

THE JEWISH FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Class I – Introduction / The Land & the Bible

January 14, 2017



An Introductory Reading

- Part of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls
- Discovered by a Palestinian shepherd boy in 1948 in caves near the Dead Sea
- Hidden by the Essene community when the Romans invaded in 70 CE
- Copies of the OT (except for Esther) plus their own additional writings
- Confirmed the faithfulness of the contemporary Masoretic OT Hebrew text
- Gave us a view of one of the major 1st century Jewish groups



Introduction

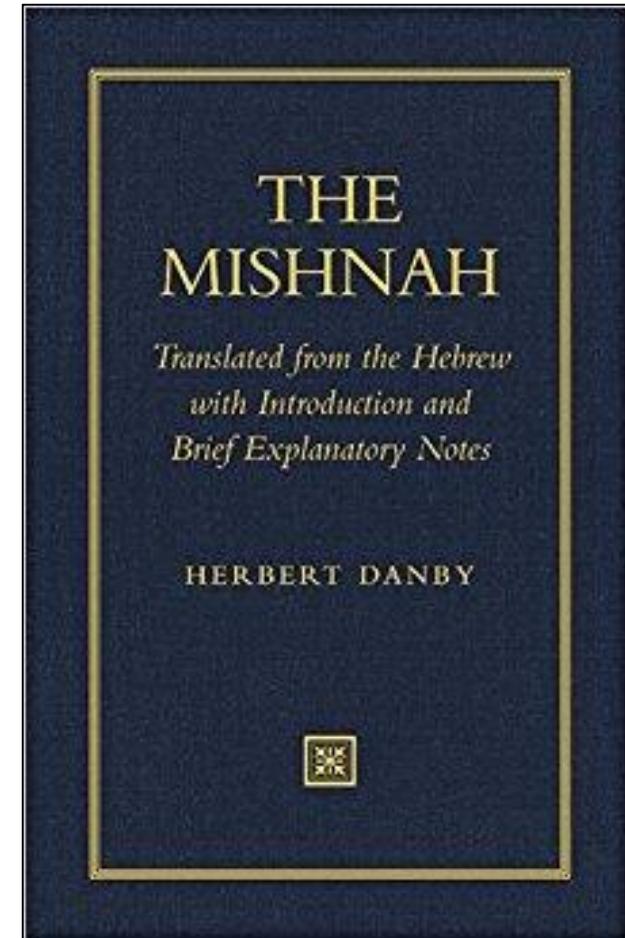
- Why do we care about the background of the Bible?
 - Context – biblical interpretation is grounded in the original audience
 - Submission to the Word – danger of reading our own anachronisms into Scripture
 - Worship of God - called to worship with our whole being, including the mind
- What are we trying to accomplish in this study?
 - *NOT* – an entirely complete view of every possible idea on these subjects
 - *NOT* – be experts reading Greek, or be experts in some obtuse academic subject
 - A framework for understanding Scripture that takes into account the historical/cultural background and assumptions of the original audience
 - Develop a hunger to ask more questions and do further study on your own
 - *Grow a deeper relationship with God through encountering the Bible on a deeper level*

Introduction

Simeon ben Gamaliel said:

“All my days have I grown up among the Sages and I have found nothing better for a man than silence; and not expounding [of the Law] is the chief thing but the doing [of it]; and he that multiplies words occasions sin.”

- Aboth 1.17



Where are We Going (Tentative)?

- Class I: Introduction & the Land of the Bible
- Class II-III: What Happens After the Old Testament Ends?
 - If worshiping YHWH means sacrificing at the Temple, what do you do when it no longer exists or you can't get to it?
 - When an independent Jewish kingdom is established, how do you rule?
- Class IV-VI: Judaism in the First Century
 - What is Hellenistic Judaism?
 - How has the church misrepresented Judaism?
 - What were the priorities of Hellenistic Judaism and what did they believe?
 - How does that affect how we interpret Jesus' mission and message?

Where are We Going (Tentative)?

- Class VII-VIII: What is the New Testament?
 - What is the NT?
 - How did we get the NT?
 - How come we have so many translations?
 - What are all of these other books (OT/NT Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha) and how do they relate to the New Testament?
 - How do faithfully interpret and apply Scripture to our lives?

The Land and the Bible

Today, we are going to build a map!

- Why are we doing elementary school work?
 - We want a resource to keep with us
 - Active learning > passive learning
 - Visual learning > auditory learning
- 3 ways the land affects how we understand the Bible:
 - Ethnic /political boundaries
 - Cultural themes
 - Keeps us honest on interpretation



Overview

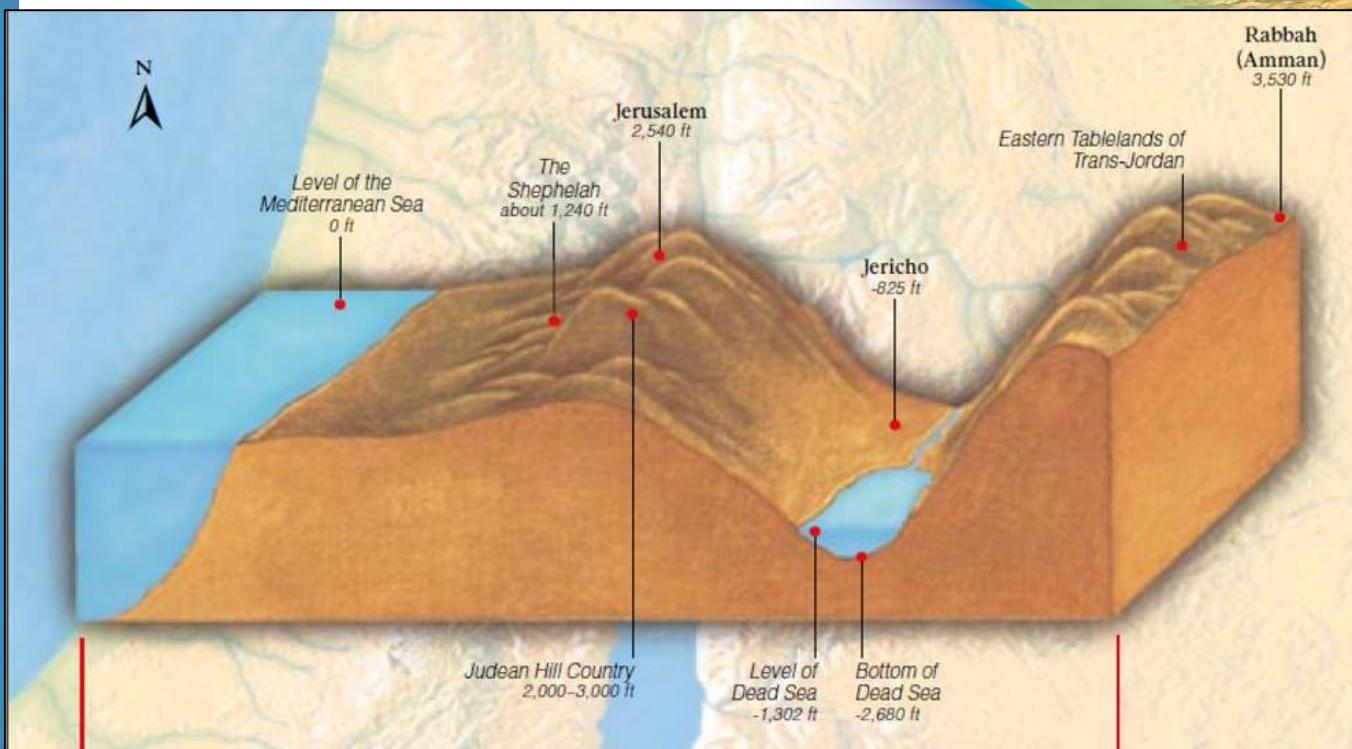


CHART OF NATURAL REGIONS

A. Coast of Great Sea
 1. Plain of Asher

B. Plains West of Jordan
 1. Plain of Dor

C. Mountains West of Jordan
 1. Hills of Galilee

D. Arabah (Rift Valley)
 1. Hula Basin

E. Mountains/Tablelands East of Jordan
 1. Bashan

F. Mountains of Lebanon

6. Wilderness of Judah

7. Negeb

8. Wilderness of Paran

2. Coastal Strip of Sharon

3. Pasture Grounds of Sharon

4. Plain of Philistia

5. Central East-West Valley

a. Plain of Megiddo

b. Low Plain of Jezreel

2. Area of Sea of Galilee

3. Jordan Valley

4. Salt Sea (Dead Sea)

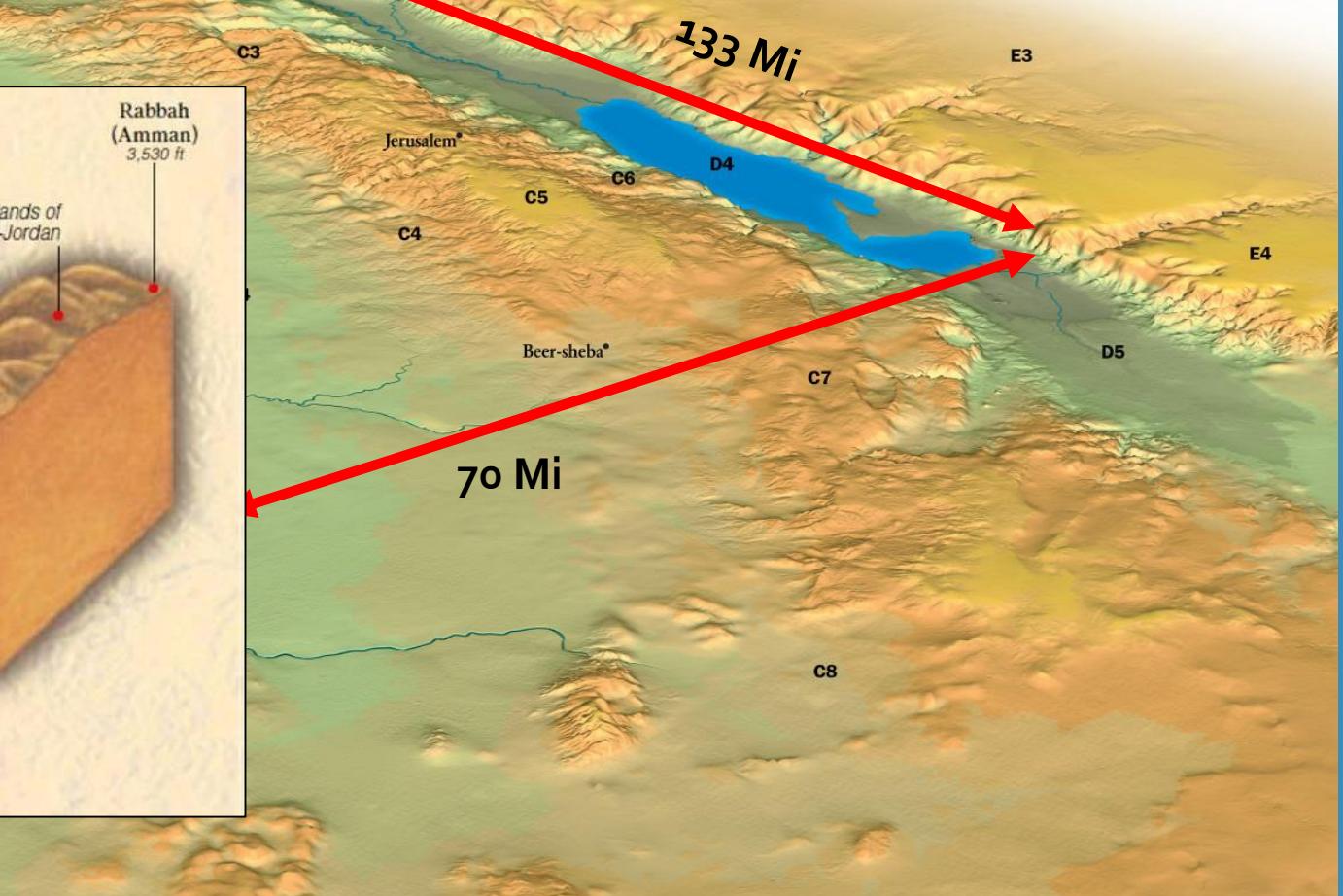
5. Arabah (south of Salt Sea)

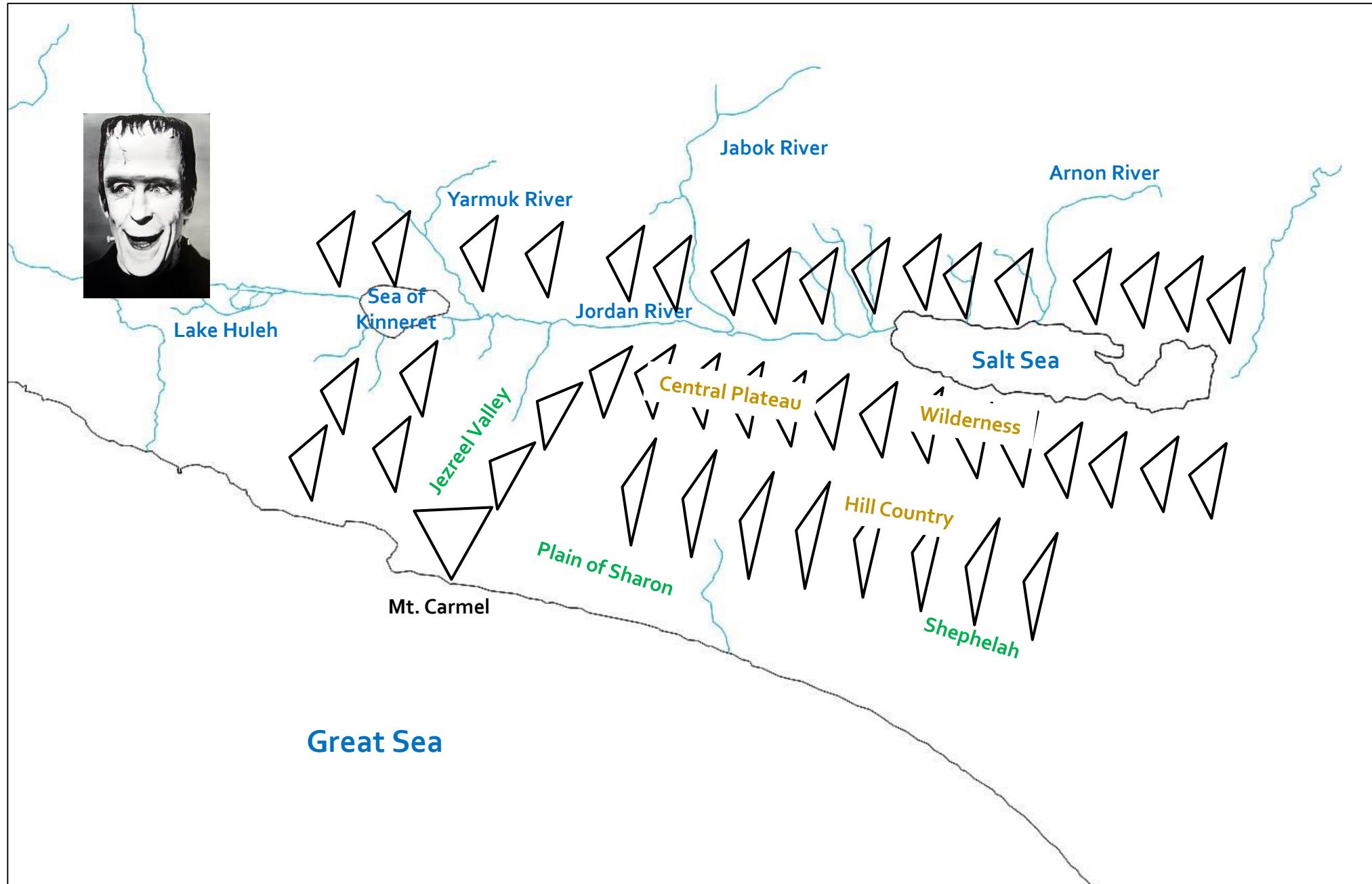
1. Hills of Carmel

2. Hills of Samaria

3. Shephelah (low hills)

4. Hill Country of Judah

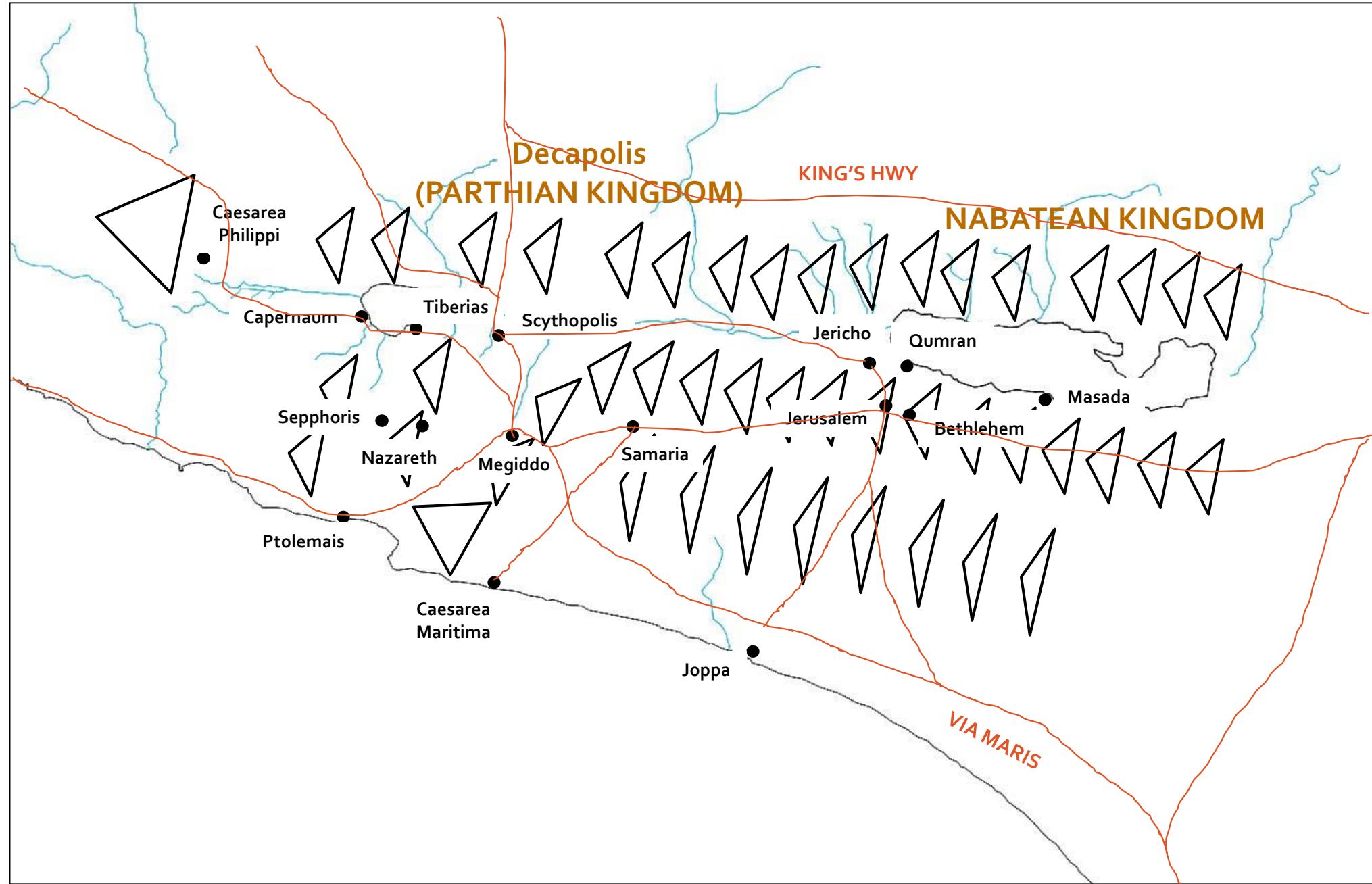




Label:

- 1. Bodies of Water**
- 2. Mountains**
- 3. Hills**
- 4. Valleys**

Label:
1. Major Cities
2. Roads
3. Other Kingdoms



Today's Takeaways

- The land has a big influence on the narrative of the Bible
- While the land itself is small, it has huge differences in geology/geography
- In order to properly understand some stories, we need to understand the location and the cultural assumptions of the place
- Three ways the land influences the Bible:
 - Ethnic/political boundaries
 - Cultural themes
 - Helps ground our interpretation

Next Week's Homework

- Read Mark 5:1 - 20
- Where does the setting of this story occur?
- What information can you gather about the inhabitants?
- How did they respond to Jesus?

The Gerasene Demoniac by
Sebastian Bourdon (1653)

