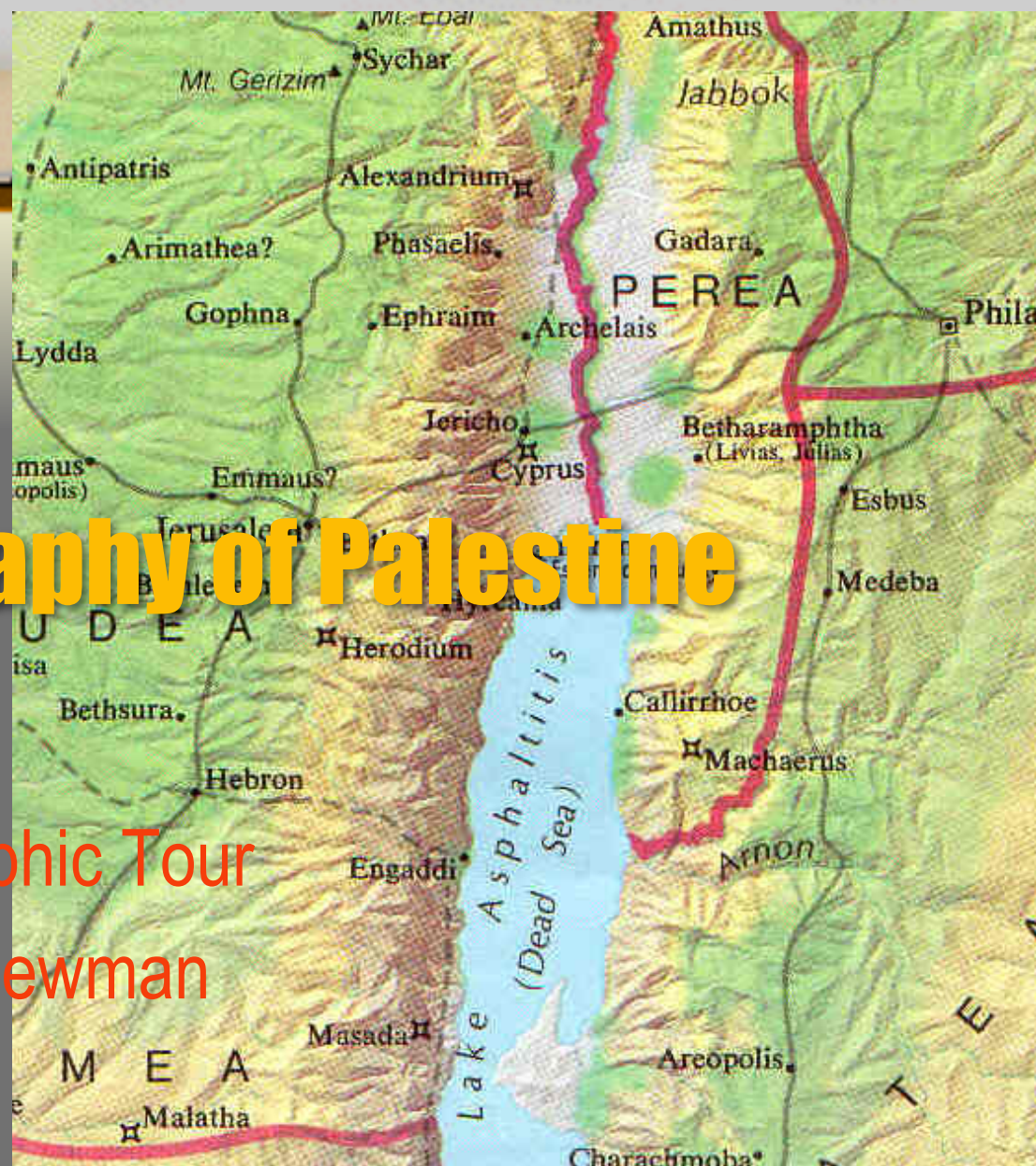


The Geography of Palestine

A Photographic Tour
Robert C. Newman



Physical Features of Palestine

⇒ Major Regions

- Going from West to East

⇒ Some Smaller Geographic Features

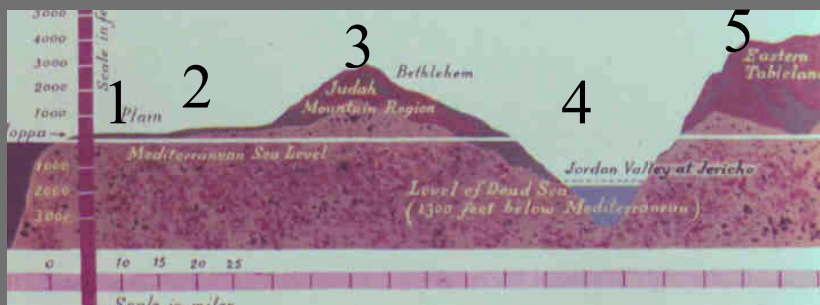
- Going from North to South

⇒ The Major Bodies of Water

- Seas, lakes, rivers

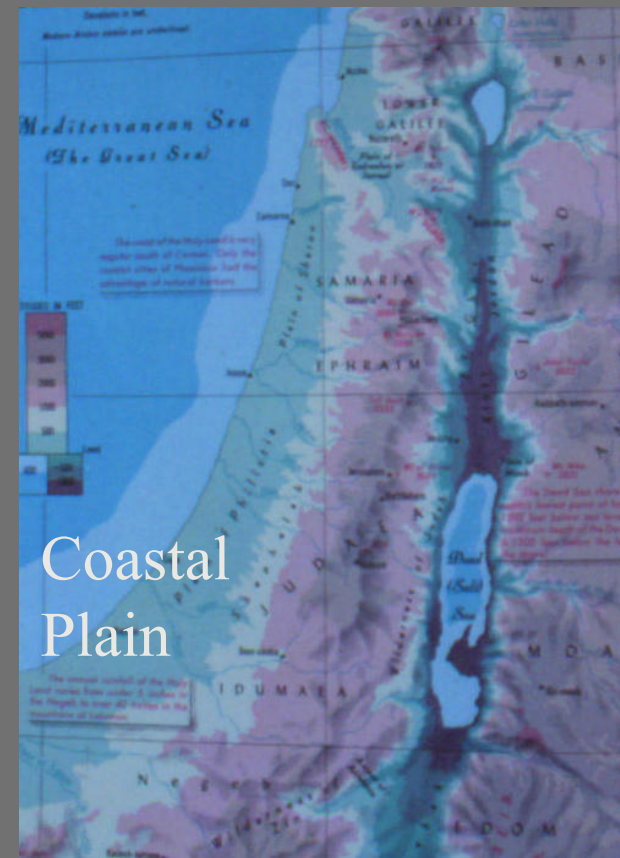
Major Regions West to East

- ➔ Coastal Plain - 1
- ➔ Shephelah - 2
- ➔ Hill Country - 3
- ➔ Rift Valley - 4
- ➔ Trans-Jordan Plateau - 5



Coastal Plain

- ➔ Low, flat
- ➔ Fertile where not too salty or sandy
- ➔ Easily invaded
 - Terrain pretty smooth
 - Open to South
 - Reached from North thru passes



Coastal Plain



Coastal Plain



Shephelah "Lowlands"

- ➔ Somewhat higher than coastal plain
- ➔ Lower than Hill Country
- ➔ Rolling terrain
- ➔ Travel typically along valleys
- ➔ Relatively easy to invade



Shephelah "Lowlands"

Beth
Shemesh



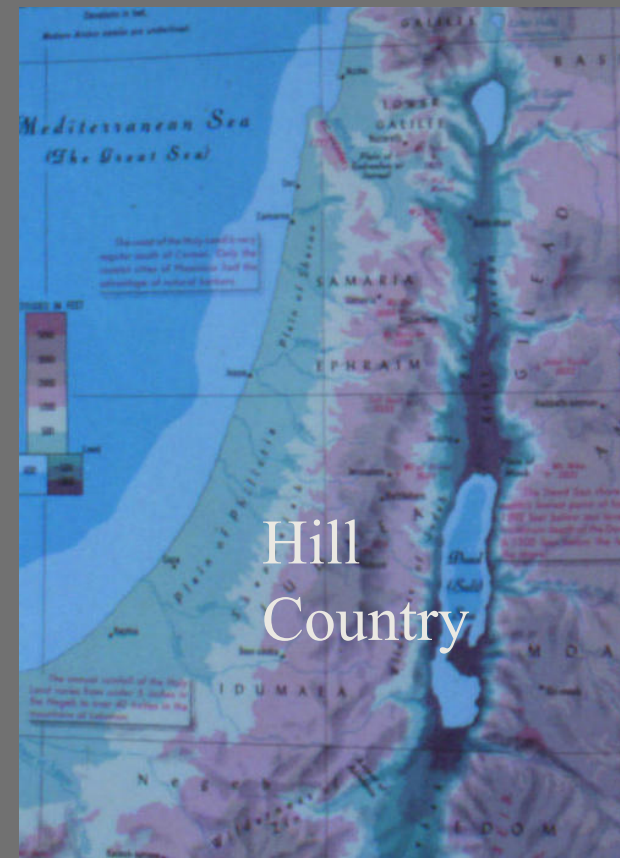
Shephelah "Lowlands"

Shephelah
from Azekah



Hill Country

- ➔ Sharp hills, V-shaped valleys
- ➔ Resembles West Virginia
- ➔ Travel along ridges
- ➔ Difficult to invade
- ➔ Agriculture uses terraces
- ➔ Rainfall good W of ridge, poor to E of ridge



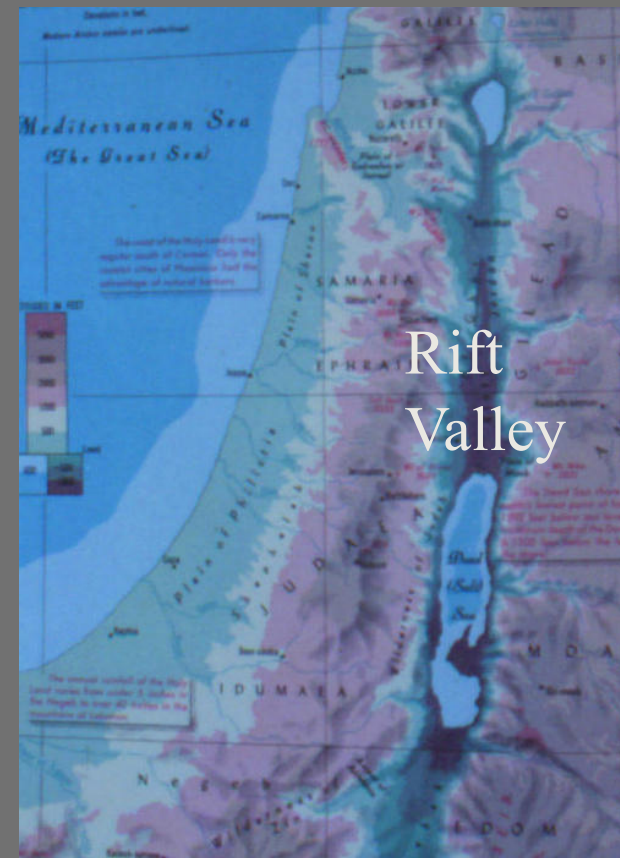
Hill Country

Kefar
Ezyon



Rift Valley

- ➔ A geologic fault (Graben)
- ➔ Extends S into Africa, N into Syria
- ➔ Wide U-shaped valley
- ➔ Jordan R has its own valley in middle
- ➔ Climate hot & dry
- ➔ To grow crops, must use irrigation



Rift Valley

Rift Valley
from Belvoir



Rift Valley

In Rift Valley
North of Jericho



Trans-Jordan Plateau

- ➔ A flat tableland
- ➔ Higher than Hill Country
- ➔ Relatively well-watered at Western edge
- ➔ Quickly becomes desert as one moves Eastward



T-J
Plateau

Trans-Jordan Plateau

Fertile soil on
T-J Plateau



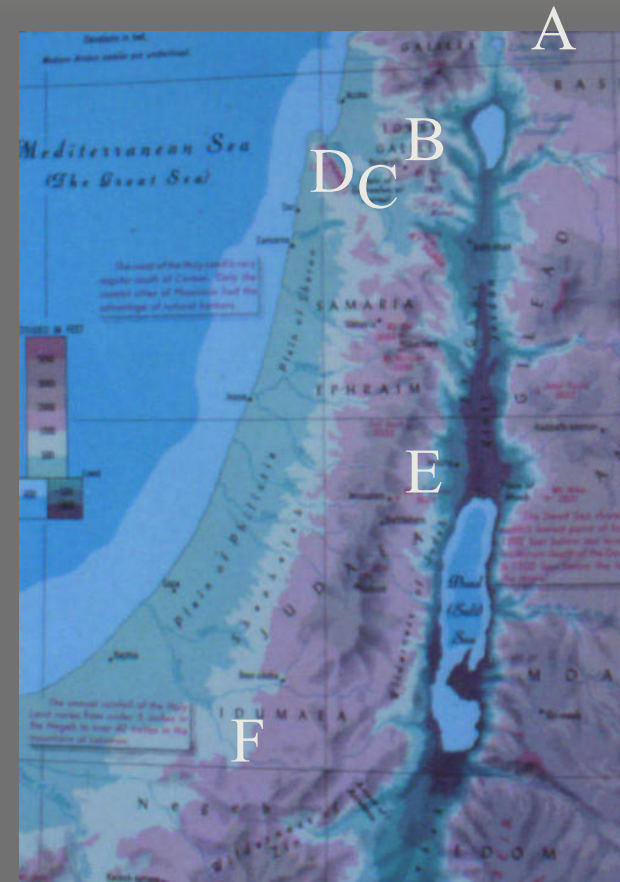
Trans-Jordan Plateau

On T-J Plateau
Looking SW
Into Rift Valley



Smaller Geographical Features

- ➔ Mount Hermon - A
- ➔ Galilee & Mt. Tabor - B
- ➔ Jezreel Valley - C
- ➔ Mount Carmel - D
- ➔ Wilderness of Judea - E
- ➔ The Negev - F



Mount Hermon

- ➔ Highest peak in Palestine area
- ➔ Elevation over 9,000 ft
- ➔ Southernmost peak of the Anti-Lebanon range
- ➔ Peak is generally snow-covered all year



Galilee & Mount Tabor

- ⇒ Hilly region, N extension of Hill Country
- ⇒ Best-watered area in Palestine, similar to Eastern United States
- ⇒ N is higher, S lower
- ⇒ Reasonably cool except around Sea of Galilee
- ⇒ Mt Tabor (1900 ft) is an isolated peak



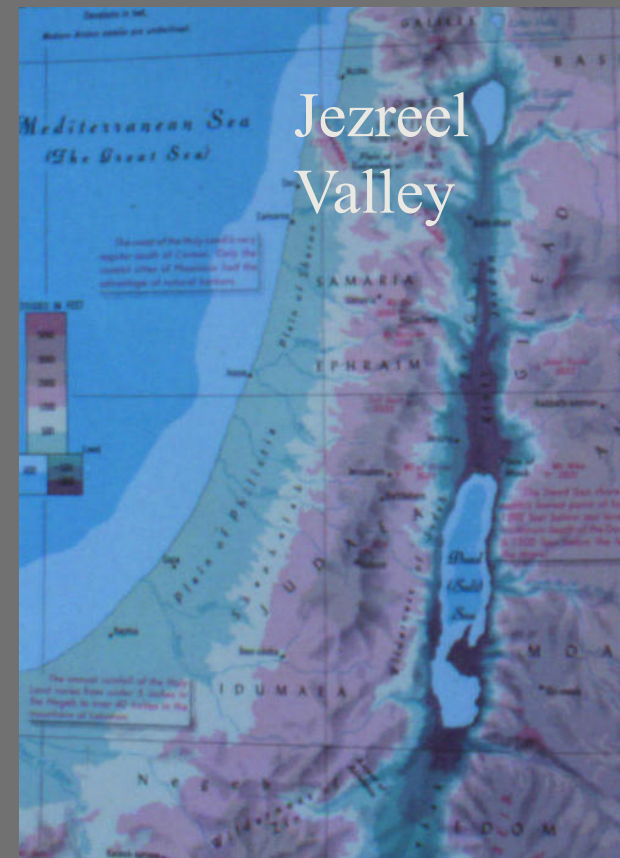
Galilee

Galilee & Horns
of Hattin from
Mt Arbel



Jezreel Valley

- ➔ An E-W valley connecting coast with Jordan valley
- ➔ Separates Samaria from Galilee
- ➔ Easiest passage from Rift Valley to coast
- ➔ An important trade route



Jezreel Valley

Jezreel Valley
from Megiddo
Pass



Mount Carmel

- ➔ Long ridge on S side of Jezreel Valley
- ➔ Maximum height about 1800 feet
- ➔ Barrier to N-S travel
- ➔ Trade routes go thru passes
- ➔ City of Megiddo controls one pass



Wilderness of Judea

- ➔ A badlands region E of Jerusalem
- ➔ Virtually uninhabited, due to poor rainfall & soil
- ➔ Used for grazing sheep in winter (wetter) season
- ➔ Site of Jesus' temptations



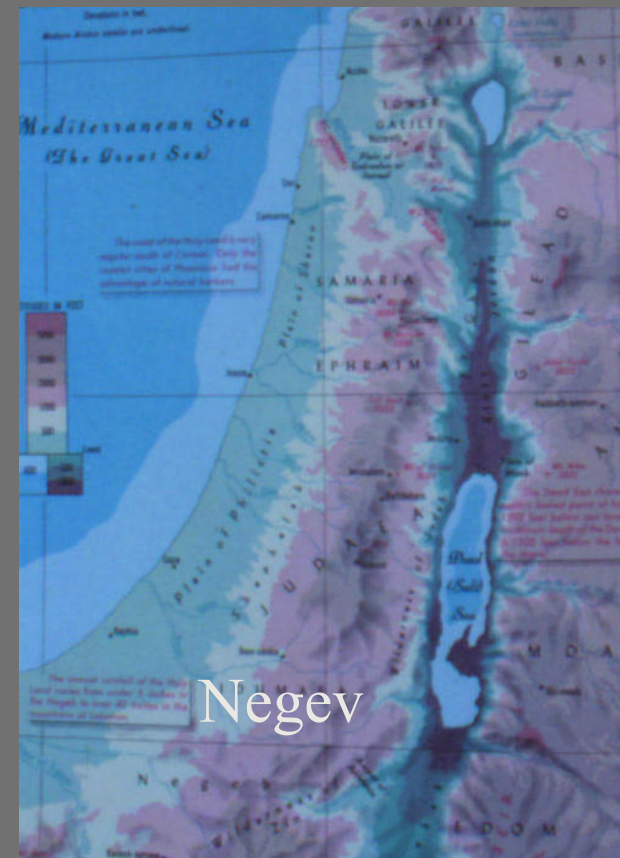
Wilderness of Judea

Bedouin tent
& sheep



The Negev

- ➔ Arid region South of Hebron
- ➔ Flat or rolling terrain
- ➔ Soil is good for agriculture
- ➔ Very little rainfall due to latitude effect
- ➔ Agriculture possible using tricks to concentrate water



The Negev

Camel &
Tent



Major Bodies of Water

- ➔ Mediterranean Sea – 1
- ➔ Sea of Galilee – 2
- ➔ Jordan River – 3
- ➔ Dead Sea – 4



Mediterranean Sea

- ➔ Large body of salt water (1700 x 500 mi)
- ➔ Connects to Atlantic at Gibraltar
- ➔ Major transportation route
- ➔ Palestine has few ports, so Jews typically middlemen rather than sailors



Mediterranean Sea

Near
Ashkelon



Sea of Galilee

- ➔ A fresh-water lake (about 7 x 13 miles)
- ➔ Surface is 600 ft below sea level!
- ➔ Source & outlet both called Jordan River
- ➔ Important for fishing
- ➔ Peculiar topography allows violent storms



Sea of Galilee

Sea of Galilee from
Horns of Hattin



Jordan River

- ➔ Begins in N on lower slopes of Mt Hermon
- ➔ Descends thru Sea of Galilee to end in Dead Sea
- ➔ Drops about 2300 ft in 100 mi (with river winding perhaps 250 mi)



Jordan River

Jordan from
Belvoir



Dead Sea

- ➔ Surface is lowest point on earth, 1296 ft below sea level
- ➔ Water is extremely salty, so fish cannot live in it
- ➔ Objects float unusually well
- ➔ Mined in antiquity and today for minerals



Dead Sea

Dead Sea near
En-Gedi



Political Features of Palestine

- ⇒ Political divisions at time of Jesus' ministry
- ⇒ Cities of Palestine at same time
- ⇒ Major roads
- ⇒ The Herodian fortifications

Political Divisions

Boundaries are red lines

- ➔ Judea – A
- ➔ Galilee – B
- ➔ Perea – C
- ➔ Tetrarchy of Philip – D
- ➔ The Decapolis – E



Judea

- ➔ Also included Samaria & Idumea
- ➔ Population mostly Jews
 - Gentiles in Samaria & Idumea
- ➔ Rulers:
 - Herod the Great
 - Archelaus
 - Roman governors
 - Herod Agrippa 1
 - Roman governors



Galilee

- ➔ Area W of Sea of Galilee
- ➔ Territory of N tribes till captivity
- ➔ Territory of Gentiles till Maccabees took it back
- ➔ Rulers:
 - Herod the Great
 - Herod Antipas
 - Roman governors
 - Herod Agrippa 1
 - Roman governors



Perea

- ➔ Narrow strip E of the Jordan
- ➔ Inhabited mainly by Jews after Maccabean conquests
- ➔ Same rulers as Galilee



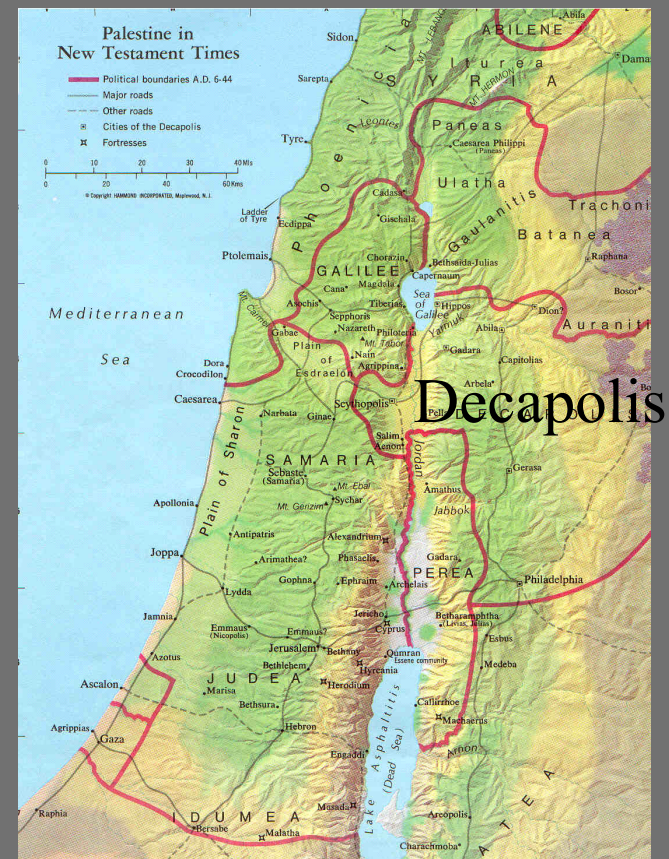
Tetrarchy of Philip

- ➔ Region NE of Sea of Galilee
- ➔ Multi-ethnec, mostly Gentile
- ➔ Part of Herod the Great's territory, went to Philip
- ➔ Rulers:
 - Herod the Great
 - Philip the Tetrarch
 - Roman governors
 - Herod Agrippa 1
 - Roman governors



The Decapolis

- ➔ League of Hellenistic cities (w/ territories)
- ➔ Mostly Gentile
- ➔ Under Maccabees during their power
- ➔ After Romans came, made independent of Jewish control



Cities of Palestine

- ➔ Jerusalem – 1
- ➔ Caesarea – 2
- ➔ Sebaste – 3
- ➔ Tiberias – 4
- ➔ Caesarea Philippi – 5



Major Roads

- ➔ Via Maris —————
 - Latin for "Way of the Sea"
 - Coastal road from Egypt to Antioch & Damascus
- ➔ King's Highway —————
 - On T-J Plateau
 - Gulf of Aqabah to Damascus
- ➔ Ridge Route - - - - -
 - Thru Hill Country
 - Connects Jerusalem with Galilee



Herodian Fortifications

➡ Macherus – A

- E of Dead Sea
- John the Baptist killed here, acc to Josephus

➡ Masada – B

- W of Dead Sea
- Last stand of Zealots

➡ Herodium – C

- Near Bethlehem
- Herod buried here?



Masada



Herodium



The End

Knowing geography helps in
understanding the narratives of the OT,
the Gospels & Acts.