



Historical Overview

Dates	Period
Creation – 2150 B.C.	Pre-patriarchal Period
2150 – 1800 B.C.	Patriarchal Period
1876 – 1446 B.C.	Egyptian Sojourn
1446 – 1406 B.C.	Wilderness Wanderings
1406 – 1400 B.C.	Joshua's Conquest
1350 – 1050 B.C.	Period of the Judges
1050 – 930 B.C.	United Monarchy
930 – 722 B.C.	Divided Kingdom
722 – 586 B.C.	Judah Alone
605 – 535 B.C.	The Exile
535 – ca. 400 B.C.	The Return
ca. 400 B.C. – 5 B.C.	Intertestamental Period ("Silent Years")
ca. 5 B.C. – 100 A.D.	New Testament Period

The Five Key Dates of Old Testament History:

- Abraham: 2000 BC
- The Exodus: 1446 BC
- David: 1000 BC
- Exile of Israel: 722 BC
- Exile of Judah: 586 BC

Introduction to Historical Geography

I. Study Maps

See handout.

II. Overarching Dynamics of the Land of Israel

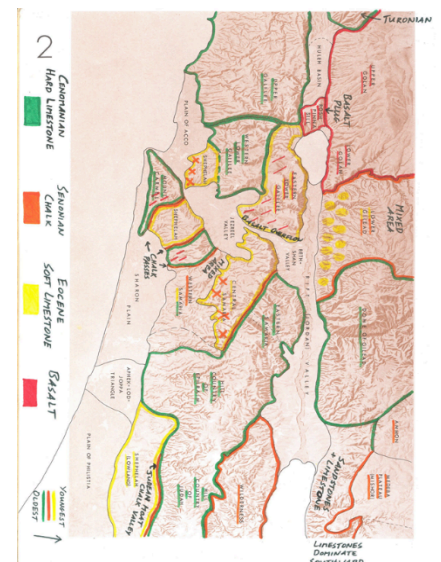
“A Land Between”

- The land of Israel was small compared to the great empires of the ancient near east. It is only 150 miles (240 km.) from Dan to Beersheba, and 45 miles (75 km.) from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. However, this land had immense strategic importance in the region.
- The land of Israel and the rest of the Levant serves as a land bridge between Africa & the rest of the world. Hemmed between the Mediterranean Sea on west and the Arabian Desert on the east, this was the only land route by which you could travel from Mesopotamia or Anatolia (Asia Minor) to Egypt. The land of Israel is the link that connects Africa with Europe and Asia.
- A major, international trade route passed through the Land of Israel. Sometimes this route is referred to as the “Via Maris” (the “way of the sea”). The Land of Israel was the ancient world’s equivalent of the Suez Canal or Panama Canal today.



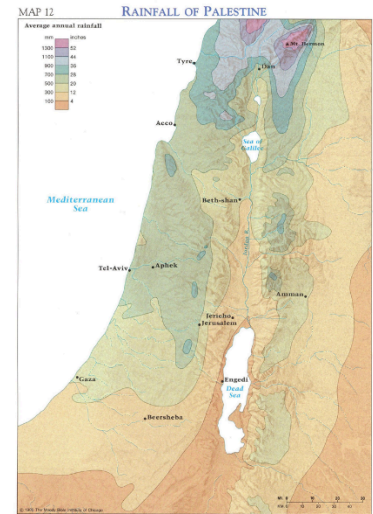
“A Land of Diversity”

- Exod. 3:7-8
- The land of Israel contains several different types of terrain, soil, and humidity.
- The land is subdivided geographically, which encouraged people who were living in the land to segregate from one another.



“A Land That Fostered Faith”

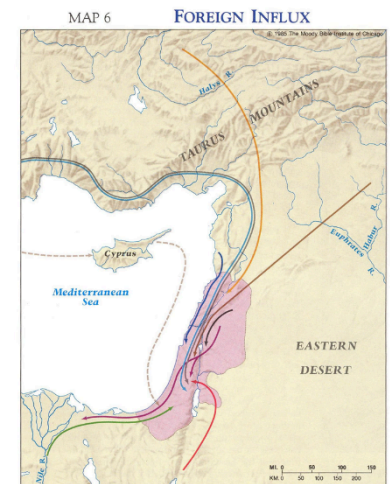
- Deut. 11:10-12
- The agricultural realities required rains at the proper time. There is no useful river (such as the Nile, the Tigris, or the Euphrates) that flows through the land, making it easy to grow food. The people were dependent on powers that they could not control (the wind and the rain). Ultimately, they were dependent on Yahweh to provide for their needs.
- The strategic importance of the territory as a land bridge would prove to be a juicy target for foreign powers. The little nation of Israel would be continually threatened from neighbors near and far. The people living in that land constantly needed God's protection from very real and violent dangers.



"A Land Promised to Abraham"

All of the factors listed above made the Land of Israel the perfect place for God to position His chosen people. In various ways, these factors pushed them toward Yahweh:

- Israel was strategically placed for its mission:
 - The land's position as a land bridge between three continents gave God's people the opportunity to "shine [their] light before all men" (Matt. 5:16). Instead of God sending the people of Israel into the world, God brought the people of the world to Israel's doorstep. This was God's "reverse missions" strategy in the Old Testament. Sadly, the Israelites failed in their mission as a "kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6)
 - Israel's political unity was tied to their common faith in Yahweh:
 - The land's diversity and tendency to isolate populations would make it difficult for the various Israelite tribes to maintain their unity. Only through a common faith in Yahweh, a common place of worship, and a common submission to a divinely appointed king could the people of Israel maintain their integrity as a nation. If they stood united and faithful as they did in the time of David and (to a lesser degree) Solomon, then they would have dominance in the region and be blessed spiritually and materially. Yet, again, the nation failed miserably to maintain their unity and for most of their history, they were divided and fought against one another.
 - Israel's prosperity and safety was dependent on Yahweh:
 - The land's geographical characteristics, particularly the dependence on farmers for rain and
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- MAP 6 FOREIGN INFLUX
- The map shows the Eastern Desert region, including the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and the Taurus Mountains. It illustrates the 'Foreign Influx' of people into the region, with arrows indicating the movement of various groups. The region is labeled 'EASTERN DESERT'. A scale bar at the bottom right shows distances in miles (0 to 100) and kilometers (0 to 100).



the constant threat of invasion, should have driven the people of Israel to their knees, to the one true God for His provision and protection. Instead, all too often the people chose to rely on other gods for assistance.

Introduction to Biblical Archaeology

What is Biblical Archaeology?

"Biblical" = related to the Bible.

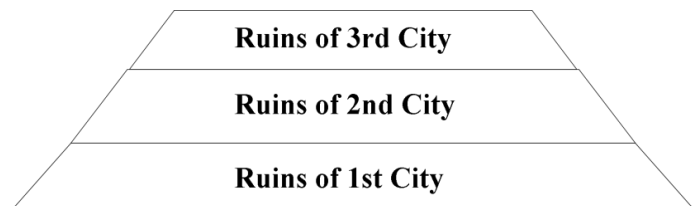
"Archaeology" = the study of physical remains of past cultures.

What types of physical remains do people leave behind?

- Stone
- Mudbrick
- Metal
- Pottery
- Bone and Ivory
- Wood and Fiber
- Papyrus and Parchment

How are ruins formed?

- 1) A new city is built.
- 2) The city is destroyed.
- 3) People build a new city on top of the ruins.
- 4) That city is destroyed.
- 5) People build a new city on top of the ruins.
- 6) That city is destroyed.



Each time the city is rebuilt, the town gets higher. Today, these ruined cities built on top of each other are called a "Tell" (Hebrew spelling) or "Tel" (Arabic spelling).

In general, the newer material is higher in the tel, and the older material is lower in the tel. But there are many cases where later societies dug into the layers of older societies.

How much material from ancient times is available for study today?

In his book, *The Stones and the Scriptures*, Edwin Yamauchi discusses the fragmentary nature of the evidence from antiquity at our disposal. He points out that we have only a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction to study:

Out of all the stuff that existed in ancient times, only a small part of it still exists today.

- o Out of the small part that still exists today, only a small number of sites have been surveyed.
 - Out of the small number of sites surveyed, only a small part of them have been excavated.
 - Out of the small number of sites excavated, only a small amount of each site has been excavated.
 - o Out of the small parts that have been excavated, only a small part of the excavations have been published in books.

Yamauchi writes:

"Now if one could by an optimistic estimate reckon that one-tenth of our materials and inscriptions has survived, that six-tenths of the available sites have been surveyed, that one-fiftieth of these sites have been excavated, that one-tenth of the excavated sites have been examined, and that one-half of the materials and inscriptions excavated have been published, one would have $(1/10 \times 6/10 \times 1/50 \times 1/10 \times 1/2)$ at hand but six, one hundred-thousandths $[6/100,000]$ of all the possible evidence. This estimate must take into account the factor of redundancy. That is, in cases of mass-produced items such as pottery one does not have to discover many examples of the same type of pot to set up a corpus of representative types. On the other hand, this fraction becomes significant when considering the paucity of relatively rare items, such as historical inscriptions."

-- Edwin Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 156.

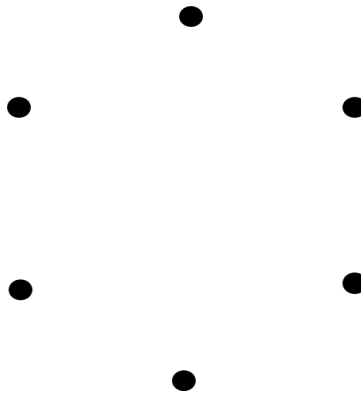
So how much material from ancient times is available for study today?

The answer is very little!

How should archaeological evidence be interpreted?

When it comes to interpreting the evidence unearthed by archaeology, we have two options:

1. Man as the authority.
2. Bible as the authority.



All archaeologists and historians have the same evidence to examine. Different scholars come to different conclusions because they “connect the dots” in different ways.

Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence ...

- When an archaeologist says the Bible is NOT true, realize he or she has a very small window into the past. There are many things the experts don't know.
- At the same time, it is impossible to use archaeology to prove the Bible IS true. Archaeology can never produce enough evidence to prove that every single biblical event happened the way the Bible says it did.

What are the proper uses of biblical archaeology?

First, archaeology provides an apologetic for the historical reliability of the Bible. Thus, it encourages faith in the Scriptures.

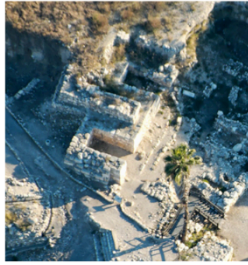
Examples:

- Tel Dan Inscription: “House of David” (see 1 Sam. 20:16).
 - 841 B.C. Aramean inscription found at Tel Dan in Israel.
- Solomonic gates at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (see 1 Kgs. 9:15).
 - Similar blueprint used at all three sites, dating to the 10th century B.C.





Hazor



Megiddo



Gezer

Second, archaeology provides background information for the Bible. Thus, it promotes a better understanding of the Scriptures. It can teach us what things were like back in biblical times:

- How people lived.
- Where they lived.
- What they ate.
- What they wore.
- How they worked.



Third, archaeology provides a tangible connection with the past. Thus, it can inspire courage in believers to trust God more fully with their lives.

- Deuteronomy 7:17-19
 "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?' you shall not be afraid of them but **you shall remember** what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out. So will the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid."



The Great Pyramids of Giza