able to receive the disclosures that might be made to them, He ascended into the hills towards evening, for silent prayer. The favoured friends were Peter, the rock-like, His host at Capernaum from the first; and the two Sons of Thunder, John and James; loved disciples both, but John, the younger, nearest his Master's heart of all the Twelve, as most like Himself in spirit. They had been singled out, already, for similar especial honour, for they alone had entered the death-chamber in the house of Jairus, and they were, hereafter, to be the only witnesses of the awful sorrow of Gethsemane.

2b. The communion and prayer:

Evening fell while Jesus poured out His soul in high communion with His Father, and the three, having finished their nightly devotions, had wrapped themselves in their abbas and lain down on the hill-side, to sleep. Meanwhile their Master continued in prayer. His whole soul filled with the crisis so fast approaching.

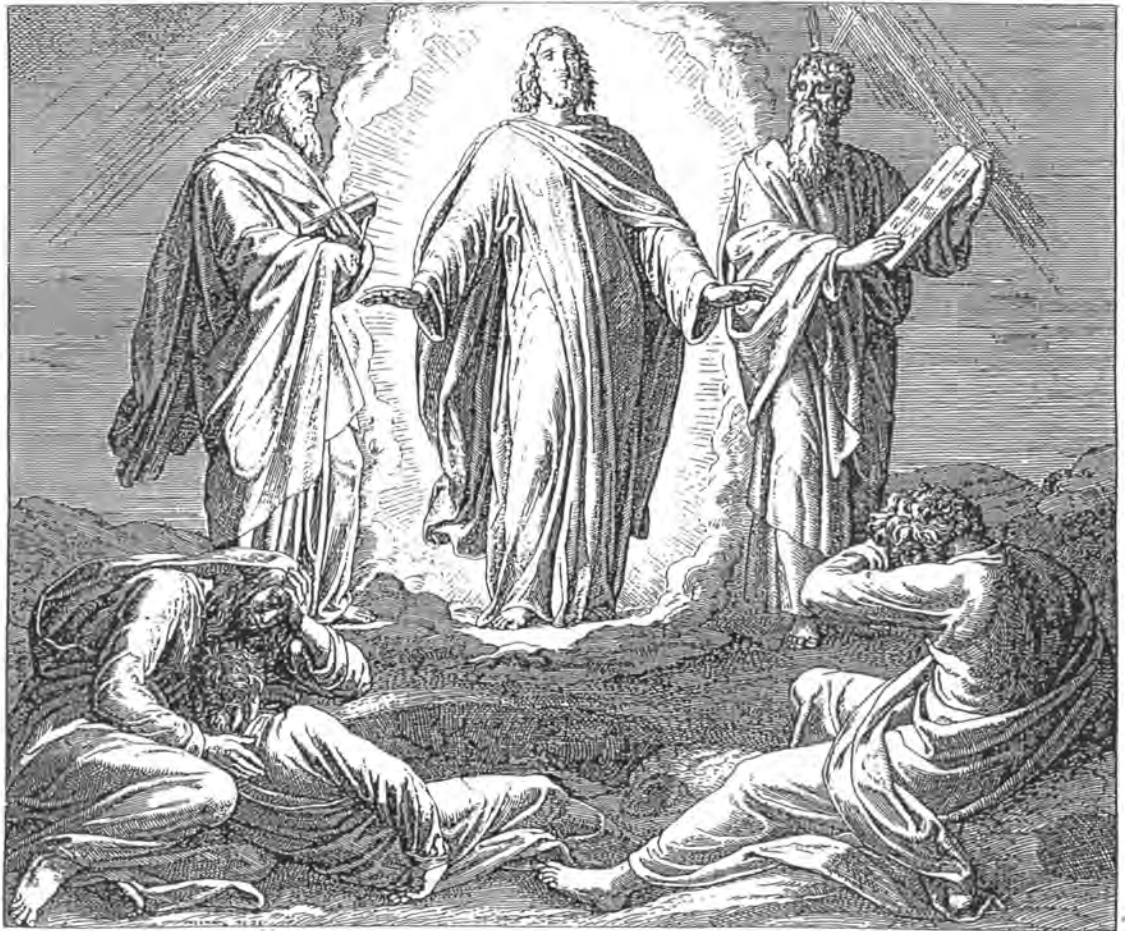
3b. The condition of the Savior:

He had taken the three with Him, to overcome their dread of His death and repugnance to the thought of it, as unbecoming the Messiah; to strengthen them to bear the sight of His humiliation hereafter; and to give them an earnest of the glory into which He would enter after His decease, and thus teach them that, though unseen, He was, more than ever, mighty to help. He was about to receive a solemn consecration for the cross, but, with it, a strong support to His soul in the prospect of such a death. He was a man like ourselves, and His nature, now in its high prime, and delighting in life, must have shrunk from the thought of dying. The prolonged agony and shame of so painful and ignominious an end, must have clouded His spirit at times; but, above all, who can conceive the moral suffering that must have been in the thought that, though the Holy One, He was to be made an offering for sin; that, though filled with unutterable love to His people, He was to die at their hands as their enemy; that, though innocent and stainless, He was to suffer as a criminal; that, though the beloved Son of God, He was to be condemned as a blasphemer?

4b. The change in His appearance:

As He continued praying, His soul rose above all earthly sorrows. Drawn forth by the nearness of His Heavenly Father, the Divinity within shone through the veiling flesh till

His raiment kindled to the dazzling brightness of light, or of the glittering snow on the peaks above Him and His face glowed with a sunlike majesty.



5b. The comfort of Moses and Elijah:

Amidst such an effulgence it was impossible the three could sleep. Roused by the splendour, they gazed, awe-struck, at the wonder, when, lo! Two human forms, in glory like that of the angels, stood by His side—Moses and Elijah, the founder, and the great defender, of the Old Economy, which He had come at once to supersede and to fulfill. Their presence from the upper world was a symbol that the Law and the Prophets henceforth gave place to a higher Dispensation; but they had also another mission. They had passed through death, or, at least, from life, and knew the triumph that lay beyond mortality to the faithful servants of God. Who could speak to Him as they, of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, and temper the gloom of its anticipation? Their presence spoke of the grave conquered, and of the eternal glory beyond. The empty tomb under Mount Abarim, and the horses and chariots of Elijah, dispelled all fears of the future, and instantly banished all human weakness. That His Eternal Father should have honoured and cheered Him by such an embassy at such a time, girt His soul to the joyful acceptance of the awful task of redemption. Human agitation and spiritual conflict passed away, to return no more in their bitterness till the night before Calvary. His whole nature rose to the height of His great enterprise. Henceforth His one thought was to finish the work His Father had given Him to do.

6b. The concern of Peter:

Meanwhile, the three Apostles, dazzled, confused, and lost in wonder, gazed silently on the amazing sight, and listened. But it is not given to earth to have more than brief glimpses of Heaven. Moses and Elijah had ere long finished their mission, and were about to return to the presence of God. Could they not be induced to stay awhile? Peter, ever first to speak, and hardly knowing, in his confusion, what he said, would at least try to prolong such an interview. "Master," said he, to amplify his words, "it is good for us to be here; let us gather some branches from the slopes around, and put up three booths, like those of the Feast of Tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." The cares and troubles of his wandering life, and all his gloomy forebodings for his Master and himself, had faded away before such brightness and joy, and, in his fond childlike simplicity, he dreamed of lengthening out the delight.

7b. The contrast between Mt. Sinai and the Mt. of Transfiguration:

The Almighty had come down of old, to Mount Sinai, in blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but now, a bright cloud descended from the clear sky, like that from which He had of old spoken to Moses at the door of the Tabernacle, and overshadowed Jesus and the two heavenly visitors, filling the three Apostles with fear, as they saw it spread round and over their Master, and those with Him. It was the symbol of the presence of God, for He, also, had drawn nigh to bear witness to His Eternal Son.

8b. The confirmation of the Father:

It was not enough that Moses and Elijah had honoured Him—a voice from the midst of the cloud added a still higher testimony, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

9b. The commentary of Peter:

Such a confirmation of the great confession of Peter was never to be forgotten. Almost a generation later, when he wrote his second Epistle, the remembrance of this night was as vivid as ever. "We were eye-witnesses," says he, "of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.' And this voice which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." The brightness of a vision so amazing lingered in the memory of those who beheld it to the latest day of their lives.

(The Life and Words of Christ, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1913, 236-239).

Talented and pious individuals have tried to picture the scene on the Mt. of Transfiguration. Perhaps none is more famous than that by the Italian artist Raphael. Philip Schaff shows a real appreciation of this icon when he writes:

Every one knows the picture of the Transfiguration in the Vatican, which represents the Saviour soaring above the earth and floating in glory, Moses and Elijah bowing in adoration before him, the disciples overpowered by the dazzling light, and below, in startling contrast to this scene of celestial peace, the misery of the lunatic whose healing follows in the gospel narrative. It is one of the sublimest conceptions of human genius, and yet but an imperfect reflection of the reality. It was the last work of Raphael, and accompanied his coffin to the grave in the Pantheon. He died of the transfiguration, in the prime of manhood; but his picture, multiplied in ten thousand copies all over the earth, will continue to preach to admiring beholders the best sermon on this supernatural event.

(*Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*, New York: The American Tract Society, 1878, 335-336).

Raphael's Timeless Painting of the Transfiguration



THE TRANSFIGURATION — FROM THE GREAT RAPHAEL PAINTING.

Christ's Companionship With Peter, James and John

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter
Luke 8:51

The Mt. of Transfiguration
Mt. 17:12; Mk. 9:2; Lk. 9:28

The Agony in Gethsemane
Mt. 26:37



Vivification of a Sweet Person

Transfiguration of His Person

Anticipation of His Passion

Prayer for restoration to life

Prayer out of devotion

Prayer for deliverance from the cup

Divine Power

Divine Performance

Human Passion

Concern

Companionship

Comfort

The Horns of Hattin, i.e.

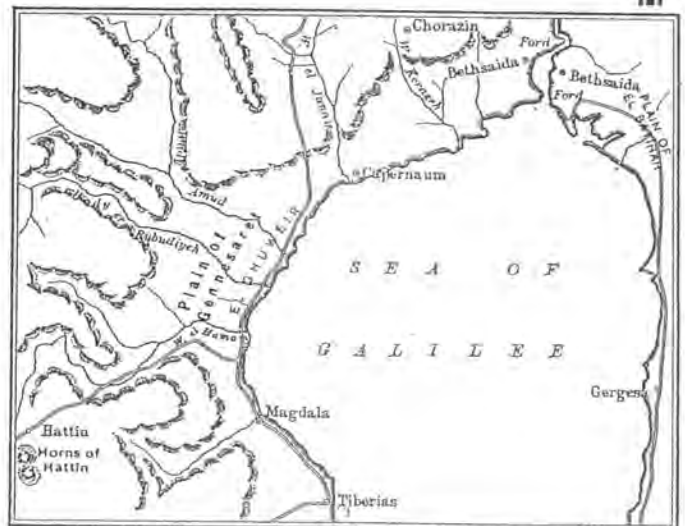
The Mount of the Beatitudes – The Most Misunderstood Message
from the Lips of the Lord



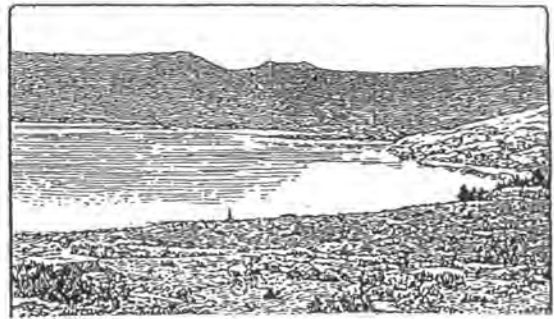
186. 115. Die Hüner von Hattin.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.



The Horns of Hattin



1A. The Importance of Galilee:

Galilee is the home of the Savior. He spent two years of His three years of public ministry in Galilee. His first major sermon was preached here, the topic for our discussion on the Horns of Hattin or the Mount of Beatitudes.

1b. The design of Galilee:

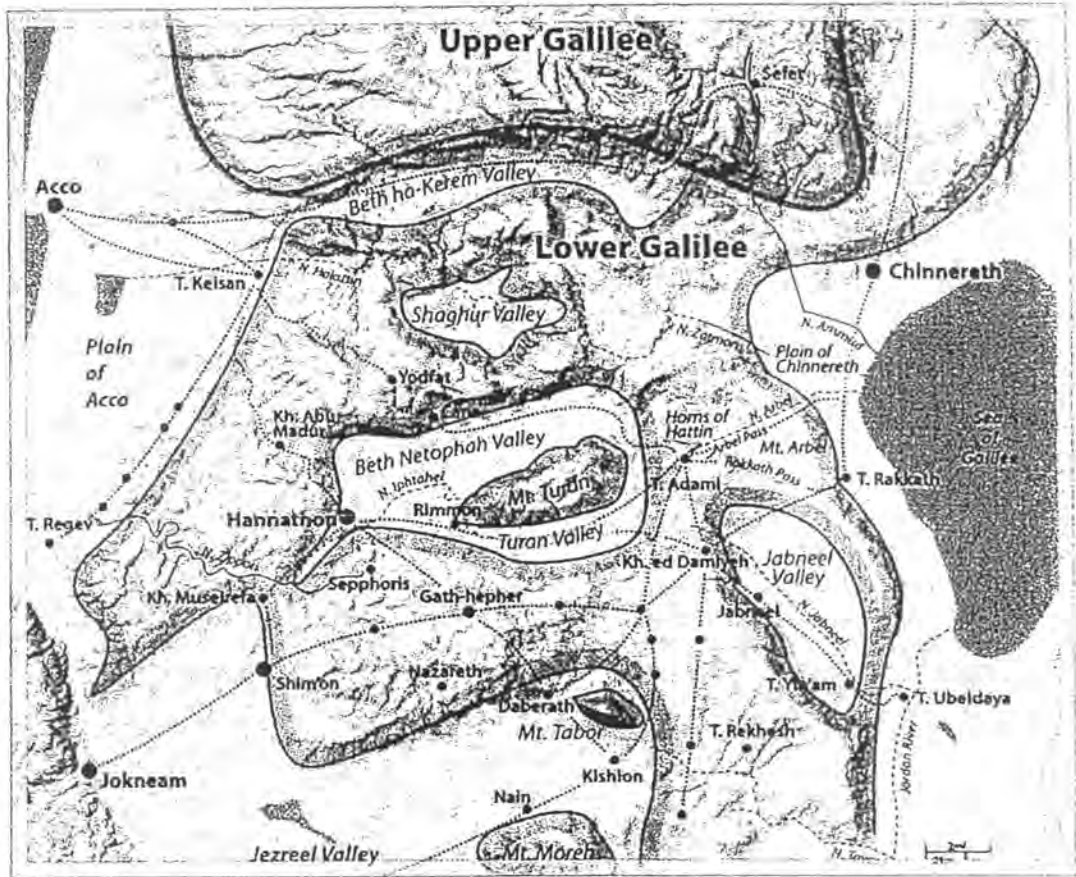
Galilee was a region in northern Palestine that was controlled at different times by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, and Roman Empires. Under the Romans it became a fixed administrative area (ca. 57 B.C.). Herod Antipas, for example, was tetrarch of Galilee after the death of his father, Herod the Great (4 B.C.; see Luke 3:1). Because the Israelites never succeeded in driving out the Canaanites who "dwelt among them" (Judg. 1:30-33), and since Galilee was surrounded by foreign nations whose populations mixed freely with the Jews, this region was called by Isaiah, "Galilee of the nations" (Isa. 9:1). The name "Galilee" comes from the Hebrew galil which means a circle. The word "nations" is from the Hebrew goim, which can also be translated "gentiles." Thus the phrase "Galilee of the nations" might also be translated "in the district (region) of the gentiles," reflecting the fact that Galilee often comprised a mixed population of Jews and gentiles.

2b. The division of Galilee:

Galilee is composed of several subregions, including Upper Galilee (most of which is in Lebanon today), Lower Galilee, and the Sea of Galilee... Upper and Lower Galilee are distinguished by differences in altitude, climate, and vegetation. The mountains of Lower Galilee are less than 2,000 feet high; whereas those of Upper Galilee attain almost twice that height. Upper Galilee is fragmented into isolated hills and deep valleys. Lower Galilee is more open: the valleys run between and parallel to the mountains, connecting the coast with the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee. These valley roads carried the commerce and military might of the ancient world, making Lower Galilee a focus of international concern.

3b. The description of the population of Galilee:

According to Josephus (1st century A.D.), "the cities [of Galilee] lie here very thick; and the very many villages ... are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants" (III Wars iii.2). The figures provided by Josephus see high (elsewhere he mentions some 200 towns and villages, making a total of more than 3,000,000 inhabitants in Galilee!), but his description of a highly populated region accords with what is known about Galilee in that period. What was true of Galilee, in general, applied more specifically to Lower Galilee because of its rich soils and abundant rainfall and because there was more level ground. Lower Galilee was one of the favored regions for settlement. Here, also, "Jesus went about all the



Der Berg der Seligpreisungen.

cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity" (Matt. 9:35).

2A. The Identification of the Location:

1b. The geographical features:

According to tradition, the Sermon on the Mount was preached on a mountain west of the Sea of Galilee, known as the Horns of Hattin, (in Arabic: *Kurin Hattin*, in Hebrew Karnei Hittin), an extinct volcano with twin peaks overlooking the plains of Hattin in the Lower Galilee.

2b. The historical significance:

Karnei Hittin is believed to be the site of the Battle of Hattin, Saladin's victory over the Crusaders on July 4, 1187. The Battle of Hattin was fought in summer when the grass was tinder-dry. Saladin's troops set fire to the grass, cutting off the Crusaders' access to water in the Sea of Galilee. Saladin built a "victory dome," *Qubbat al-Nasr*, on the hill. Thietmar, a German pilgrim who visited the site in 1217, wrote that the "temple Saladin had erected to his gods after the victory is now desolate." In the early 17th century, ruins were found on the summit that appeared to be those of a church. Prior to 1948, and Arab village, Hittin, lay at the foot of the hill. Excavations were carried out on the hill in 1976 and 1981.

Many have identified the hill with the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount. Writing in 1864, Ferguson describes it as the "supposed" site, because although "its position corresponds with the particulars of the narrative," no one can declare with any certainty that He gave a sermon at that exact spot.

3b. The strategic location:

The narrow valley leading to the Plain of Gennesaret (northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee), was also called the "Valley of Robbers." Bandits used to plunder caravans as they traveled up and down this strategic pass. Herod the Great (38 B.C.), for example, I gathered a force at the village of Arbela to purge Galilee of the "robbers that were in the caves" above the pass (I Wars xvi.2-5). This was also the way of the international highway called the Via Maris, and the road used by Jesus when he traveled from Nazareth to Capernaum.



The above material was adapted from (<http://www.messengers-of-messiah.org/Tour/LowerGal1.html>, accessed 10/17/2012.) and (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horns_of_Hattin.html)

3A. The Mount of Beatitudes

1b. The name:

This name is given to the place where our Savior delivered the "Sermon on the Mount," beginning with the Beatitudes. The scene of this discourse is traditionally located on Karn Hattin (or Kurun Hattin), the *Horns of Hattin*, a mountain which receives its name from the little village at its northern base and from the two cones of horns which crown its summit. Karn Hattin is in Galilee, within easy distance of Nazareth, Cana, and Mt. Tabor to the southwest, of Tiberias and Lake Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee) to the east, and of Capharnaum to the northeast, in the center, therefore, of much of the ministry of Jesus. It lies 1,816 feet above the lake and 1,135 feet above the sea level.

2b. The geography:

This mountain, rising above the hills that skirt the lake, is the only height to the west that can be seen from its shores. It consists of a low ridge about one-quarter of a mile long, extending east and west, and rising at each extremity into a cone or horn. The eastern horn, which is the taller, is only sixty feet above the ridge. Between the horns lies an uneven platform which could easily accommodate the crowd that followed Jesus; but it is believed that the spot on which the discourse was given is lower down, on a level place on the southern side of the mountain, corresponding with St. Luke's description (*topou pedinou*) vi, 17, which may mean a level place, as well as a "plain."

3b. The view:

From the eastern slope of the hill there is a beautiful view, to the east, of the lake with the Jolan (Gaulanitis) mountains beyond, to the south the plateau of Ard el-Hamm, and Mt. Tabor, and to the north the snowy height of Mt. Hermon. The tradition that there was a village on the mountain top, if true (the only proof being the remains of a wall which served as defense to a camp), might lend point to the reference in the sermon to the city which was seated on a hill and could not be hid (Matt., v, 14); and the beautiful flowers that abound there might include the unidentified "lilies of the field" (vi, 28). Bishop Le Camus (*Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, II, pp. 220-222) thought he never saw elsewhere and never imagined so lovely a variety and harmony in the beauty of flowers; other travellers are scarcely so enthusiastic, but all agree the spot has a charm of its own.

4b. The tradition:

It is interesting to note that, like the Old Testament law, this law of Christ for His people was given on a mountain.

The tradition regarding the scene of the Sermon on the Mount, though usually received with a certain degree of favor by Scriptural scholars, apparently does

not go back beyond the crusaders. St. Jerome, the best informed man of his day on points of this nature, knew of no such tradition and merely conjectured that the scene was on Mt. Tabor or some other high mountain of Galilee (Comm. In Ev. S. Matt. In Cap. V). The Gospels, in fact, afford but little help in determining the site. Matt., v, 1 locates the sermon on The mountain (*to oros*), and Luke, vi, 12, uses the same expression for the spot from which our Lord descended before He preached on the "level place", vi, 17. The expression most naturally "suggests that the sermon had long been traditionally connected with a mountain and seems to mean The mountain on which the sermon was delivered." Some scholars even see in the definite article the indication of a particular mountain which the Evangelists suppose known to the reader; but popular curiosity concerning the scene of particular Gospel events is a growth of later date.

5b. The mountain:

If we seek to determine the particular mountain to which the Evangelists allude, we cannot advance with anything like certainty beyond the ancient opinion of St. Jerome (Comm. in Ev. Matt.) that the events before and after the discourse show that it was given on some mountain of Galilee. It is not unlikely that the locality was not far distant from Capharnaum, into which our Lord entered after finishing His discourse (Matt., viii, 5; Luke, vii, 1); but the Evangelists do not say how soon after the discourse He entered Capharnaum. We know from their literary methods that it may have been a day, a week, or even more, for they had little interest in the chronological sequence of events, and the attempt to press details of this sort only results in interminable contradictions.

6b. The probability:

In favor of Karn Hattin, it is said, is the fact that it is accessible from all sides, which is thought to be demanded by the narratives of Matthew (iv, 25, v, 1) and Luke (vi, 17). But this argument, although it is accepted by Dean Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, London, 1883, p. 369) who is usually quite rigorous in requiring proof, has little force, since the multitude did not flock to the mountain from all sides, but, according to Matthew, at least, first gathered together and followed Jesus up the mountainside. (Cf. iv, 25, v, 1, with vii, 28, where the multitude, not merely the disciples, are found on the spot where the sermon was delivered). . . . It is near the scenes of our Lord's greatest activity and fulfils all the requirements of the narrative.

(The information was gleaned from the Original Catholic Encyclopedia online, http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Mt._of_Beatitudes.html . It is interesting to note that this Catholic source places the Mt. of Beatitudes some distance away from the place now frequented by most visitors. A beautiful little chapel crowns a hill above Capernaum from which one has a magnificent view of the entire Sea of Galilee which, like a beautiful jewel, lies to one's feet. The edifice was built by the Italians in 1937. This is an alternative location. However, from what Josephus said, the Sea of Galilee was surrounded by nine cities at the time of Christ, and one would suppose that the popular Mt. of Beatitudes in the vicinity of Capernaum was part of a city lining the shores of Galilee [**Note the next page for pictures of the Mt. of Beatitudes above Capernaum**]).

4A. The Holy Mountain



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Pastor Ulrich-Kerwer, in his classic volume, *Heilige Berge (Holy Mountains)*, written in 1913, gives place to his enthusiasm of that beautiful mountain in Galilee.

9. Der Predigtberg.

Gegen 130 Meter steigt der Berg, Kurun Hattin genannt, schroff über die Ebene auf; am östlichen und westlichen Ende hat er Spitzen von etwa 20 Meter Höhe, die aus der Ferne den Anblick von Hörnern gewähren. Wie der Berg etwa in der Mitte steht zwischen dem Tabor und der Höhe von Safed, so eröffnet sich auf ihm eine herrliche Aussicht auf den Berg der Verkörperung, auf den steilen Bergabfall bei Magdalla und die Ebene Genezareth mit Kapernaum, auf den nördlichen Teil des Sees mit seinem leuchtenden Wasserpiegel, und über Galiläas Fluren bis zum Hermon hinauf. An diese Stätte verlegt die Überlieferung die Bergpredigt des Herrn, bei der das Volk, auf der amphitheatralisch sich senkenden Ebene gelagert, der holdseligen Rede lauschte; so steht der Berg da wie der Thron eines Mächtigen, dessen Fußschemel die Erde ist. Nahe dieser Stätte wurde die Schlacht verloren, in der die Herrschaft der Kreuzfahrer im Heiligen Lande gebrochen ward. Das herrlichste Heer, das je von ihnen im Lande aufgestellt war, 2000 Ritter, 8000 Fußsoldaten, eine große Schar Leichtbewaffneter, kämpfte unter dem schwachen König Beit von Jerusalem in dem schattenlosen Tale am Fuße des Berges 1187 gegen den tapfern Sultan Saladin. Nicht die Glut der Sommerhitze, nicht die Qual des Durstes und Hungers, nicht die Übermacht des Feindes brach die Macht des christlichen Königreichs; es war die Sucht nach Beute, es war die Uneinigkeit der christlichen Fürsten, welche die Niederlage herbeiführte. Der König zog sich endlich auf den

The mountain, called Karun Hattin, rises some 130 meters steeply above the plain. At its eastern and western end it has a point of about 20 meters high which from a distance give the appearance of horns. Since the mountain is positioned at midpoint between Mt. Tabor and the elevation of Safed, it affords from its height a glorious view of the Mt. of Transfiguration, the steep decline by Magdala and the plain of Gennesareth, with Capernaum, to the northern part of the Lake with its shining waters, across the fields of Galilee up to Mt. Hermon. Tradition assigns to this location the Sermon on the Mount by the Lord, with the people seated in the amphitheatre-like declining plain, listening to His gracious words. Thus the mountain stands here like the throne of a mighty king whose footstool is the earth. . .

Our interest in the mountain is occasioned by the fact that it is assumed that here the Sermon on the Mount was preached. **The place seems to have been created for just this occasion.** The mountain was a pulpit, the sanctuary the beautiful nature surrounding the mountain, with its gorgeous scenery of which the Savior was always keenly aware.

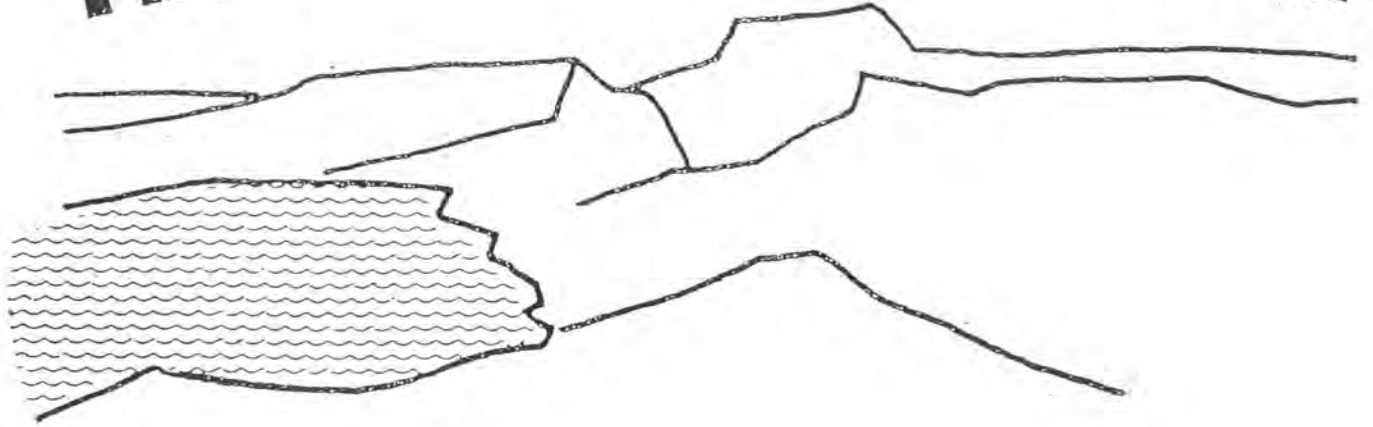
(G. W. Ulrich-Kerwer, *Heilige Berge*, Konstantz: Buch-und Kunstverlag von Carl Hirsch A.G., 1913, 157-158. Translation by this writer.)



(By permission of Palestine Exploration Fund.)

Plain and Horns of Hattin, from ruins of Irbid.

The Sermon on the Mount



LAW,

GRACE

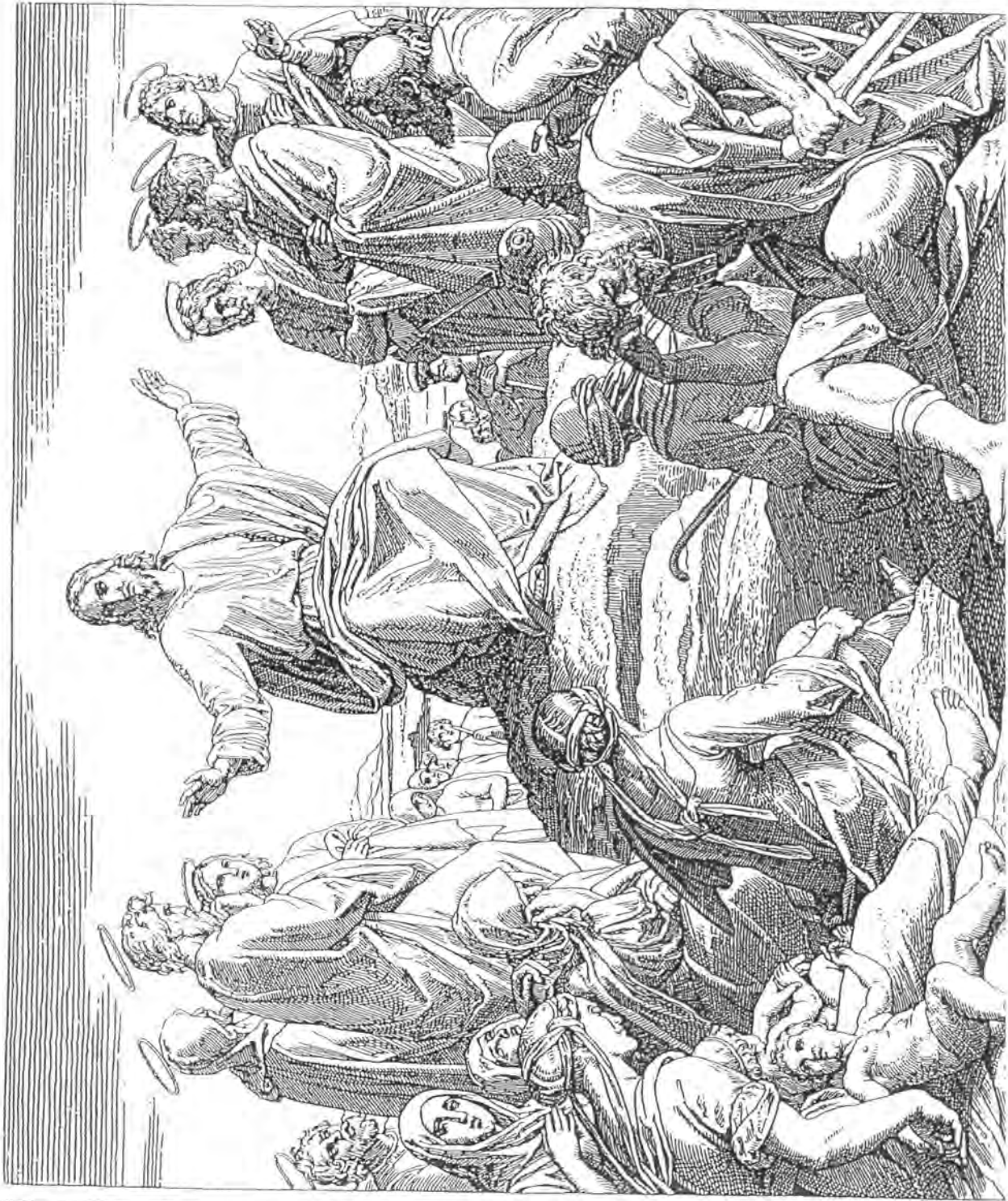
or KINGDOM?



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



Die Bergpredigt Jesu.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

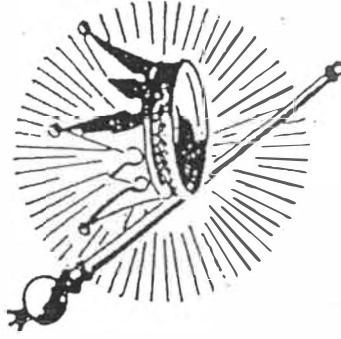
LAW



GRACE



KINGDOM



MT. 3:2-3; 4:17	MT. 3-12	MT. 12—13	MT. 16	Acts 1- Revelation	Revelation	MT. 25:32
KINGDOM ANNOUNCED	KINGDOM OFFERED	KINGDOM REJECTED	CHURCH ANNOUNCED	RAPTURE ANTICIPATED	KINGDOM REOFFERED	KINGDOM INSTITUTED

1

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT For Whom?

CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM

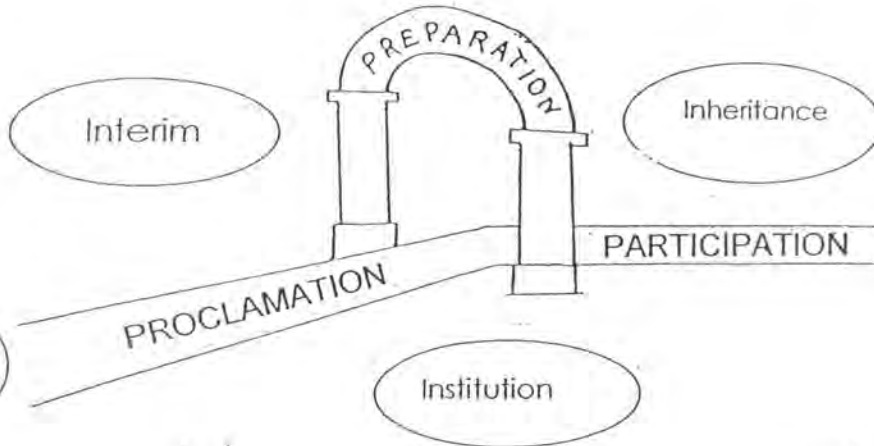


MT. 3:2-3; 4:17	MT. 3-12	MT. 12— 13	MT. 16	Acts 1- Revelation	Revelation	MT. 25:32
Kingdom Announced	Kingdom Offered	Kingdom Rejected	Church Announced	Rapture Anticipated	Kingdom Reoffered	Kingdom Instituted

2

CONTRAST OF THE VIEWS

3
CONTRADICTION WITH THE AGE OF GRACE



ARRANGEMENT OF MATTHEW
ABSENCE OF CHURCH TRUTH
ADDRESS OF INHERITORS

4

CONTENT OF THE SERMON

REPRESENTATIVES	S. L. Johnson	Chafer	Ryrie
REASONS FOR THE VIEWS:	Persecution of disciples Prayer for the Kingdom Prospect of rewards	Preparation for disciples Perfection of the citizens Prompting to repentance	Possession of the land Peace on earth Presence of the Messiah

The Sermon on the Mount: Law, Grace or Kingdom?

Hermeneutical Approach and Eschatological Application

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

The **Sermon on the Mount** is a **problem passage of the first magnitude**. It is one of Christ's three major discourses. The Upper Room Discourse deals with church age truth, the Olivet Discourse with the tribulation, and the Sermon on the Mount with the kingdom. We have rejected the ecclesiastical interpretation of the Sermon because of its place in the arrangement of Matthew (see diagram on the final page). It comes long before the announcement of the church and, indeed, forms part of the kingdom offer. Furthermore, the Sermon lacks Church truth, such as salvation by faith, prayer in the name of Christ, and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. While certain truths of the Sermon seem to be repeated in the Epistles, similarity does not mean identity. The addressees of the Sermon are subjects of the kingdom rather than members of the Body of Christ. The church was to them as yet a mystery. The bona fide offer of the kingdom forms the interpretive key for the sermon. Actually, both the interim view and the millennial view are correct in certain respects. The Sermon on the Mount, rightly understood, involves three aspects. It is taught to the disciples who lived during the time of the **proclamation of the kingdom**. Further, it involves their **preparation of the kingdom**, and also deals with the **participation in the kingdom**.

1b. The Sermon relates to the proclamation of the kingdom.

Various passages of the Sermon definitely relate to the period just prior to the establishment of the kingdom, such as the persecution of the disciples, the prayer for the kingdom, and the future prospects of rewards. Since the kingdom was officially rejected in Matthew 12, the promise of the kingdom was taken from the Jews of Christ's time, and given to another generation (Mt. 21:43), living during the tribulation, when the disciples would once again expect the coming of the King and His kingdom. The so-called Lord's Prayer will be especially relevant then, as the disciples pray that God's will be done on earth, where the Wilful King of Daniel 11 has free reign. The request for deliverance from the Evil One will then be made by those who suffer under Antichrist's reign of terror.

2b. The Sermon describes the proper preparation for the kingdom.

Lewis S. Chafer is correct in seeing the sermon as spelling out the entrance requirements for the kingdom. It is the "pure in heart" (5:8) who alone shall see God. The citizens of the kingdom need a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (5:20). In fact, Christ requires of them the absolute perfection of God (5:48). The disciples must have responded in utter amazement. How could they be pure in heart, more righteous than the Pharisees and as perfect as God? The answer lies in Christ's concluding illustration of the house built on the rock (7:24-27). Those disciples who heard Christ's sayings and did them would endure and enter the kingdom. The message of the Messiah would produce faith and works in the attentive disciples, qualifying them to enter the straight gate of the kingdom (7:13).

3b. The Sermon outlines the disciples' participation in the kingdom.

Ryrie stresses that the Sermon pictures "certain aspects of life in the kingdom and thus in a certain restricted sense is a sort of constitution of the kingdom" (*Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 82). The inheritance of the land will then be a blessed reality. The turning of the other cheek and the giving of one's possessions to anyone who asks, will then be tolerable because of the personal presence of the Prince of Peace. Especially in the Kingdom will His citizens function as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (5:13-14)

4b. The Sermon provides high ethical principles for any dispensation, and any people.

As a guide for daily conduct, the Sermon is no more applicable to the church age believers than are the Ten Commandments. By interpretation, the Sermon is for the subjects of the kingdom, giving them guidelines for life in anticipation of the kingdom, detailing the qualifications for entrance into the kingdom and outlining their participation in the kingdom. Once one realizes these three major purposes for the Sermon on the Mount, it becomes possible to rightly divide the teachings of the Sermon and assign each paragraph to its proper purpose. But, like the entire Old Testament, which, while not written to us, is certainly for us, so the principles of the Sermon may be used with great profit by the church age believers.

Consistent dispensationalists have been unjustly accused of writing off this portion of the Word of God as irrelevant for today. Yet dispensationalists insist that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And they recognize the necessary distinction which others refuse to see, that between interpretation and application. He who would rightly divide (II Tim. 2:15)—rather than recklessly distort (II Cor. 4:2)—the Word of God, must know that while each passage of Scripture has many applications, it has only

one correct interpretation.

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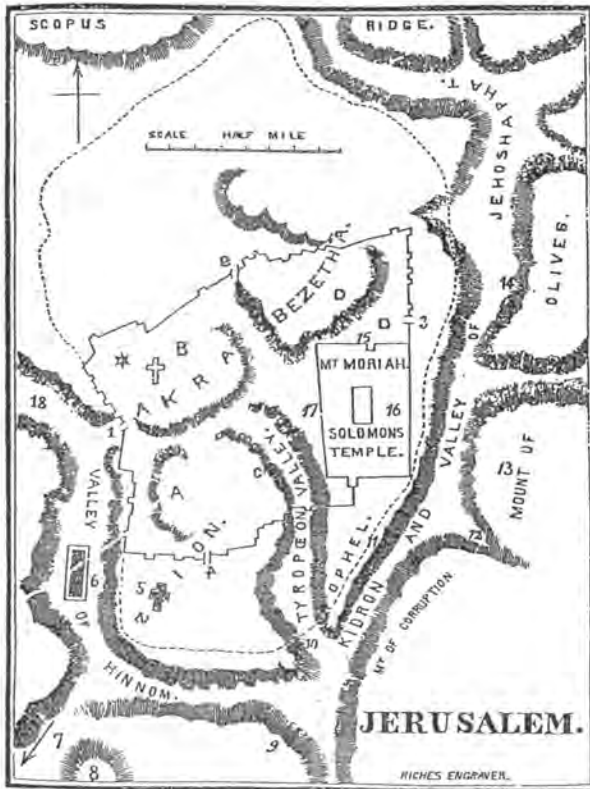
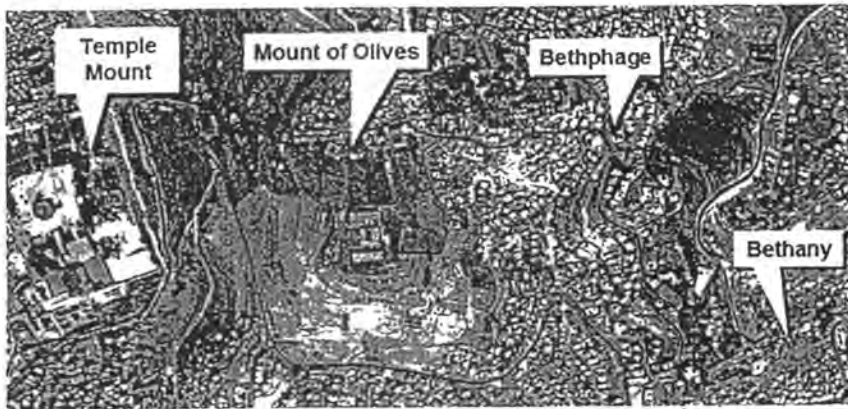
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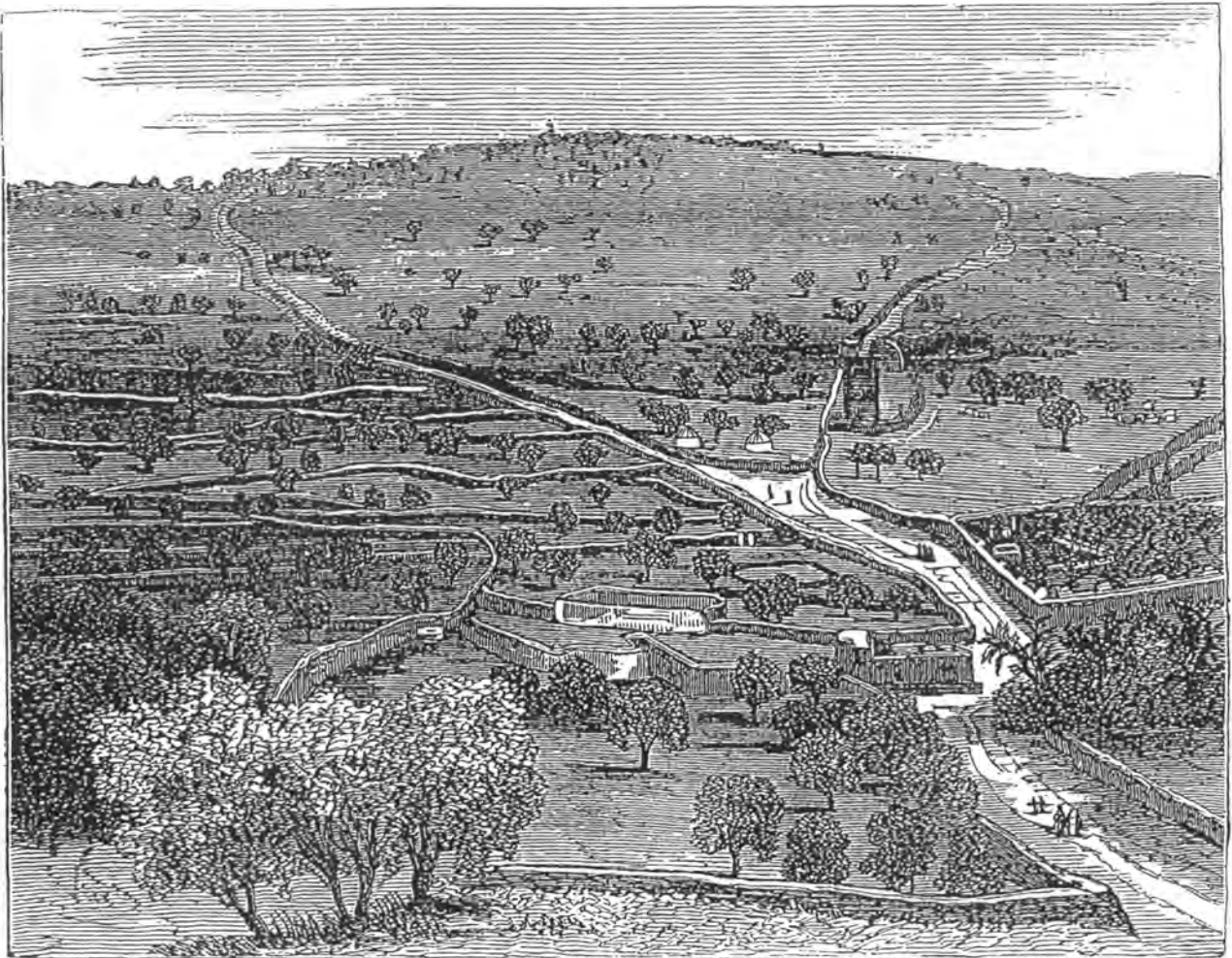
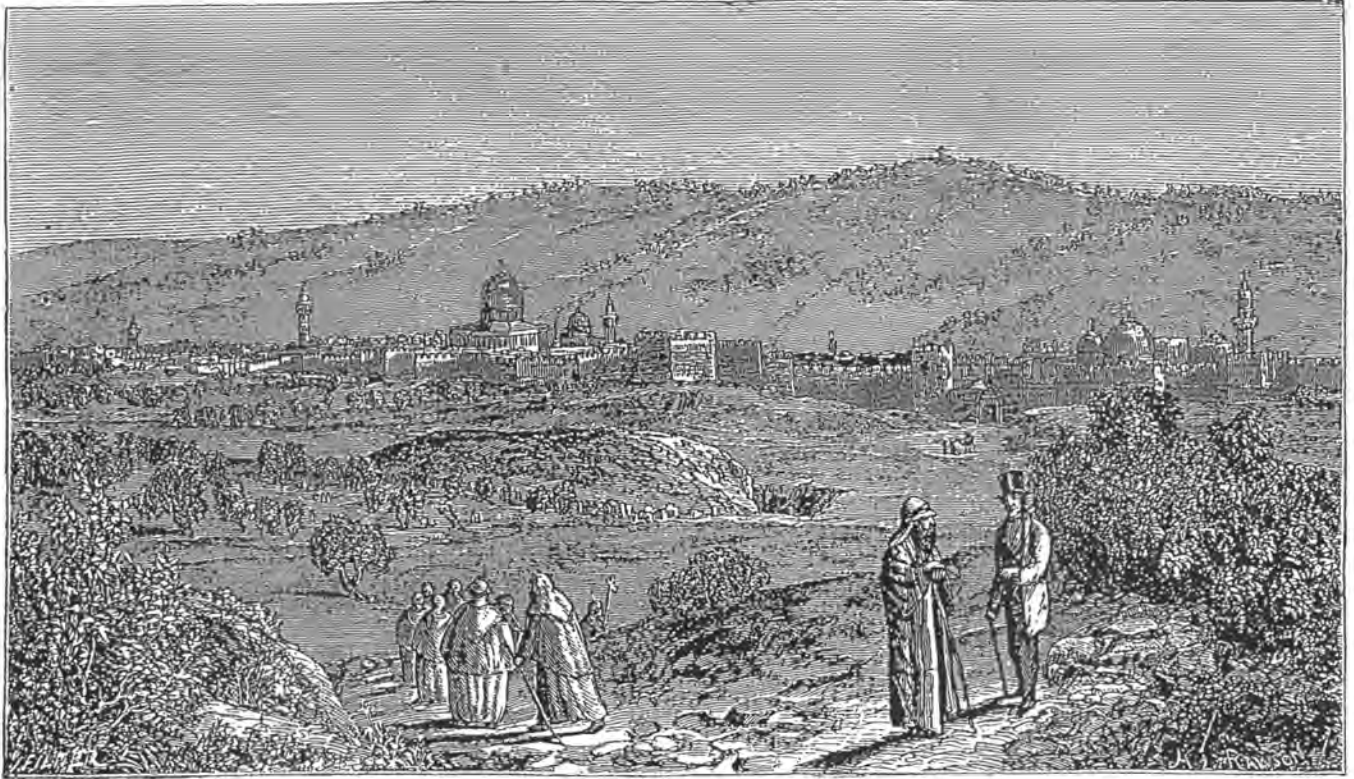
Mt. of Olives – The Scene of the Climax of World History



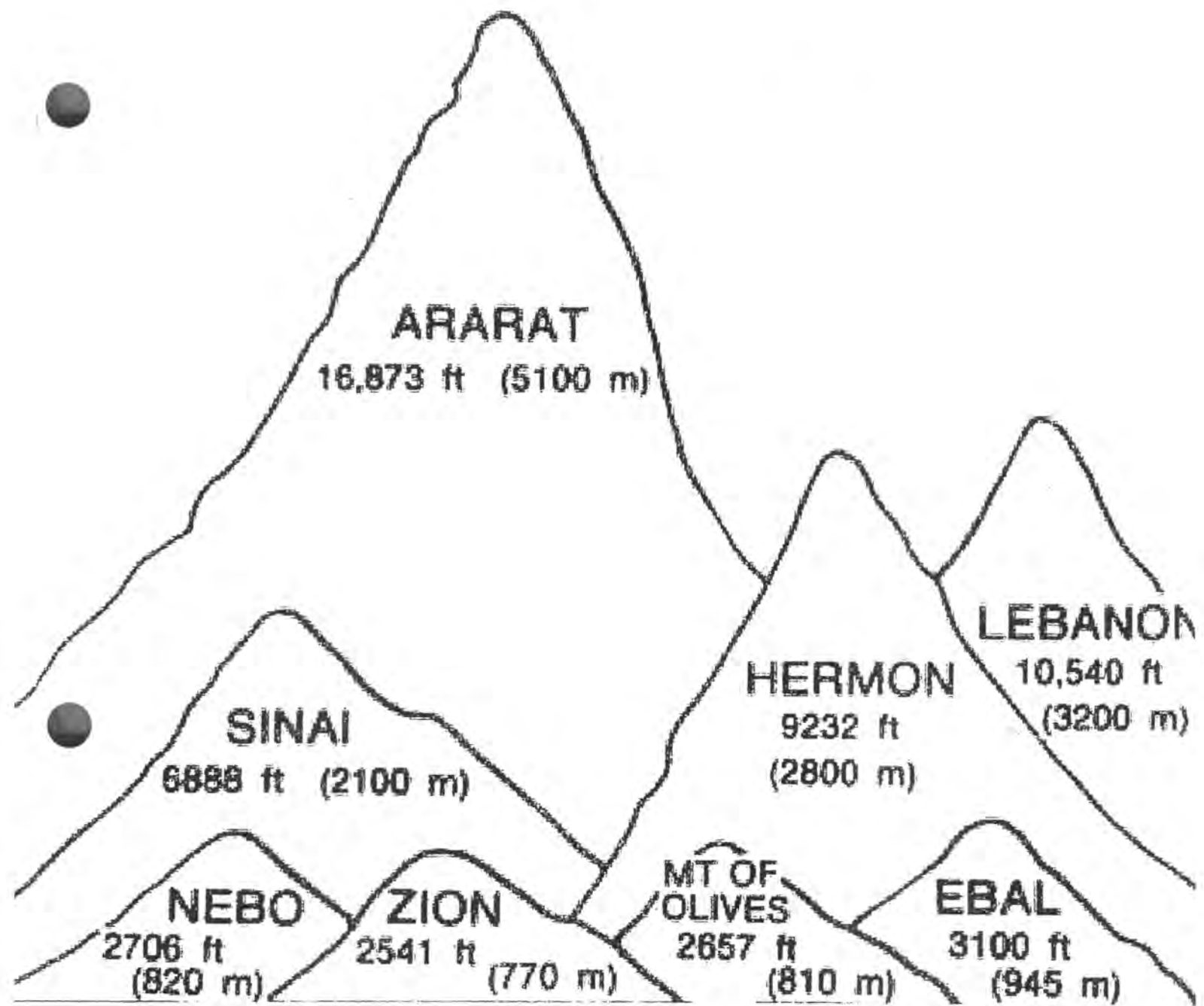
PLAN OF JERUSALEM AND ITS ENVIRONS.



MOUNT OLIVET.



The Mount of Olives. (From a photograph by the editor.)



Mt. of Olives – The Scene of the Climax of World History

1A. The Designations for Olivet:

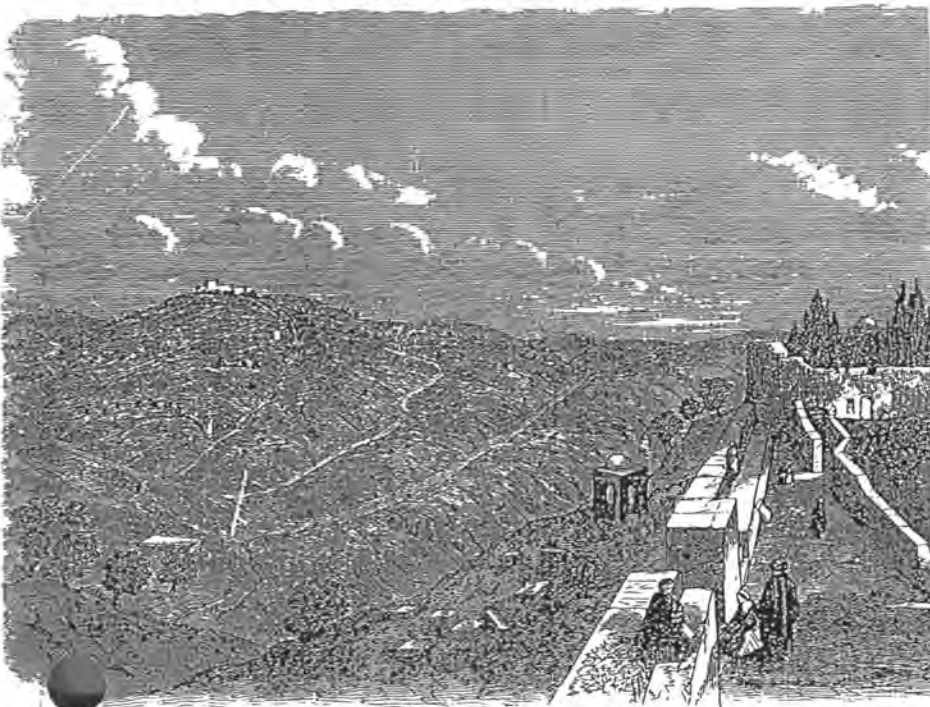
Olivet comes to us through the Vulgate *Olivetum*, "an oliveyard." Josephus frequently uses the expression "Mount of Olives" (e.g. *Ant*, VII, ix, 2; XX, viii, 6; *BJ*, V, ii, 3; xii, 2), but later Jewish writings give the name *har ha-mishhah*, "Mount of Oil"; this occurs in some MSS in 2 K 23:12, and the common reading, *har ha-mashhith*, "Mount of Corruption," m "destruction," may possibly be a deliberate alteration... In later ages the Mount was termed "the mountain of lights," because here there used to be kindled at one time the first beacon light to announce throughout Jewry the appearance of the new moon.

To the natives of Palestine today it is usually known as *Jebel et Tur* ("mountain of the elevation," or "tower"), or, less commonly, as *Jebel Tur ez zait* ("mountain of the elevation of oil"). The name *Jebel ez-zaitun* ("Mount of Olives") is also well known. Early Arab writers use the term *Tur Zait*, "Mount of Oil." (James Orr, Gen. Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1960, 2186.)



Dein König kommt in niedern Hüllen
Sanftmütig, auf der Öl'lin Hüllen,
Empfang ihn froh, Jerusalem!
Trag ihm entgegen Friedenszweige,
Bestreu mit Raien seine Steige.
So ist's dem Herren angenehm!

2A. The Topography of Olivet:



Viewing the mountain thus, two principal summits and two subsidiary spurs may be described. The N. summit is that known as *Karem es-Sayyad* (the vineyard of the hunter), and also as the *Viri Galilaei*; it reaches a height of 2723 feet above the Mediterranean, and is separated from the S. mass by a narrow neck of land traversed to-day by the new carriage road. As far back as 530 this hill is spoken of as Galilee, and in the *Acts of Pilate* (about 350) a mountain near Jerusalem called 'Galilee' is mentioned. It is said to have first received its name *Galilaea* because the Galilaeans attending the feasts used to encamp there, or as Saewulf (1102) says, it 'was called Galilee because the Apostles, who were called Galilaeans, frequently visited there.' The S. summit, of practically equal height, is the traditional Mount of the Ascension, and has for some years

been distinguished by a lofty tower erected by the Russians. Here, too, Constantine erected his Church of the Ascension in 316 on the site where now stands its successor (erected 1834-5) of the same name. Here also is the Church of the Creed and the Paternoster Church, the latter a

modern building on the site of one of that name destroyed long ago. Scattered over the summit is a modern Moslem village—*Kefr et-Tur*—which combines with the noisy conduct of its rapacious inhabitants in spoiling the quiet beauty and holy associations of this sacred spot.

A small spur running S. is sometimes known as the Hill of the Prophets, on account of the interesting old 'Tomb of the Prophets'—a sepulchre generally believed, until recently, to have been originally Jewish—which is situated there; and the other somewhat isolated spur to the S.E., on which stands the wretched, half-ruined village of *el-Azariyeh*, on the site of Bethany, should, for reasons given, be included in the Mount.

Along the W. slope facing the city lies the reputed Garden of Gethsemane (part, too, of the Mount, cf. Lk 22)...of the Latins and its Greek rival; and a little higher up the hill to the S. the great Russian Church of St. Magdalene. The greater part of the slopes of the S.W. part of the hill is filled with a vast number of graves, those from the valley bottom till a little above the Bethany road being Jewish, while higher up are some Christian cemeteries. The Jews have a strong sentiment about being buried on this spot, the slopes of the 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' being traditionally, with them and with the Moslems, the scene of the resurrection and final judgment. (James Hastings, Ed., *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, 207).

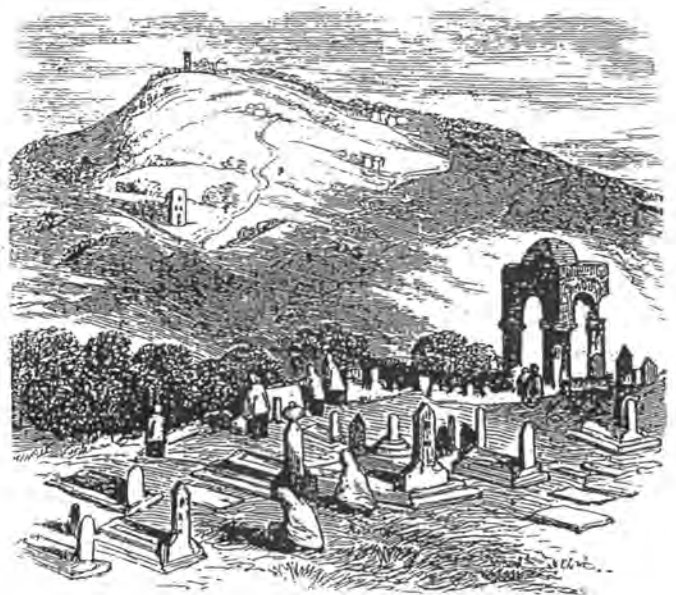
3A. The Savior and Olivet:

A.W.G. Masterman, in the article cited above, has a superb summary of the Savior's relationship to Olivet:

Although, with the single exception of Jn 8:1, all the incidents expressly connected with the Mount of Olives belong to the Passion week, there can be no doubt (Lk 21:37) that this quiet spot was one beloved and frequented by the Master. Here He withdrew from the city for rest and meditation (Jn 8:1) and for prayer (Mt 26:30 etc.). Once we read of His approach to the Mount from the Easter side 'unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives' (Mk 11:1; Mt 21:1; Lk 19:29). Over a part of the Mount He must have made His triumphal progress to the city (Mt. 21, Mk 11, Lk 19), and on this road He wept over Jerusalem (Lk 19:40-44). During the whole of that week 'in the daytime he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out and abode in the Mount that is called of Olives' (Lk 21:37)—the special locality on the Mount being Bethany (Mt 21:17, Mk 11:11). Crossing over from Bethany, Jesus illustrated His teaching by the sign of the withering of the barren fig-tree (Mt 21:18,19; Mk 11:12-14; 20-22), and on the slopes of this hill, with the doomed city spread out before them, Christ delivered to His disciples His wonderful eschatological discourse (Mt 24:3ff; Mk 13:3ff). Then here, in the Garden of Gethsemane, occurred the Agony, the Betrayal, and the Arrest (Mt 26:36-56; Mk 14:26-52; Lk 22:39-53; Jn 18:1-12). Lastly, on the Mount, not on the summit where tradition places it, but near Bethany, occurred the Ascension (Lk 24:50-52; Ac1:12).

To these incidents where the Mount of Olives is expressly mentioned may be added the scene in the house of Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-42), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11), and the feast at the house of Simon (Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-19); for, as has been shown, Bethany was certainly a part of the Mount of Olives.

(*Ibid.*, 208).



THE MOUNT OF OLIVES



4A. The Ascent to Olivet:

1b. The paths to the Mt. of Olives:

It is worthwhile to reproduce here a pilgrim's account:



Leaving the garden, we commenced the ascent of the Mount of Olives. This mountain lies directly east of the city, from which it is separated by the deep valley of Jehoshaphat. Its high [sic] above this valley varies from five hundred to seven hundred feet. It is a little more than one hundred feet higher than Mount Zion, and near two hundred and fifty feet higher than the Temple area on Mount Moriah, so that it overlooks the whole of the city. The Arabs call it *Jebel et Tur*. The summit directly east of the city is the traditional place of the ascension of Christ. It slopes down beautifully toward the valley of Jehoshaphat on the west, and again toward Bethany on the east. Viewed from Zion, it has a most beautiful and graceful outline, and is one of the most commanding objects about Jerusalem. This hill, once

so beautifully covered with gardens and olive orchards, now presents the same desolate aspect that forms so prominent a characteristic of Jerusalem scenery. Of the palm trees of the valley, not a single one is left, and the two gigantic cedars that once stood near its summit have disappeared. Only a few scattering olive trees are seen upon its sides, and an occasional fig tree takes root in its scanty soil. Great boulders of variegated flint are scattered about in every direction, while here and there a little patch of ground, enclosed by a frail and tottering wall of stone, is sown to barley.

There are three paths leading from Jerusalem over Olivet. One is a foot-path, leading directly up the mountain side; another, and easier one, the common road for beasts of burden, leads around the southern brow of the mount; while still another but much less used, winds around the northern slope. As we ascended, I stopped on the way to gather some portions of a low, thorny bush, from which many suppose the mock crown of the Savior was made. The monks of Mar Saba manufacture and sell to pilgrims, crowns from a tree that bears a long, sharp thorn, which they believe to be the kind used on that occasion.

Just below where we are ascending, and near the base of the mount, the place is still pointed out where, in the days of the temple service, the red heifer was sacrificed and burnt, from the ashes of which the waters of purification were prepared (Num. xix.) By one of these paths too, probably the one upon the right, David ascended when he was forced to flee from the city under the rebellion of his son Absalom. This afflictive incident in the life of the renowned monarch is pathetically portrayed by the pen of inspiration. Absalom had managed his plans so adroitly, the court of Israel was completely taken by surprise. The reports of the wide-spread rebellion, like peal after peal of thunder, came rolling in from the surrounding tribes. The power and extent of the rebellion seems to have been greatly magnified, and the king and his servants made a hasty flight from Jerusalem. David and his associates passed over the brook Kidron, along this pathway they climbed the mount. "And David went up the ascent of Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up weeping as they went." (2 Sam. xv. 30.) The result we have seen in another place, and within our very sight now stands the pillar of Absalom, and all who pass by revile his name.

(D. A. Randall, *The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land*, Norwich, CT: Whitney & Kingsley, 1867, 134-135.)

2b. The view from the Mt. of Olives:

Having feasted your eyes on these, you turn and look eastward. What a scene opens to your wondering vision! There the hill country of Judea—the wilderness—lies before you in all its gloomy sterility; a mountainous region, broken into bluffs and crags, whose deep and yawning chasms form a fit hiding place for Bedawin robbers and beasts of prey. Here your eye wanders to the bleak looking mountain of Quarantanla, where the Savior, fresh from his baptism, endured his terrible temptation, and achieved his first great moral victory. Beyond this, you look down into the deep vale of the Jordan, fresh in beauty and fertility, with its long, snaky line of blue waters, around which cluster a thousand interesting associations. You follow its course along the dim distance, the width of the plain gradually expanding, until your eye catches a view of a portion of the waters of the Dead Sea, that wonderful monument, that entombs beneath its dark and leaden waves, the buried cities of the plain. Beyond all these rise up in dark and sullen grandeur the mysterious mountains of Moab, the region beyond the Jordan, on one of whose bold eminences the haughty Balak stood when he called Balaam:

"Come curse me Jacob—come defy Israel." Almost instinctively you search out the highest peak, and as your eye rests upon it, you exclaim: "There is Pisgah! On that sublime hight [sic] stood Moses when he took his survey of the Promised Land!" What remarkable sights are before us, and what wonderful visions of the past rise around us as we stand upon this lofty summit and enjoy this extensive prospect. Were there nothing more than this, a half hour on Olivet would well repay a long and weary pilgrimage.

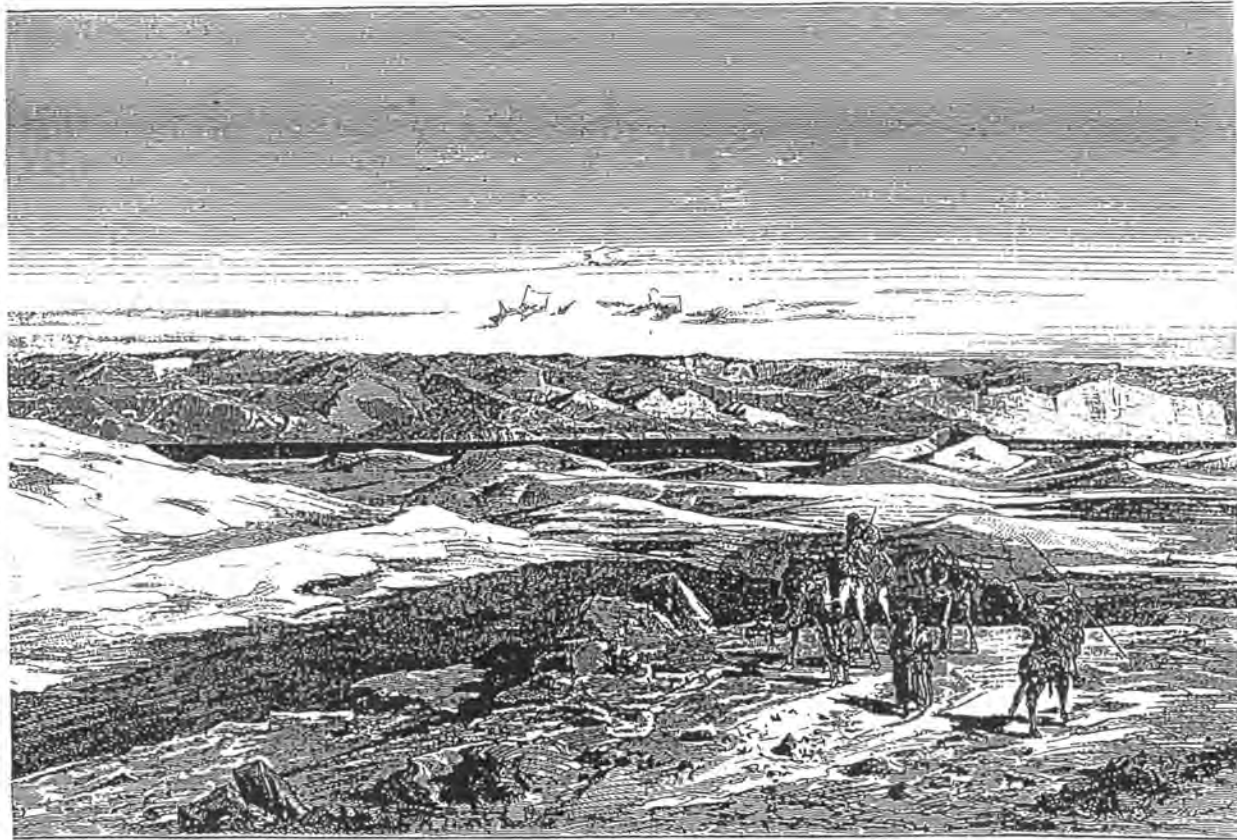
But Olivet has associations and lessons of a deeper interest. The path up which we toiled has often been pressed by the feet of the Son of God; beneath the shade of its olives and vines he sat and taught his listening disciples; the garden beneath us was the scene of his agony. But more than this, it is the MOUNT OF ASCENSION! Forty days after his resurrection he led his disciples out as far as Bethany, and while he talked with them and blessed them, and a cloud received him up out of their sight. And while they stood astonished and awe struck, angels in white apparel stood by them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you into Heaven shall, in like manner, return again from Heaven." O Olivet! stepping-stone from which the victorious Son of God went back to glory, lifting thy majestic form above all the mountains around Jerusalem, it was fit thou shouldst be honored above them all! From the garden at thy base, to the place of ascension upon thy summit, what a radiance of glory clusters about thee! Mount of Ascension, with thee is associated the hope of glory; thou givest us assurance of the life everlasting!

(*Ibid.*, 134-135.)

OLIVET

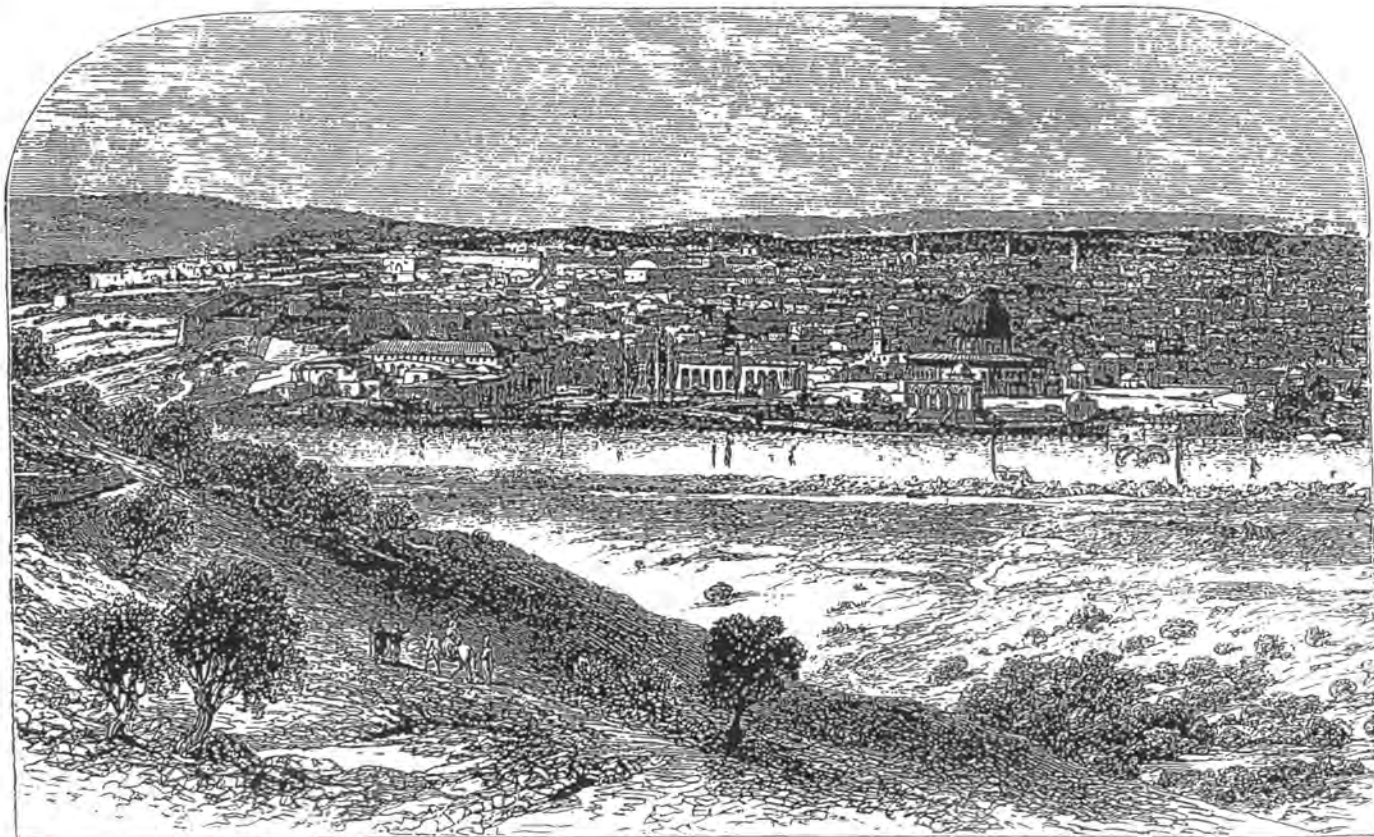


Map of the Mount of Olives, with its connections. (From the Ordnance Survey.)



Das Tote Meer vom Ölberge aus.

Eastward View from the Mt. of Olives



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Westward View from the Mt. of Olives

5A. The Theologian and Olivet:

Schaff, who has been quoted repeatedly in this manual, has, as a theologian and historian, a special gift of describing holy sites. His lengthy chapter on his visit to Olivet deserves careful reading. (The points of the outline were added by this writer.)

1b. The panorama:

There are "mountains round about Jerusalem." Like Rome, Jerusalem is built on hills and surrounded by hills. It is 2,500 feet above the Mediterranean, and 3,700 feet above the Dead Sea. From the east and from the west there is a steady ascent to it; hence the phrase "to go up to Jerusalem." It stands on the mountain ridge which runs from north to south and forms the backbone of Palestine. It is built upon Mount Zion in the southwest and the lower Mount Moriah in the east. These two hills are separated by the Tyropoeon or Cheesemongers' Valley (which is nearly filled up with rubbish). Both are surrounded by ravines, which unite with the Tyropoeon in the south, Zion by the valley of Hinnom, Moriah by the valley of the Kedron or Jehoshaphat. The best place from which to study the panorama for orientation is Mount Olivet, with the Bible in the right hand and Josephus in the left. There you see the holy city in her lonely melancholy grandeur, with her walls and towers, her churches, mosques, and dome-roofed houses. It is the saddest, and yet the most impressive view in the world.

(Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*. New York: American Tract Society, 1878, 271.)

2b. The final night in Gethsemane:

When Jesus passed out of St. Stephen's Gate (the ancient Fish-gate) down the ravine, and crossed that black winter torrent called Kedron (*i.e.*, the Black Brook), which is formed by the winter rains, but is entirely dry in summer (even in April as far as my experience goes), it was far more than Caesar's crossing the Rubicon for the military conquest of the world: it was the passage which decided the moral and eternal redemption of the world. David, betrayed by Ahithophel, one of his body-guard, took the same course in his flight from his rebellious son Absalom—a remarkable parallel, the typical import of which Jesus himself pointed out. In the garden of Gethsemane (*i.e.*, Oil-press), at the foot of the Mount of Olives, he was overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish, and endured the mysterious agony with all the powers of darkness, in the stead and in behalf of a fallen race. Here he was betrayed by the Judas-kiss, which he anticipated and made meaningless. Here the heathen garrison and the Jewish temple guard combined under the lead of the traitor, against the one unarmed Jesus; and yet, made cowards by conscience and overawed by the superhuman majesty of Jesus, like the profane traffickers in the temple, they fell to the ground before his "I am He!" The same words which cheered his trembling disciples on the stormy lake and after the resurrection, are here words of terror to his enemies, and will be on the day of judgment.

(*Ibid.*, 273-274.)

3b. The description of the garden:

There is no evidence to prove, but no good reason to deny, the identity of the spot now shown as GETHSEMANE. Some think it is too near the city and the thoroughfare for a place of retirement in that dangerous and dismal night. We reach it by an easy walk through St. Stephen's Gate over the dry bed of the Kedron. It lies on the slope of Mount Olivet, and is in the possession of the Franciscans. It is a garden with seven or eight majestic olive-trees, which are perhaps the oldest and certainly the most venerable trees in the world, though of course not of the time of our Lord—for Titus cut down all the trees round the city during the siege. But they may have sprouted from the roots of the original trees. The garden is enclosed by a new wall, and kept in very good order. A kind old



210. Kibour, in der Höhe des Gethsemane. (Nach Gortz.) (30 B. 11.)

Franciscan monk gave us olive leaves and flowers from this every-memorable spot. The Greek Gethsemane is a short distance north of the Latin, and marked by a rude chapel in the rock. The two traditions may be reconciled by supposing that the Gethsemane of the Greek Church was the interior part of the garden, to which the Savior retired for prayer.

(*Ibid.*)



4b. The place of the ascension:

Tradition fixes the Ascension on the middle summit, in full sight of Jerusalem, but in plain contradiction to the narrative of Luke, who locates it near Bethany, on the retired eastern slope of the mountain. No importance, of course, can be attached to the mark of the foot of the ascending Jesus, pointed out in the Mohammedan mosque, but the mosque is well worth ascending on account of the magnificent view it affords over the most historic of all the historic regions on earth. A short distance from it a Russian lady erected a fine dwellinghouse. A little south of it the French Princesse Latour d'Auvergne, a relative of Napoleon III, built, in 1868, a church in the style of a campo santo over the spot where Christ is said to have taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer; and caused this Prayer of prayers to be inscribed on thirty-one slabs in as many different languages, as a symbol of the unity and universality of Christian devotion. A monument in white marble perpetuates her memory. West of this church we visited the chapel commemorating the composition of the Apostles' Creed, according to a tradition not older than the fourth century, and long since disproved as untenable. This Creed of creeds is apostolic indeed in spirit and power, but not in form, and gradually grew up from the inner life of the ancient Church.

(*Ibid.*, 275-276.)

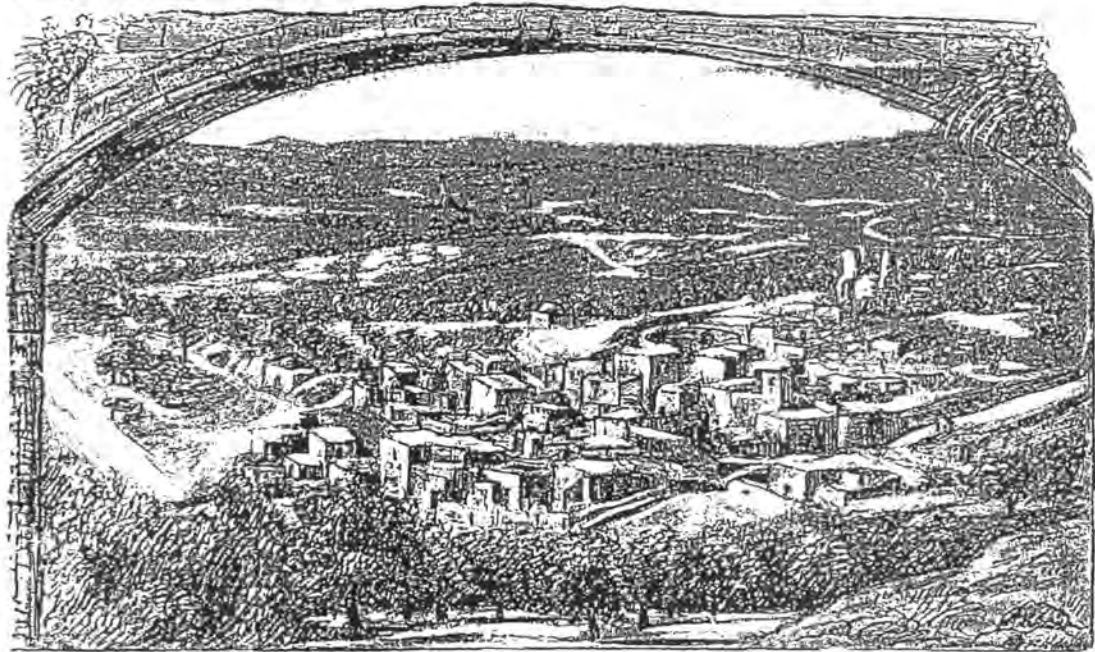


JESUS ASCENDS TO HEAVEN.

5b. The description of Bethany:

From the top of the Mount of Olives it is an easy descent to Bethany on its southeastern declivity. It can also be reached by the road to Jericho which leads round the mountain. It is only two miles from Jerusalem. It is now a miserable village of about forty hovels, inhabited by beggarly Mohammedans. They call it, in honor of Lazarus, "El-Azariyeh," and show the house of Martha and Mary, the house of Simon the leper, the tower of Lazarus, and his reputed sepulchre, a wretched cavern in the limestone rock, like a cellar, with about twenty-five steps, to which we descend by the dim light of a taper.

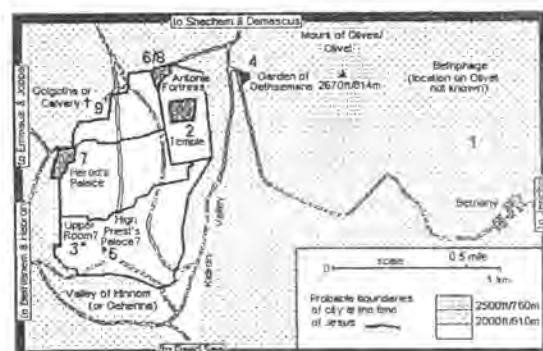
There is no probability of the genuineness of these particular localities; on the contrary, the grave of Lazarus was some distance from the village.



Bethany is pleasantly located, has good water, and is surrounded by cultivated spots and numerous fig, olive, almond, and carob trees. It was once a home of peace, inhabited by three children of peace and visited by the Prince of peace. It was the sacred spot of the friendship of Jesus. Here he revealed more of his *human* nature than elsewhere. Here he enjoyed the hospitality of Martha, the practical housekeeper, and allowed her contemplative sister Mary to sit at his feet and to perform, in the foreboding presentiment of his death, that touching service of devoted love for which she will be commemorated to the end of time. Here he wept tears of friendship over the grave of Lazarus "whom he loved." The eternal Son of God dissolved in tears! How far more natural, lovely, and attractive is weeping, sympathizing Saviour, than a cold, heartless stoic! How near these tears bring him to every child of sorrow and grief! But here also he revealed himself as the Resurrection and the Life, and wrought the greatest of miracles by the creative words, "Lazarus, come forth!" This act is a seal of his divinity and a pledge of our future resurrection. There is no escape from the plain, circumstantial narrative of John, one of the eyewitnesses. We must admit the truth, or resort to the disgraceful hypothesis of imposture, which explains nothing, but perverts the supernatural miracle into an unnatural monstrosity. Spinoza said to his friends, if he could believe the resurrection of Lazarus, he would dash to pieces his entire system of philosophy, and embrace without repugnance the common faith of Christians. This is sound reasoning. If Christ could raise the dead to life, he could easily perform the lesser miracles of healing, and must truly have been the eternal Son of God.

We left Bethany as we left other spots in Palestine, for ever consecrated to memory. It is a melancholy shadow of the past, but it may again become, at some future day, a delightful suburban retreat of domestic happiness and peace.

(*Ibid.*, 276-277.)



6A. The Mt. of Olives in Prophecy: **Zech. 14:1-4**

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.

2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the Lord will go forth
And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west, *Making* a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

1b. The return of the Lord:

Dr. Unger shows have the above passage strongly argues for a literal, physical return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. ***It is then that the Mount of Olives will witness the climax of world history***, as Christ descends with the holy angels and heavenly saints to establish a kingdom of peace and righteousness for a thousand years.

And his feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. . . His feet are the Lord's feet, as verse 3 demonstrates. How can the Lord's (Jehovah's) feet stand on the Mount of Olives? Because they are the feet of His resurrected, glorified humanity, which ascended to heaven from the same locality, and because "*this same Jesus* who was taken up. . .into heaven shall so come *in like manner*" as the disciples witnessed Him "go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). The "so" and "in like manner" evidently also mean, in the light of Zechariah 14:4 that He ascended from Olivet personally and visibly in His glorified humanity and will so return to the same spot personally and visibly in His glorified humanity. . .At his glorious advent Messiah's feet [once nail-pierced] **shall stand** on the Mount of Olives. The word **stand**, '*amedhu*, with "feet" as the subject and the preposition "on" (locative use of '*al*, denoting place) can only mean "touch" or "rest firmly on." Messiah's feet shall "come in contact with" or "rest on" the Mount of Olives. A person is commonly said to "stand," i.e., "be erect," not sitting or reclining. But here **the feet** are said to "stand" to emphasize the personal, bodily return of the Lord to the earth, for the feet standing can only mean they support the weight of the human body in question. The language is apparently designed to compel a literal rather than a mystical interpretation of the Lord's second coming.

(Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Commentary Zechariah*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963, 245-246 [emphasis in the original].)

2b. The reference to Olivet:

The Mount of Olives, as the place of the Lord's appearing in glory, is said to be **before Jerusalem on the east**. Although this is the only time **the Mount of Olives** is mentioned by this name in the Old Testament (cf. "the ascent of Olives" in II Samuel 15:30), this can scarcely be the reason for the topographical notation describing the location of the site. The mountain was so dominant and in such close proximity to the holy city that it was well known, being plainly visible to every eye. Why then, the

appended geographical description? The following reasons may be suggested. (1) *From this mountain the glory of God departed and will return to Jerusalem.* "The glory of the God of Israel" (Ezek. 11:22), also called "the glory of the Lord," left Jerusalem *by the east* previous to the Babylonian captivity and the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles" (Ezek. 11:23), and *from the east* the same glorious symbol of the divine Presence is seen to return. "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. . ." (Ezek. 43:2), marking the termination of "the times of the Gentiles."

(2) Accordingly, *the idea prevailed in antiquity that from the east salvation would arise*, like the sun, dispensing its salutary light, "even the Sun of righteousness (Messiah) . . . with healing in its beams . . ." (Mal. 4:2). (3) Moreover Zechariah's prophecy doubtless echoes the Ezekiel passages where similar topographical notations occur. "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain *which is on the east side of the city*" (Ezek. 11:23). "And, behold the glory . . . came from *the way of the east*" (Ezek. 43:2). "And the glory of the Lord came into the house [millennial temple] by the way of the gate *whose prospect is toward the east*" (Ezek. 43:4).

(*Ibid.*, 245-246 [emphasis in the original].)

3b. The river of life: **Zech. 14:8**

And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.

This writer is taking the liberty to adapt some of the material from a chapter he wrote in a *Festschrift* for Dr. Charles Ryrie.

The River of Life in Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Zechariah 14:8:

Woven throughout Old Testament prophecy is a constant theme of spectacular physical and geographical changes to occur when Christ returns. Zechariah 14 describes many features of this upheaval, including a new river to flow from Jerusalem into the desert (Zech. 14:8).

The Prophet Ezekiel concludes his temple vision (chaps. 40-46) with the description of this same miraculous, life-giving stream issuing from the temple. The river is also mentioned by Joel (Joel 3:18), some 250 years before Ezekiel, and by Zechariah after the Babylonian exile.

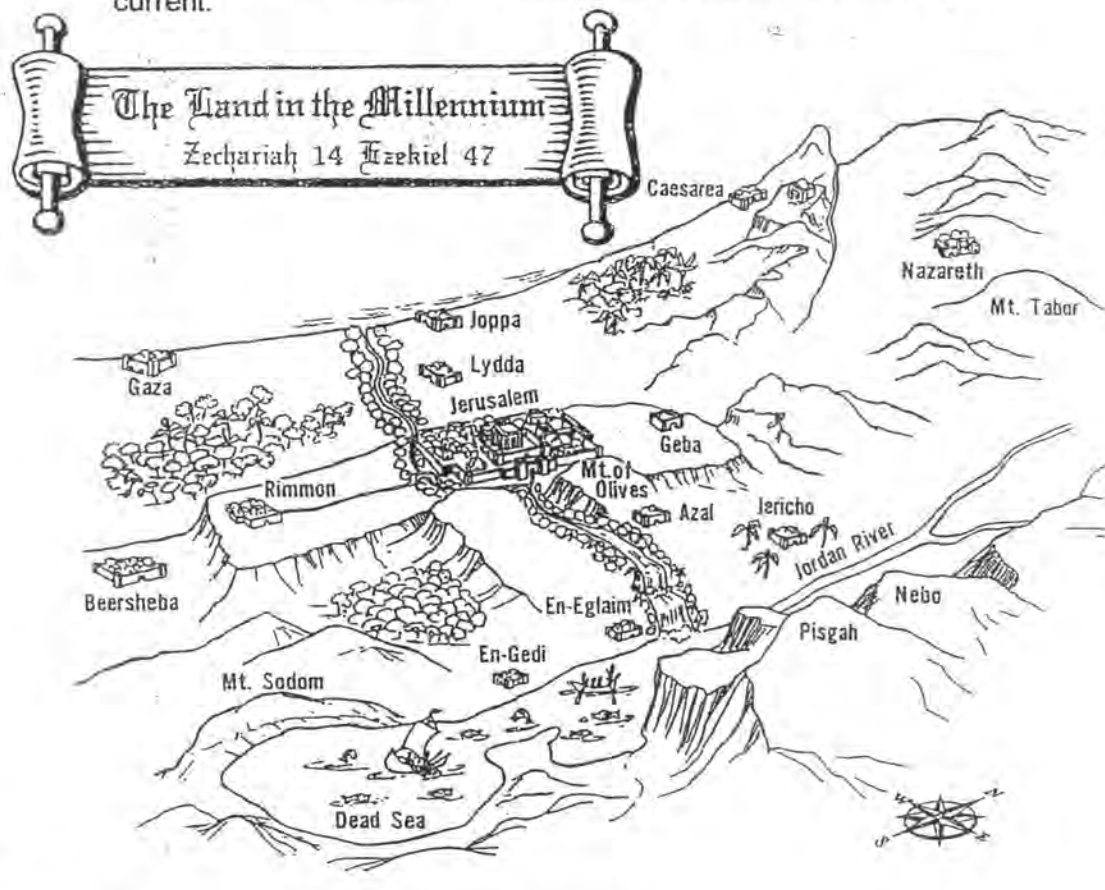
1c. The commencement of the River: Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:1-2

In Zechariah's prophecy, the river is said to originate in Jerusalem and to divide, one branch flowing into the Dead Sea, the other into the Mediterranean. In Ezekiel 47 only the river flowing eastward is described, as an angelic guide takes Ezekiel on a prophetic excursion along the river.

At the other eastern front of the temple Ezekiel sees a spring emerging (Ezek. 47:1-2). The waters begin at the immediate dwelling place of Christ who is the source of all spiritual and physical life. The miraculous waters "trickled forth" at first, and yet, without any tributaries, increased in depth and volume.

2c. The course of the River: Ezek. 47:3-5

The angel led Ezekiel along the riverbank, measuring the waters. After 1,750 feet (1,000 cubits) the waters were ankle-deep. In another 1,750 feet the waters had become knee-deep, then waist-deep at another 1,750 feet, until at another 1,750 feet the river was so deep that one could swim in it. In the distance from Jerusalem to the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives (about 1 ½ miles), the trickle became a spring, the spring a brook, the brook a stream, and the stream a raging river. To accent the dramatic size and depth of the river, Ezekiel refers to it in verse 9 as "rivers," literally "a double river," because of its raging current.



3c. The Changes Through the River: Ezekiel 47:6-12

The river continued to flow eastward, cascading into the Arabah (Ezek. 47:8), the desolate Jordan Valley rift extending from the Sea of Galilee southward to the Dead Sea and then to the Gulf of Aqabah. The river issued into the Dead Sea, healing its salty waters and rejuvenating the desert. The most inhospitable, arid, barren, desolate land on the face of the earth will become a fruitful land, lush with vegetation.

Along the banks of the supernatural yet literal river will grow "very many trees on the one side and on the other" (Ezek. 47:7). These marvelous trees shall be "for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof

for medicine" (v. 12). These trees will have an inexhaustible quantity of fruit all year long. The leaves of the tree will provide healing, apparently for those who were redeemed in the Tribulation and entered the Millennium in their physical bodies, and for their offspring.

The Dead Sea which will be healed is today a symbol of death and destruction. The stench of sulphur hanging in the air reminds one of the judgment of Genesis 19. Presently the Dead Sea can hardly sustain microorganisms, apart from some freshwater springs along its northwestern shores. As proof for the genuine healing, the sea will bring forth "a very great multitude of fish" (Ezek. 47:9). Fishermen will find the Dead Sea an ideal place for their trade, with an abundance of fish like those found in the Mediterranean Sea. Fishermen will spread their nets from En-Gedi ("fountain of a kid"), located on the middle of the western shore, to En-Eglaim ("spring of the two calves"), perhaps located along the northwestern shore near Qumran.

The swamps and marshes near the southern end of the Dead Sea "will not be healed; they shall be given to salt" (Ezek. 47:11). Though Ezekiel does not explain why the salt flats will remain, several explanations can be offered. Salt, essential for the preparation of food, will also be required for some of the memorial sacrifices offered in the temple (Ezek. 43:24; cf. Lev. 2:13). Further, the Dead Sea is an important source of minerals for Israel and possibly will be in the future. The Lord may also want to demonstrate to the rest of the world for 1,000 years how stagnant and lifeless the entire Dead Sea had been before the river of living water healed it.

4c. The Controversy Over the River:

Unfortunately many commentators spiritualize the river and thus cannot agree on its interpretation. The early church fathers saw the river as a symbol of baptism. Some see it as the stream of church history. Many speak of the river as emblematic of spiritual life, with some saints only ankle-deep or knee-deep Christians. Others identify the river with the stream of the Gospel, denying any literal future aspect of the prophecy. Derek Kidner, in relating the river with the river of paradise in Genesis 2, speaks of it simply as "vitality that flows from holy ground" (*Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1967, 63), whatever that might mean.

Only the literal interpretation can do justice to magnificent prophetic passages such as Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47. It is demonstrably true in the interpretation of these and other passages that "*sane literal interpretation . . . cannot fail to lead to happy results in exegesis. Spiritualizing and mysticalizing interpretation, on the other hand . . . are bound to produce endless confusion*" (Merrill F. Unger, *Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 239).

If one denies the literalness of the river, where does one stop? The events of the Second Advent outlined by Zechariah and Ezekiel are interrelated. The rebellion of the nations at Armageddon is followed by the ravishing of Jerusalem, which in turn is followed by the return of the Lord, the removal of the mountains, the revelation of the river, the redemption of nature, and the reign of Christ. The Germans have a proverb: "Wer A sagt der muss auch B sagen." He who says A also must say B. An interpreter who sees the return of the Lord as a literal

The River of Life



event should also subscribe to a literal fulfillment of its accompanying events.

If the river is not literal, why would Zechariah and Ezekiel list so many actual geographical places in the context? Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the Arabah, the Dead Sea, En-Gedi, En-Eglaim, and the salt flats are quite specific locations.

If the river were not literal, why would other passages of Scripture mention the river as well? Psalm 46:4 mentions a river which will make Jerusalem glad. Joel 3:18's millennial prediction envisions a fountain coming out of the temple and watering the valley of Shittim in which the Dead Sea is located. In fact, the millennial changes predicted by Zechariah and Ezekiel are simply a microcosm of the healing of the curse that will take place all over the world.

Apparently every desert on earth will become lush and green. Joel speaks of other rivers of Judah flowing with water (Joel 3:16). Isaiah writes of

waters breaking out in the wilderness, streams in the desert, and floods upon the dry ground (Isa. 43:19-20; 44:3). The wilderness will become a fruitful field (Isa. 32:15; 55:13). The changes described for the wilderness of Judea will be worldwide as deserts such as the Sahara, Gobi and Mojave will become lush forests. The redeemed will be there to witness the transformation as the Redeemer saves the groaning creation from the curse of sin (Rom. 8:22). At that time the carol "Joy to the World" will take on its fullest meaning. "No more let sin and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found." (Wesley and Elaine Willis and John and Janet Masters, eds. *Basic Theology Applied*, 1995, 287-290).

The Dead Sea: Its Mysterious Past



The Dead Sea: Its Mysterious Past

INTRODUCTION

1. The designations for the Dead Sea

The customary name for the unique, mysterious body of water located at the mouth of the Jordan River is Dead Sea, first used by Pompeius Trogus (1st cent. B.C.). Actually the Dead Sea is not a sea at all but a land-locked lake. In the Old Testament it was called the Salt Sea (Gen. 14:3; Numb. 34:12 et. al.), the Sea of the Plain (Deut. 3:17; 4:49 et. al.), and the eastern sea (Ezek. 47:18; Joel 2:20). Some early writers such as Josephus (Jos. War 4, 7, 2) also referred to it as the Asphalt Sea or Lake Asphaltitis.

2. The desolation of the Dead Sea

A pilgrim to the Dead Sea in 1861 relates his feelings, feelings which are rather common for first-time visitors:

As the visitor approaches the place, if all knowledge of his locality and its previous history could be obliterated, he would still instinctively feel that he was in close proximity to the theatre of some appalling or portentous event. All around him is a sterile desert of sand, and beneath his feet the salty incrustations crackle and break at every step. No signs of human habitation--no song of bird--no footfall of beast--no hum of insect--a silence, profound and awful as the chamber of death is there! (D.A. Randall, *The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land*, II, 241).

3. The distinctiveness of the Dead Sea

Everyone who visits the Dead Sea is overwhelmed by it. A traveler in 1867 gives the following features that make the Dead Sea unique:

The Dead Sea is doubtless the most remarkable body of water in the world. Among its chief features of interest are: first, the extraordinary depression of the basin which it occupies--the surface of the sea being over thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and the bottom of the sea over thirteen hundred feet below the surface; secondly, the saltiness and buoyancy of its water--the salt amounting to more than twenty-six pounds in every hundred of the water, and the buoyancy being such that persons may sit or lie in the water with their heads high above the surface; thirdly, the fact that it has no outlet, and voids the water

THE DEAD SEA IN HISTORY

1A. It was situated in a fruitful plain.

Before God destroyed the cities of the plain because of their indescribable wickedness, the Dead Sea apparently was a freshwater lake situated in a lush valley with abundant vegetation along its shores and numerous streams feeding into it. In the days of Abraham (2000 B.C.) its area was reminiscent of the Nile delta of Egypt and the Garden of Eden with the four streams of paradise.

Genesis 13:10-11

¹⁰And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

¹¹Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

2A. It was sacked by foreign princes.

In the days of Abraham four Mesopotamian kings headed by Chedorlaomer invaded Palestine, punishing five petty city states which they had subdued some fourteen years previously. When Abraham heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he and his confederates pursued after the marauding Mesopotamians and rescued the captured Canaanites, including Lot.

Genesis 14:1-3, 8, 11-12

¹And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

²That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

³All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.

⁴And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

¹¹And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

¹²And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwell in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

3A. It was surrounded by fatal pits.

The Valley of Siddim, in which the present Dead Sea is located, was full of pits of bitumen or asphalt. Indeed, large chunks of asphalt still keep popping to the surface of the Dead Sea, explaining its ancient name, Lake Asphaltitis.

Genesis 14:10

¹⁰And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

4A. It was settled by fierce perverts.

The inhabitants of the cities of the plain, chief among them Sodom and Gomorrah, were indescribably wicked. The outrage of their grievous sin registered before the infinitely holy Creator. Their depth of shameless depravity in the area of homosexuality, and sexual perversion involved every male citizen from the youngest to the oldest in Sodom and, by clear intimation, the other cities of the Pentapolis.

Genesis 13:13

¹³But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

Genesis 18:20

²⁰And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

Genesis 19:4-5

⁴But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

⁵And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

5A. It was scorched by fiery punishment.

About 1900 B.C., the salt, asphalt and abundant free sulphur of the area were mingled miraculously, apparently by an earthquake. The violent explosion hurled the red-hot salt, asphalt, and sulphur into the air, literally raining fire and brimstone over the whole plain.

Genesis 19:24-27

²⁴Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

²⁵And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

²⁶But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

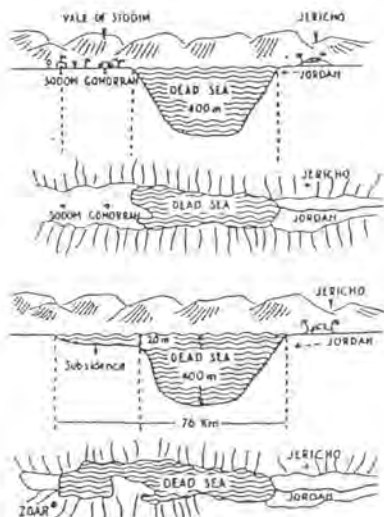


Fig. 12. The Dead Sea (a) in 2000 B.C. before the end of Sodom and Gomorrah, (b) in 1900 A.C. after the disaster.



I. Mose Kap. 19, Vers 15-17, 24-26.

6A. It is skirted by fertile places.

Despite the desolation of the Dead Sea regions subsequent to the conflagration chronicled in Genesis 19, there have always been a number of fertile areas along its shores. One of the most delightful sites on the Dead Sea is the ancient oasis of Engedi, where a gushing stream of fresh water, forming a 300-foot-high waterfall, drops down from the mountains of Judea and has sustained for millennia human, animal and plant life.

Song of Solomon 1:14

¹⁴My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.

Joshua 15:62

⁶²And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

7A. It has served as a formidable protection.

When David fled from King Saul, he found refuge in the area of the Dead Sea, in various fortresses. The desolation of the area with its numerous ravines and caves made it a safe area. David hid in the fortress (the word "Masada" is derived the Hebrew word for fortress) and in Engedi but also used the Dead Sea as a barrier between himself and Saul.

1 Samuel 22:3-4

³And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.

⁴And he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

1 Samuel 23:14

¹⁴And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

1 Samuel 23:29

²⁹And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

[1 Samuel 24:1-2

¹And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.

²Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

8A. It symbolizes the final perdition of sinners.

Both Peter and Jude point to the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." The terrifying fire of 1900 B.C. is "set forth for an example (of the sinners') suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"

1 Peter 2:6

⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Jude 7

⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

One writer has movingly depicted the symbolism of divine judgment evident to all visitors to the Dead Sea:

No doubt but God here made use of natural agencies for the execution of his stern and fearful judgments; but the execution was none the less terrible, and none the less an act of direct and Almighty power on that account. The overthrow was accompanied by exhibitions of the most awful and terrific kind. The vale was full of bituminous pits. These inflammable substances were kindled, and fire broke forth from the ground. By the power of volcanic action they were ejected into the air, and came raining down from the uplifted and quaking hills. Here Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim met their astounding and deserved overthrow! It was an utter and irreparable ruin. No one can stand here and look on this impressive scenery, and not feel the conviction that this sea is a creation of the wrath of God. The hand of the Almighty has been here, and he has left his imprint on this barren plain, these scorched and blackened hills are monuments placed here by the Almighty, upon which all succeeding generations may read, traced as with letters of fire, the Handwriting of his judgments, the certainty of his displeasure against sin. (*The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land*, p. 250-251).



THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

The Dead Sea: Its Magnificent Future



THE DEAD SEA IN PROPHECY

All those who visit the southern end of the Dead Sea are overwhelmed by the scene of desolation and death before their eyes. The burned mountains round about, the stench of sulphur in the air, and the deadly silence all around impress on the visitor the evidence of the divine destruction which occurred here 4000 years ago.

Students of the prophetic Word, however, can stand on the shores of the Dead Sea and visualize the miraculous transformation of the deadest place on earth into a lake of fresh water, teeming with millions of fish. Along its shores, fishermen will spread their nets. Lush vegetation will grace the countryside.

1A. The scene of mass burial

Before the healing of the Dead Sea waters at the Second Advent of Christ, its eastern shore will see a mass burial of enormous proportions. In a valley preappointed and already named by Ezekiel, millions of corpses at the battle of Gog and Magog will be buried here. When Russia and her satellites invade Israel at the mid-point of the Tribulation, swift divine judgment will result in the death of the invaders. Their mortal remains will be interred in the valley of Hamon-gog east of the Dead Sea.

Ezekiel 39:11-13

¹¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the *noses* of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call *it* The valley of Hamongog.

¹² And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.

¹³ Yea, all the people of the land shall bury *them*, and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD.



2A. A shield for persecuted Jews

Until the rapture, the U.S.A. appears to be Israel's protector. At the beginning of the Tribulation, Antichrist signs a covenant of protection with Israel. After three and one-half years he breaks the covenant. As he moves his military headquarters to Israel, he desecrates the temple, forcing the Jews to escape for their lives. At that time, the mountains to the east of the Dead Sea, covering the area of Ammon, Moab and Edom, will be a refuge for Israel. Antichrist and Satan, who empowers him, will be furious as the Lord establishes the Jordan River and the Dead Sea as a barrier beyond which Israel is safe from their imaginations.

Daniel 11:41

⁴¹ He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.



4A. A source of fresh water

The healing power of the Savior in His physical creation which groans for deliverance from the curse of sin (Romans 8:19-21) is magnificently illustrated by Ezekiel's millennial vision. He is shown a living stream, emerging from the presence of the Lord, flowing eastward and healing the desert and the Dead Sea. The presence of the Lord occasions both spiritual and physical life.

Ezekiel 47:8

⁸ Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

5A. A sea of marine life

The Dead Sea, now eight times saltier than the ocean, will be completely salt free. The waters of the Dead Sea will be filled with a great number and great variety of fish, as the waters of the Mediterranean. The Dead Sea today, barely sustaining microorganisms, will become a fisherman's delight.

Ezekiel 47:9-11

⁹ And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

¹⁰ And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

¹¹ But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

6A. A setting for a fishing industry

As a result of the magnificent and multiplied marine life in the former Dead Sea, a fishing industry will emerge, especially on the northwestern shore, from "En Gedi to En Eglaim" (perhaps the present-day En Feshka near Qumran). Fisherman will spread out their nets.

Ezekiel 47:10

¹⁰ And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

7A. A spectacle of living streams

Repeatedly, the Holy Spirit predicts for the millennial land of Israel a new river emerging from the temple in Jerusalem, one branch flowing westward into the Mediterranean, the other cascading eastward downhill, healing the desert and rejuvenating the Dead Sea. Along its banks, in the present wilderness of Judea, a miraculous tree will grow, producing a different fruit each month. Its leaves will provide healing for the nations. However, this microcosm of the changes in the



millennial land of Israel will be multiplied a thousand times over when not just all the rivers of Judah will flow with water, many of them issuing into the Dead Sea, but in wilderness areas all over the world, there will be "streams in the desert."

Zechariah 14:8

^a And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Ezekiel 47:7-8

⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river *were* very many trees on the one side and on the other.

^a Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

Psalms 46:4

⁴ *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.

Joel 3:18

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shiltim.

Joel 2:23

²³ Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

8A. A symbol of divine redemption

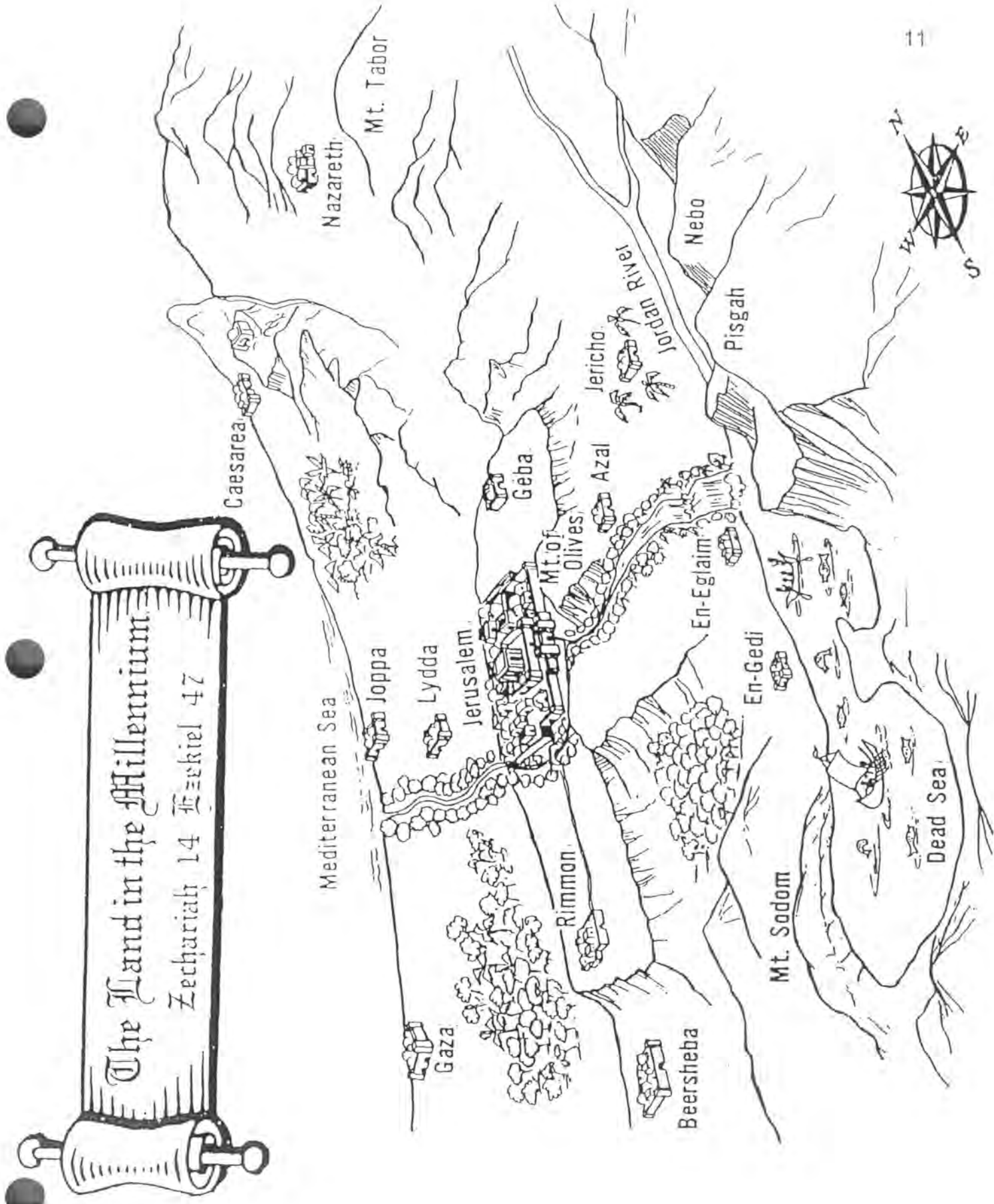
The prophetic promise of life on the millennial earth envisions an abundance of spiritual as well as physical life.

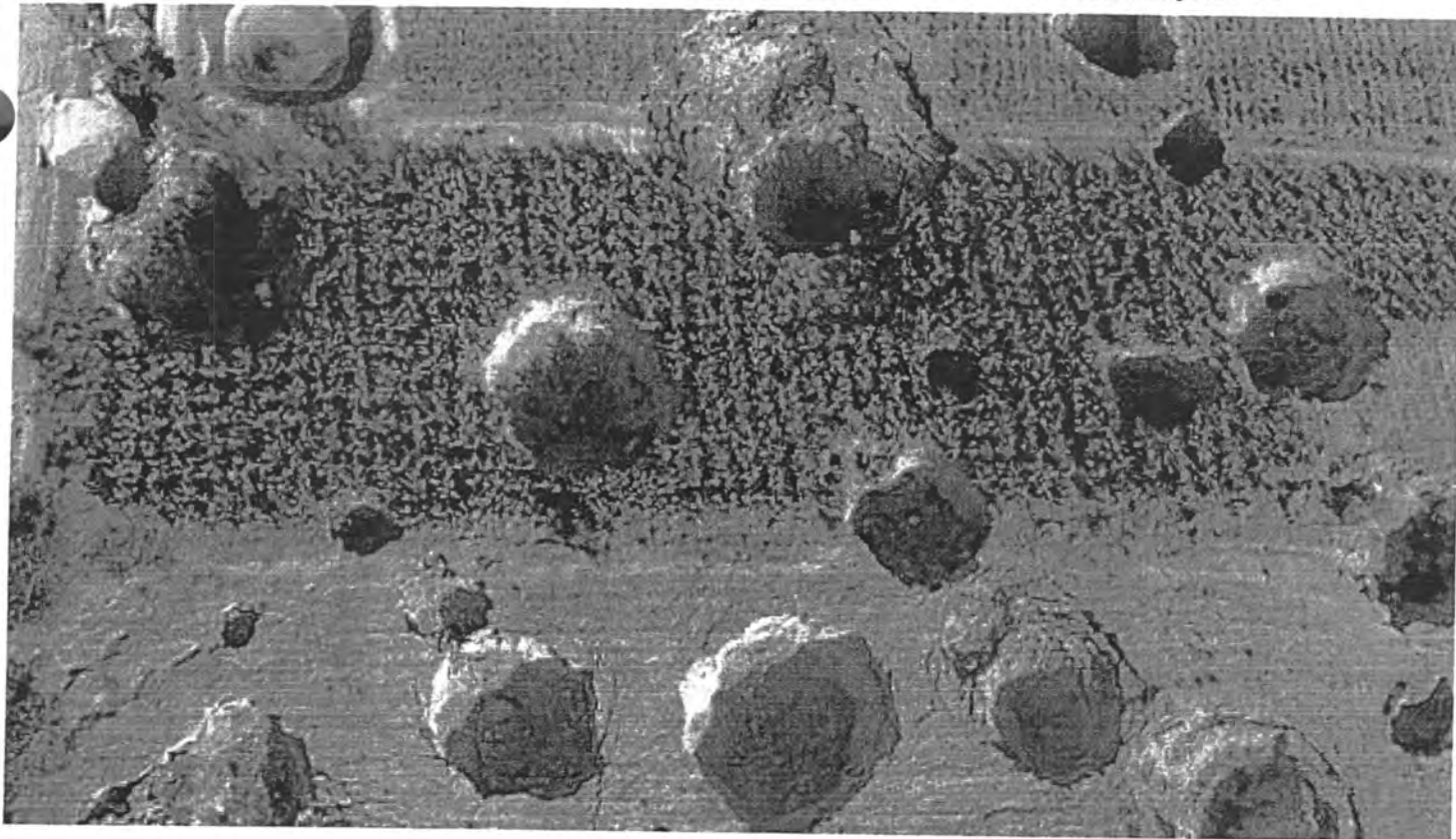
Christ's final redemptive work involves the regeneration of man and creation. It is through Adam's disobedience that "sin entered into the world and death by sin" (Romans 5:12). The result of Adam's sin and its effect on creation are nowhere more graphically manifest than in the condition of the Dead Sea. Its total transformation and rejuvenation through the Lord of Life employing the Spirit of Life affords a splendid symbol of the transforming power of God. If God can beautify such a dreadful scene of death and destruction, how glorious will be the redemption of the rest of creation!



The Land in the Millennium

Zechariah 14 47

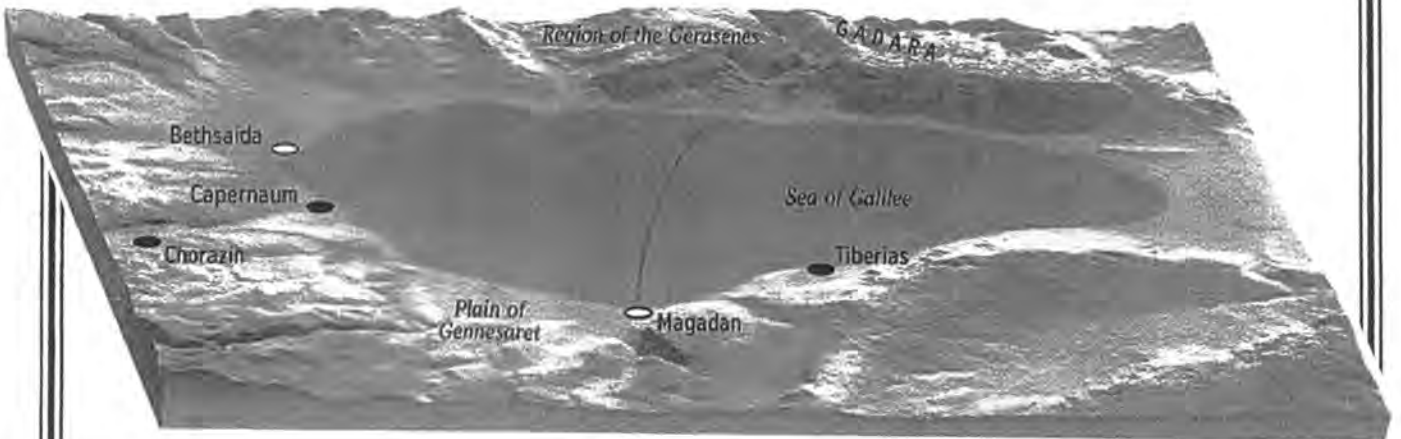


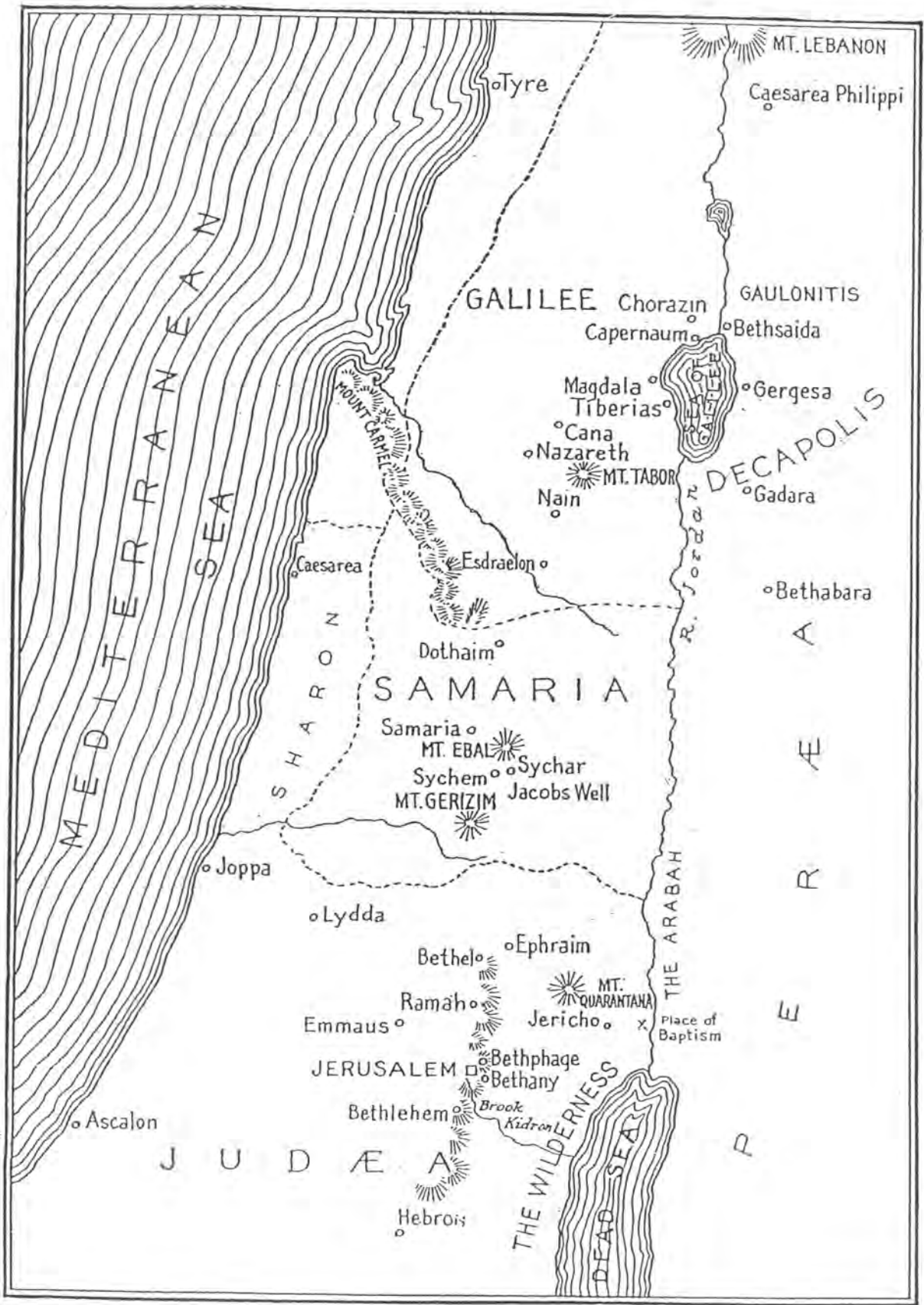


The Sea of Galilee: Lake of Our Lord



Der verjüdelnde Petrus.





The Sea of Galilee:

340

BIBLE LANDS.

now you see nothing but Tiberias, Magdala, and a few shapeless ruins. Then the lake was covered with sails of ships passing from shore to shore; now there are only about three rough fishing-boats to be seen.

Josephus relates a victorious naval battle which Vespasian fought on the lake against the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, and gives a glowing account of that country in his day. "The waters of the lake," he says in substance, "are sweet, and extremely pleasant to drink; fish found here differ from others in flavor and species; the surrounding country is admirable for its quality and beauty. Such is the fertility of the soil that it rejects no plant, and so genial is the climate that it suits every variety; the walnut, which delights in a wintry climate, grows here luxuriantly, together with the palm-tree which is nourished by heat, and near to those are figs and olives to which a milder atmosphere has been assigned. One might style this an ambitious effort of nature, doing violence to herself in bringing together plants of discordant habits, and an amiable rivalry of the seasons, each as it were asserting its right to the soil; for it not only possesses the extraordinary virtue of nourishing fruits of opposite climates, but also maintains a continual supply of them. Thus it produces those most royal of all, the grape and the fig, during ten months, without intermission, while the other varieties ripen the year round; for besides being favored by the genial temperature of the air, it is irrigated by a highly fertilizing spring, called Capharnaum by the people of the country."^{*}

^{*} *Ecll. Jud.* III. 10, 8.

THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

341

This description reads like irony when compared with the present condition. No roads, no houses, no gardens, no cultivated farms meet the eye along the shore, but wild grass, briars, and thistles in abundance.

And yet nature in its beauty is still there, notwithstanding the vandalism of men. There is the lake with its clear blue waters; there the hills in the light of the sun; there the plain of Gennesaret with its tropical fertility. The bright red magnolias grow luxuriantly among thistles and thorns, and occasionally even the fig, the olive, the pomegranate, the date-palm, the sugar-cane may still be found there. The lake district presents a beautiful picture, not indeed so grand and sublime as the lakes of Switzerland, nor so lovely and charming as the lakes of Northern Italy, but with a richer history, a warmer climate, and a better soil. It might be made an earthly paradise under a good government and with an industrious people. If it were not for the utter absence of convenience and comfort, such as every traveller from the West now looks for, one might delightfully spend weeks on those shores consecrated by the life and example of the wisest of the wise and the purest of the pure that ever trod this earth.

The lake forms a triangular oval or pear shape, with the broad end towards the north. It almost resembles a harp. It is over 12 (Bädeker says 16½) miles long, 6 miles broad, 160 feet deep. It lies 60 miles northeast of Jerusalem, and 27 miles east of the Mediterranean. It is on an average 660 (the Dead Sea is 1,292) feet below the Mediterranean. It abounds in fish. Its water

29*

is slightly saline, but pure and wholesome. The Jordan enters in from the north. All the towns which supplied the names of the lake were situated on the western shore. On the northwestern shore is the plain of Gennesaret (*EJ-Ghuweir*), about three miles long and one mile broad. The surrounding hills are of limestone capped with basalt, and are small and bare. There are hot springs near Tiberias, but neglected. Earthquakes and violent storms are not infrequent. Dr. Thomson, Captain Wilson, and others witnessed sudden thunderstorms not unlike that which frightened the disciples, till the Lord rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still!"

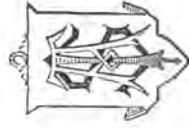
THROUGH BIBLE LANDS: NOTES OF TRAVEL

IN

EGYPT, THE DESERT, AND PALESTINE,

BY PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D., LL. D.,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LEARNING IN THE UNION THEOL. SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

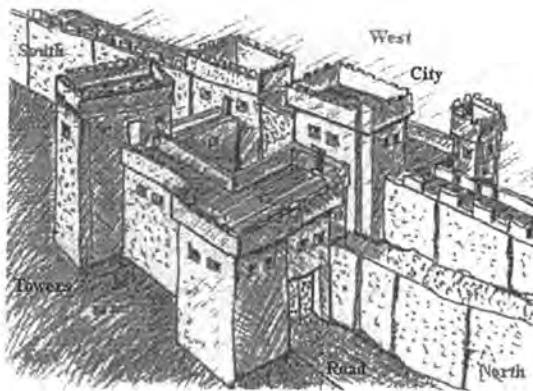


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1878

The Sea of Galilee:

Exciting Excavations along its Enchanting Shores



First Century Harbors on the Sea of Galilee

