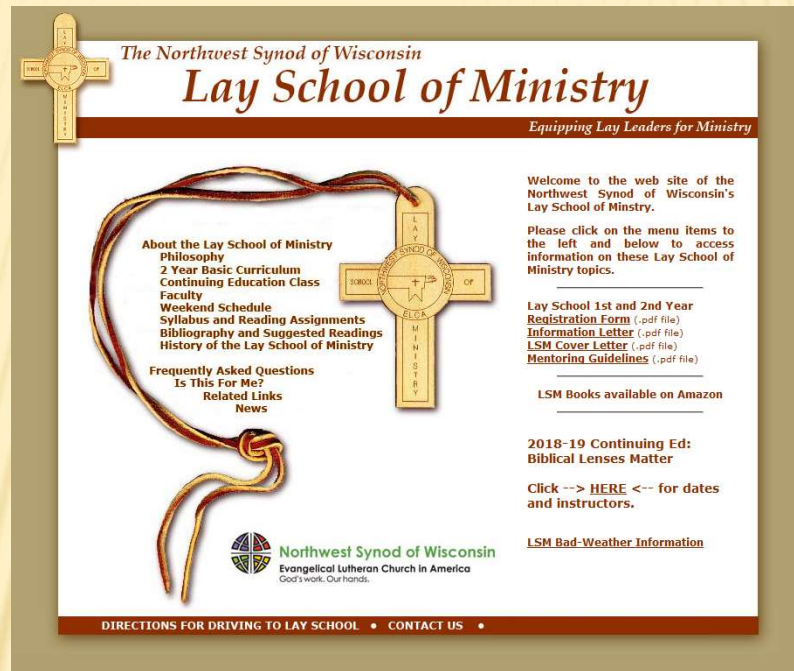


GPS: God's Positioning System

Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens



The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Lay School of Ministry
Equipping Lay Leaders for Ministry

Welcome to the web site of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin's Lay School of Ministry.

Please click on the menu items to the left and below to access information on these Lay School of Ministry topics.

About the Lay School of Ministry
Philosophy
2 Year Basic Curriculum
Continuing Education Class
Faculty
Weekend Schedule
Syllabus and Reading Assignments
Bibliography and Suggested Readings
History of the Lay School of Ministry

Frequently Asked Questions
Is This For Me?
Related Links
News

Lay School 1st and 2nd Year
[Registration Form](#) (.pdf file)
[Information Letter](#) (.pdf file)
[LSM Cover Letter](#) (.pdf file)
[Mentoring Guidelines](#) (.pdf file)

LSM Books available on Amazon

2018-19 Continuing Ed:
Biblical Lenses Matter

Click --> [HERE](#) <-- for dates and instructors.

[LSM Bad-Weather Information](#)

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

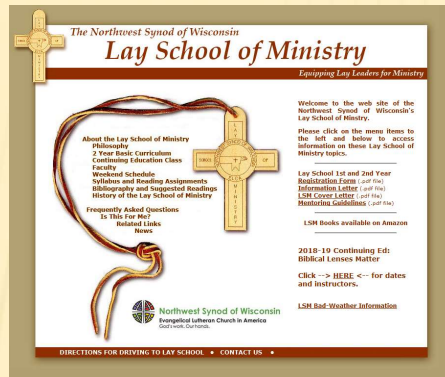
DIRECTIONS FOR DRIVING TO LAY SCHOOL • CONTACT US •

www.CrossMarks.com/LSMGPS

12-13 October 2018
Chippewa Falls, WI
Mark G Vitalis Hoffman

GPS: God's Positioning System

Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens



Session 1

Why is Geography Important?
An Introduction to Biblical Geography

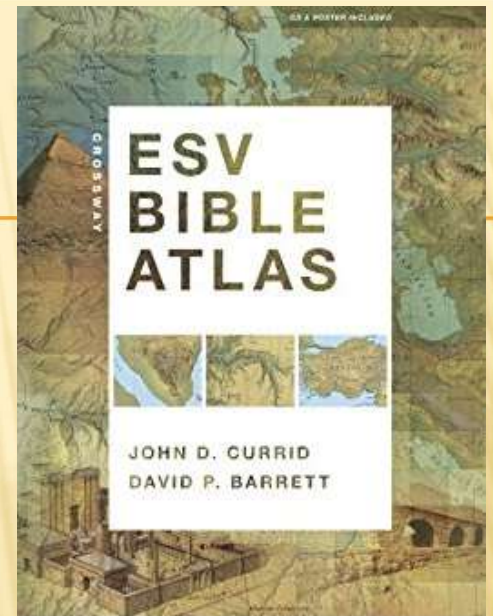
Resources – cf. website for links

✘ Crossway ESV Bible Atlas

- + Available Amazon (hardcover \$34; Kindle \$16)

✘ Other atlases

- + *ESV Concise Bible Atlas* (64pp)
- + *New Moody Atlas of the Bible* = NMBA (maps used)
- + Carta's *The Sacred Bridge* (A classic but expensive and technical)
- + Rasmussen: *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible* (160pp)
- + *Satellite Bible Atlas* (Biblically, chronologically oriented)
 - ✘ Cf. <https://www.youtube.com/user/SatelliteBibleAtlas>
- + Notley: *In the Master's Steps* (Step through the Gospels)
- + Luker: *Guide to the Holy Land*
- + Murphy-O'Connor: *The Holy Land*
- + Or wait for Mullins/Hoffman (2019?)
Fortress Atlas of the Biblical World



Biblical Geography

Land forms, water, travel, climate, agriculture...

Biblical History

People, settlements, migrations, wars, cultures

Biblical Story

The narrative of what God is doing in history

*How are these three perspectives related?
How do we learn about each?*

Biblical Geography

Study the land, climate, roads, etc.

Biblical History

Documents (incl. Bible!), archaeology

Biblical Story

Discerning the author's perspective

Discerning our perspective as
Christians reading the Bible

Behind
the text

In
the text

In front of
the text

Biblical Story

- How do we *read* the text?

- > **Exegesis**

Behind the text

- **Informed by Biblical Geography & Biblical History**
- Historical critical approaches
 - Text-, Form-, Source-, Socio-Historical-, Redaction-, Narrative-, and other criticisms

In the text

- How do we *interpret* the text?

- > **Hermeneutics**

In front of the text

- Devotional, spiritual, religious
- What weight is given the reading approaches noted above?
- What perspectives affect and inform your reading?
 - Theological, social, cultural, traditional, racial, gender, political, modern...

BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHY

NMBA 1

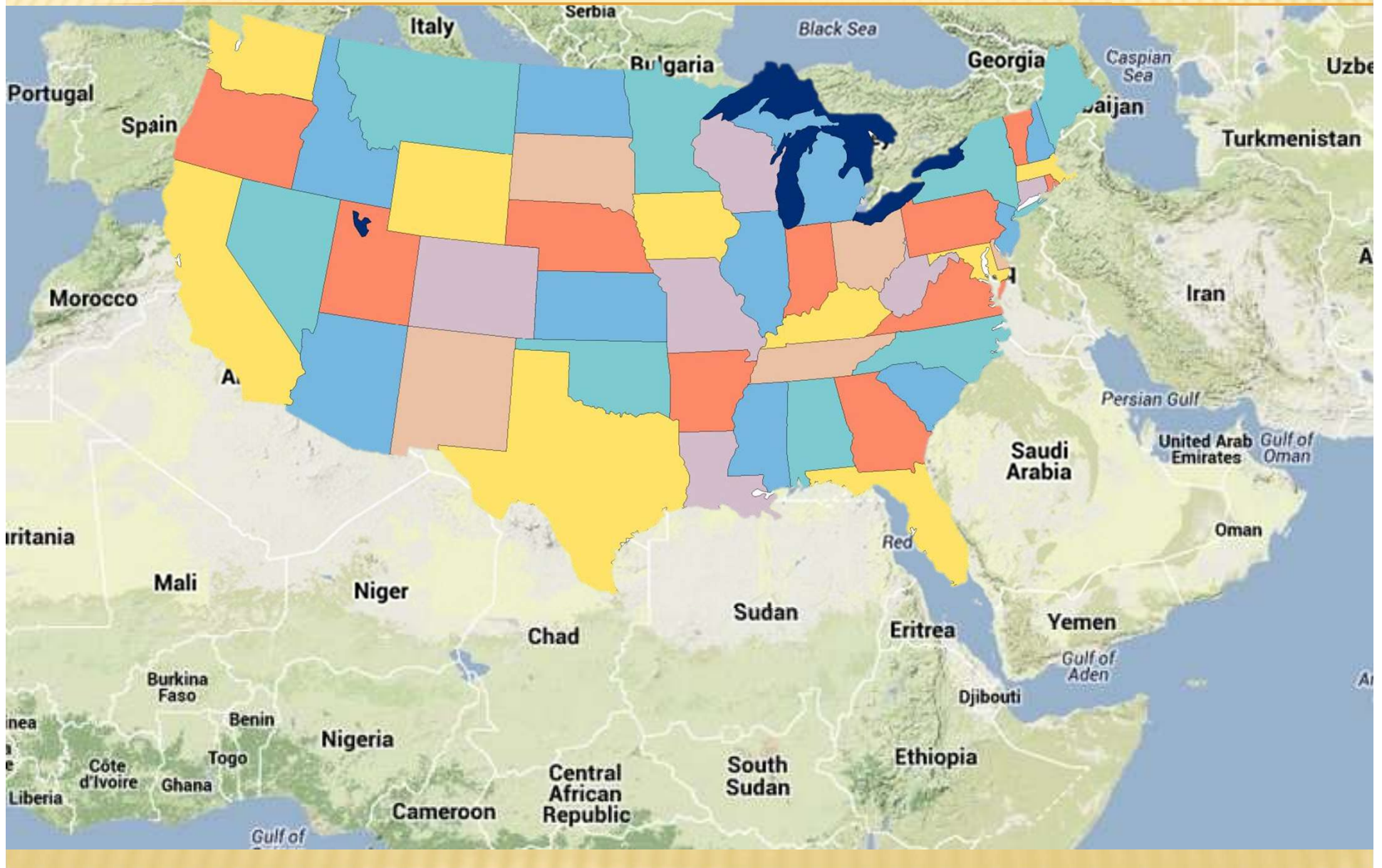


GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW: BIBLICAL WORLD



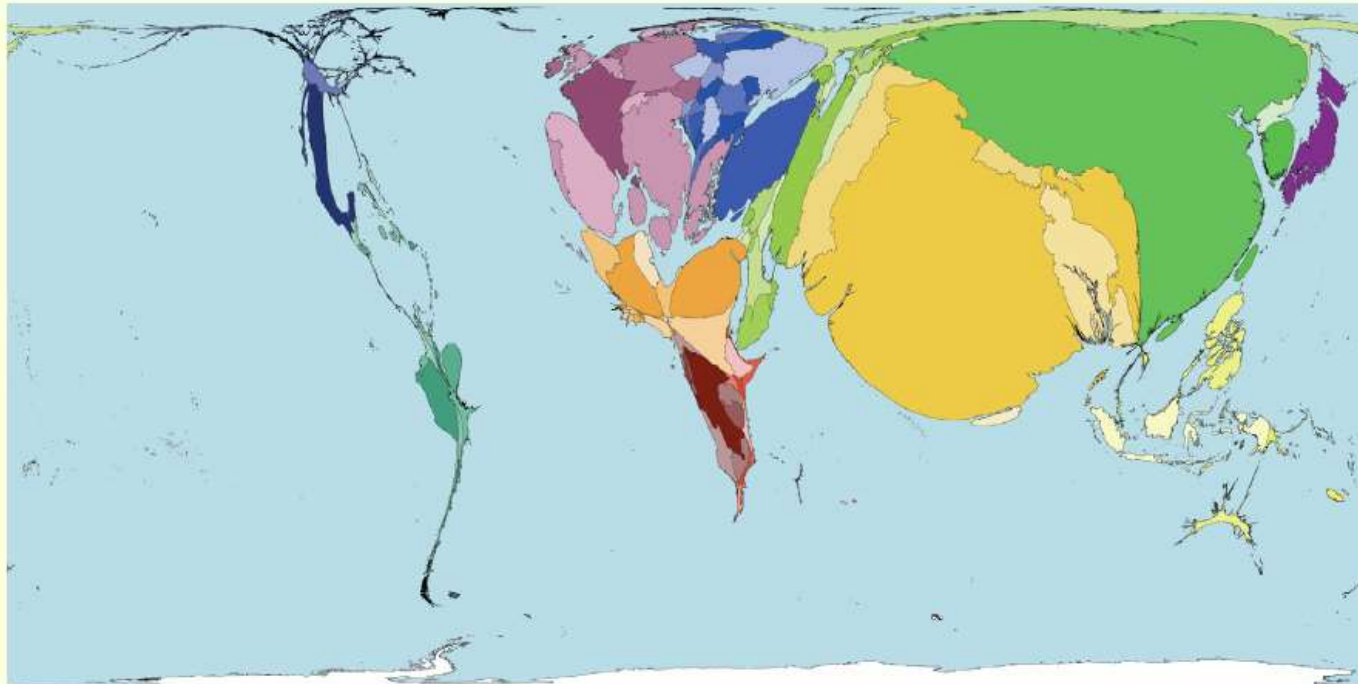
From Spain to Mesopotamia
From Rome to Ethiopia
From Dan to Beer-Sheba

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW: BIBLICAL WORLD



WORLD POPULATION

Population Year 1



The population two thousand years ago is estimated to have been 231 million. At this time North and South America were sparsely populated, as was Asia Pacific. The estimated population of New Zealand was zero. Southern Asia, Northern Africa, China and Southern Europe (parts of the same land mass) had relatively high populations. Colder Northern latitudes tended to have lower populations.

The territories that now encompass the Ganges, Tigris, Yangtze, Nile and Po rivers were the most populous.

This map shows the distribution of the world population in 1AD.



Land area

Technical notes

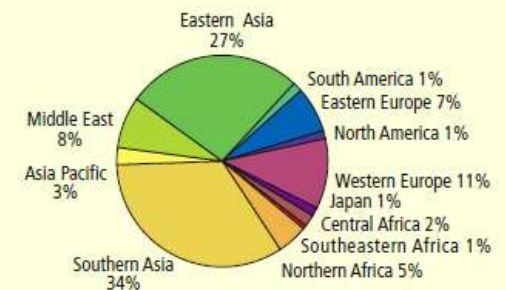
- Data source: Angus Maddison, 2003.
- The contemporary political boundaries shown differ from those in year 1.
- See website for further information.

TWENTY HIGHEST POPULATIONS IN YEAR 1

Rank	Territory	Value	Rank	Territory	Value
1	India	62	10	Islamic Republic of Iran	4
2	China	60	12	Ukraine	4
3	Bangladesh	8	13	Germany	3
4	Russian Federation	7	13	Japan	3
5	Italy	7	15	Indonesia	3
6	Pakistan	7	16	Philippines	2
7	Turkey	6	17	Mexico	2
8	France	5	18	Democratic Republic of Congo	2
9	Spain	5	19	Sudan	2
10	Egypt	4	19	Algeria	2

population in millions

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION YEAR 1



“1 AD Gregorian calendar, 3761 Hebrew calendar, 7.17.18.13.3 Mayan calendar, 544 Buddhist calendar”

Anna Barford, 2006

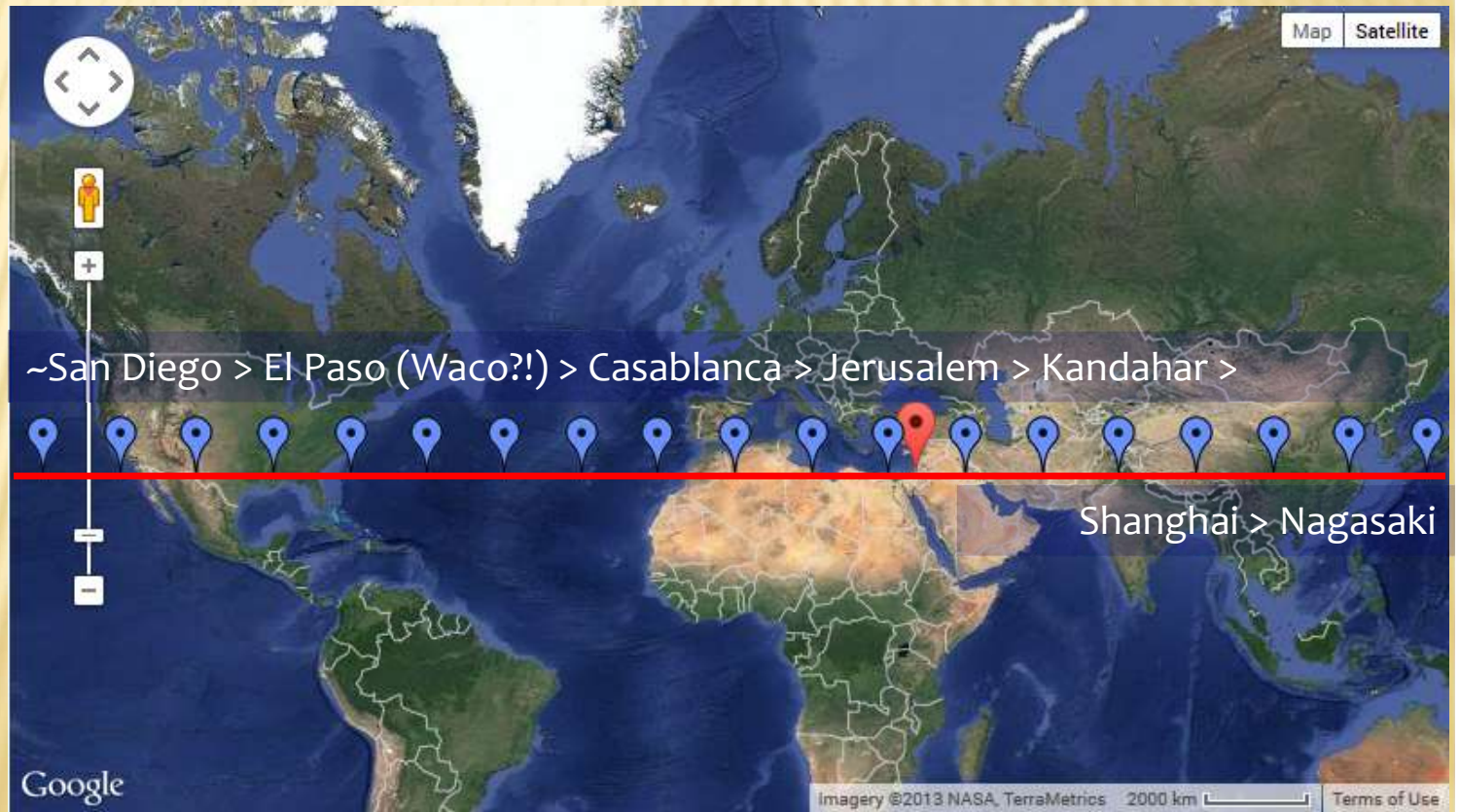
**GEOGRAPHY OF
CANAAN / ISRAEL / PALESTINE...**



Temple Mount in Jerusalem

Latitude $31^{\circ} 46'' = 31.778027$

Longitude $35^{\circ} 14'' = 35.235402$



Temple Mount in Jerusalem

Latitude $31^{\circ} 46'' = 31.778027$

Longitude $35^{\circ} 14'' = 35.235402$



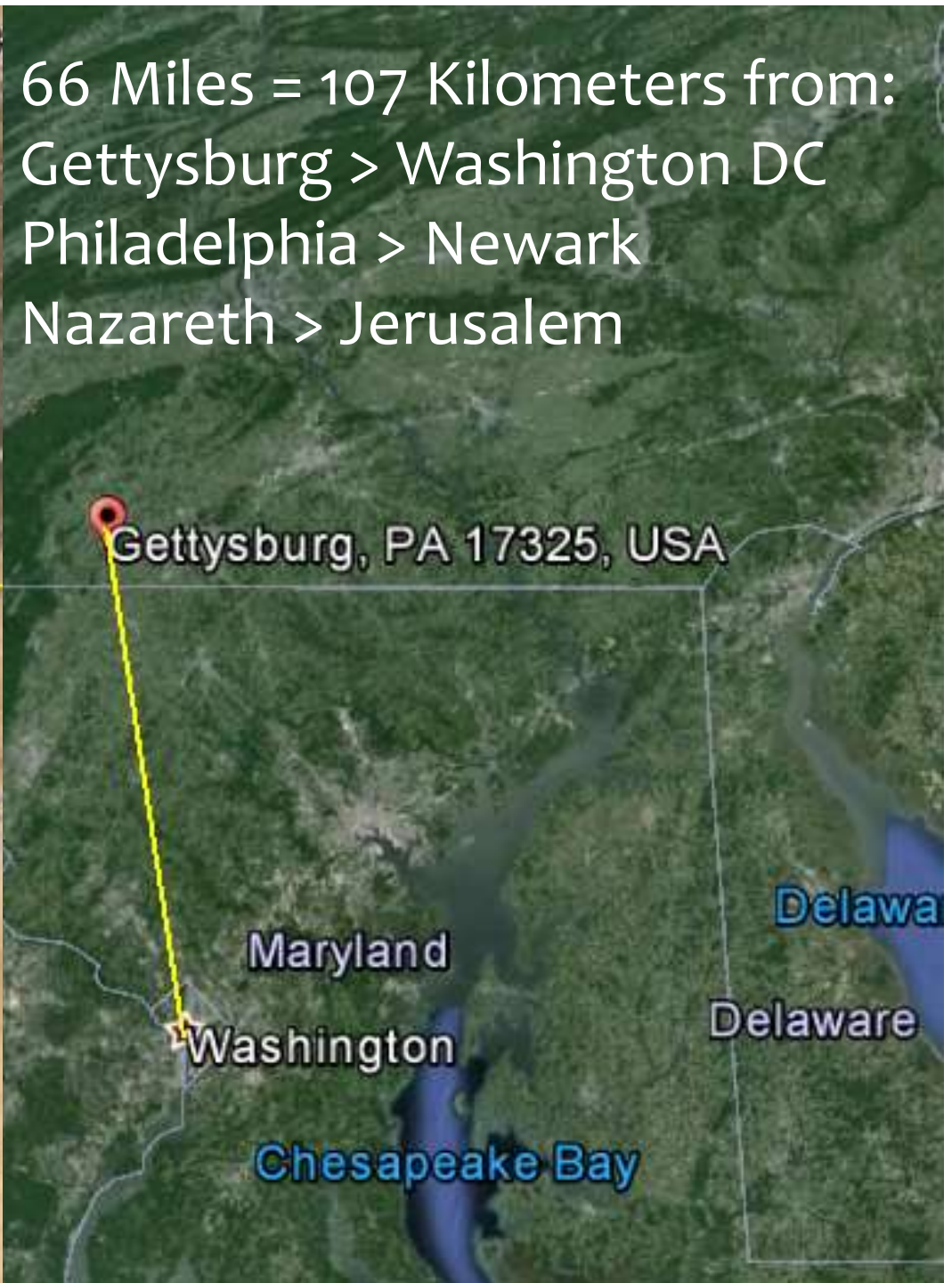
ISRAEL: RELATIVE SIZE

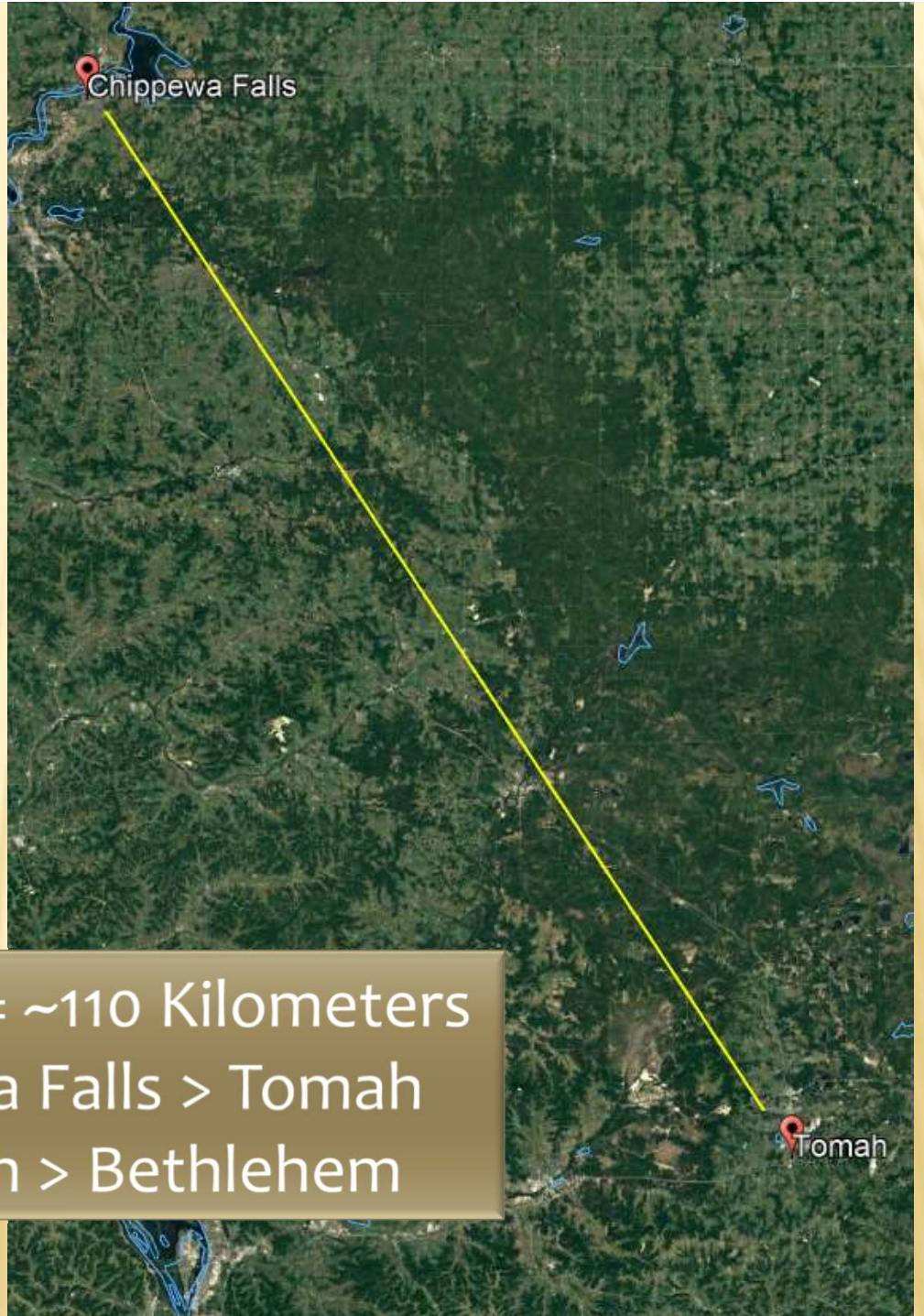
- New Jersey!
- Taiwan





66 Miles = 107 Kilometers from:
Gettysburg > Washington DC
Philadelphia > Newark
Nazareth > Jerusalem





~70 Miles = ~110 Kilometers
Chippewa Falls > Tomah
Nazareth > Bethlehem

40 miles = 65 km from Sea of Galilee to Mt. Hermon

Mount Hermon
9200 feet
2800 m

Sea of Galilee

-700 feet
-210 m

SEA LEVEL

35 miles
56 km

Jerusalem
2600 feet
800m

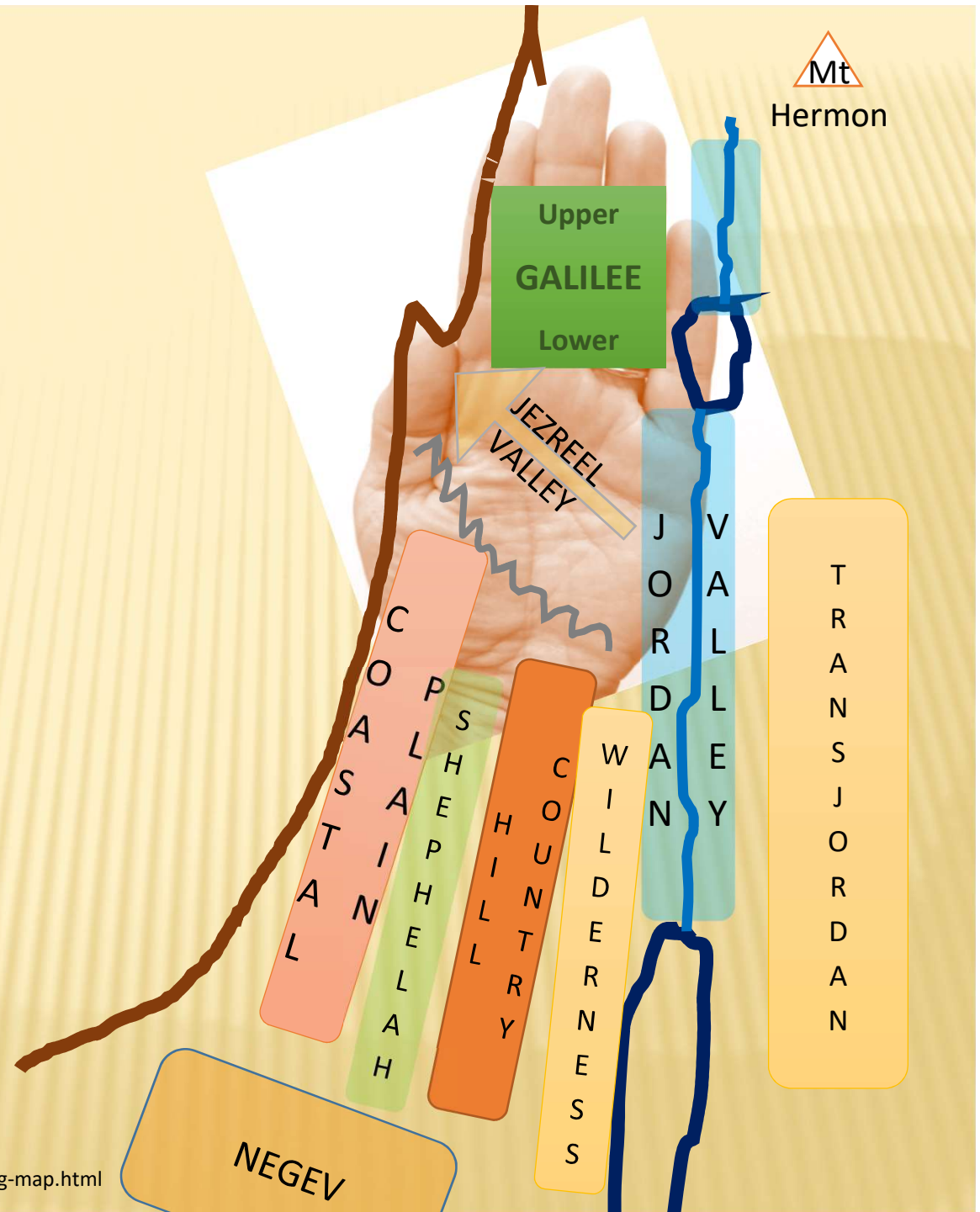
20 miles
32 km

Dead Sea
-1300 feet
-400 m

75 miles
120 km

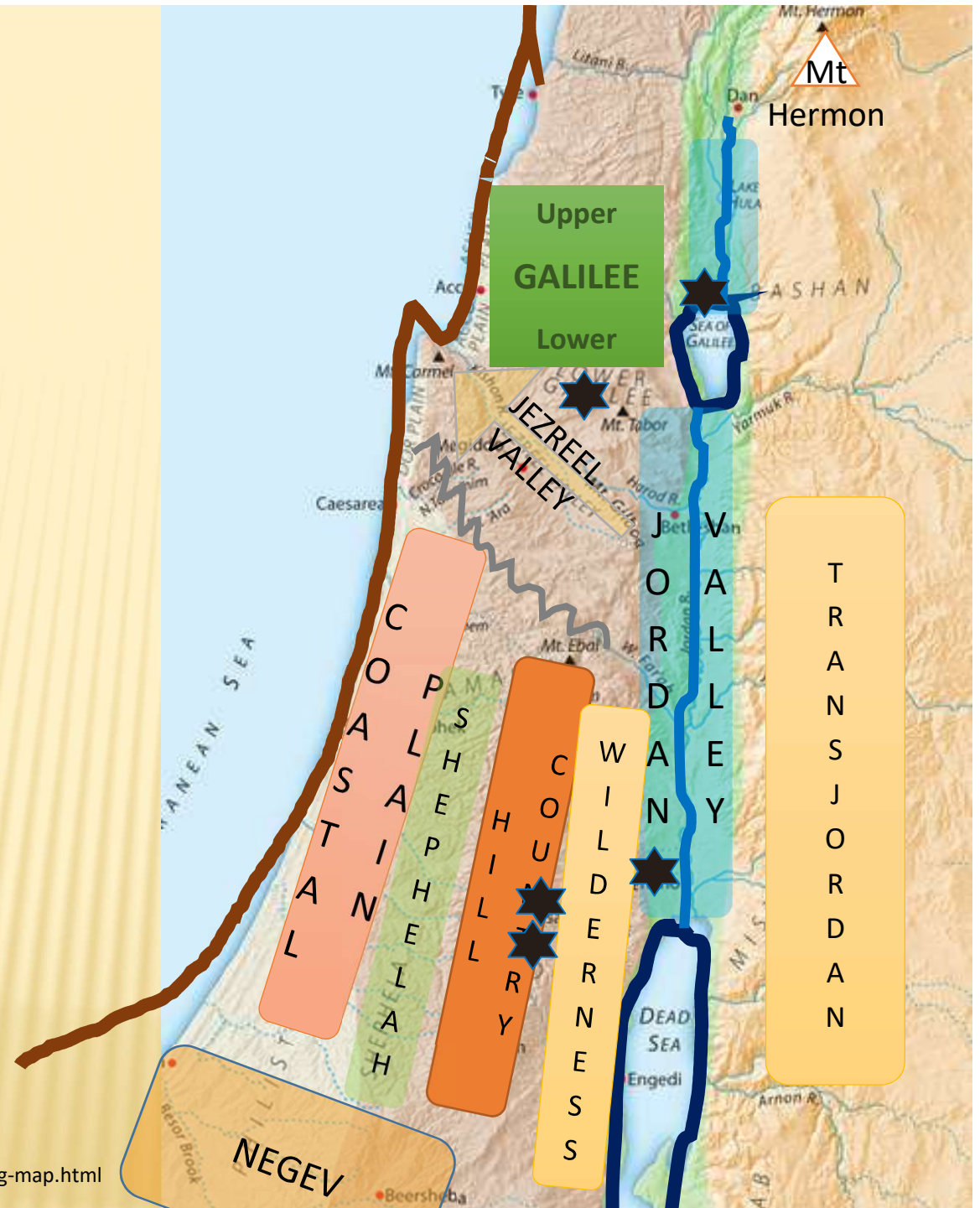


GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW: PALESTINE



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW: PALESTINE

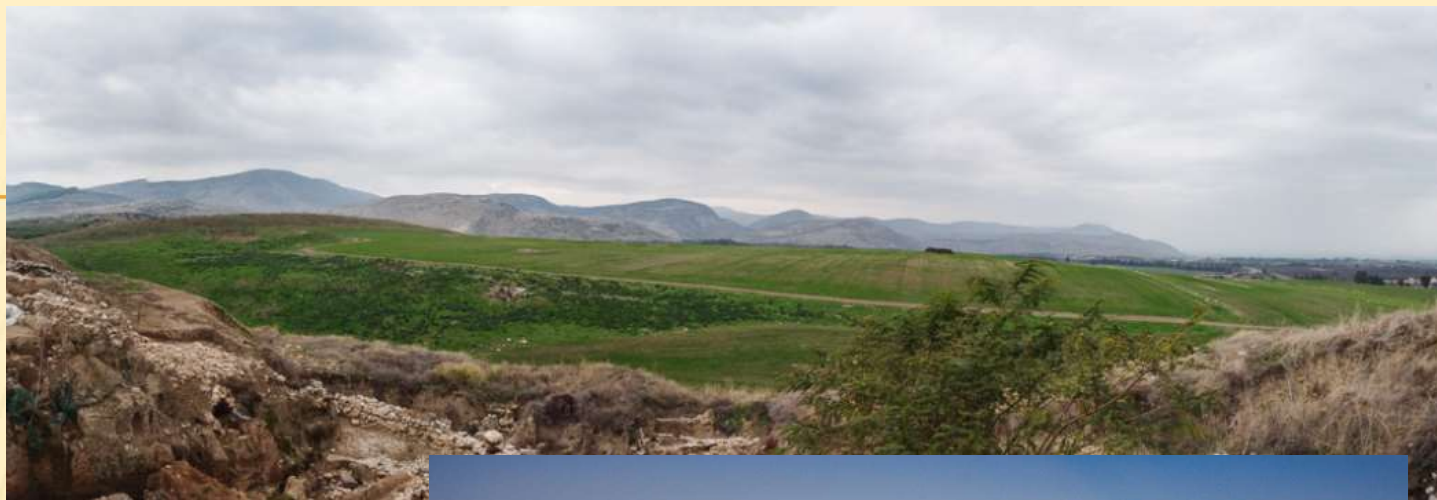
- Jerusalem
- Jericho
- Bethlehem
- Nazareth
- Capernaum



GALILEE

Upper Galilee

Looking north from Hazor



Lower Galilee – Tur'an Valley

Looking NW near Golani Junction



Galilee

Looking NE from Arbel

JEZREEL VALLEY FROM NAZARETH

Mt. Tabor

Looking southeast

Mt. Moreh

Megiddo



<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Nazareth,+Israel/@31.9673665,35.3130941,15213a,20y,78.13t/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1sox151c4e7cf16c0fff:oxd2385b30c1275dd6?hl=en>

Nazareth

Mt. Tabor

Mt. Moreh

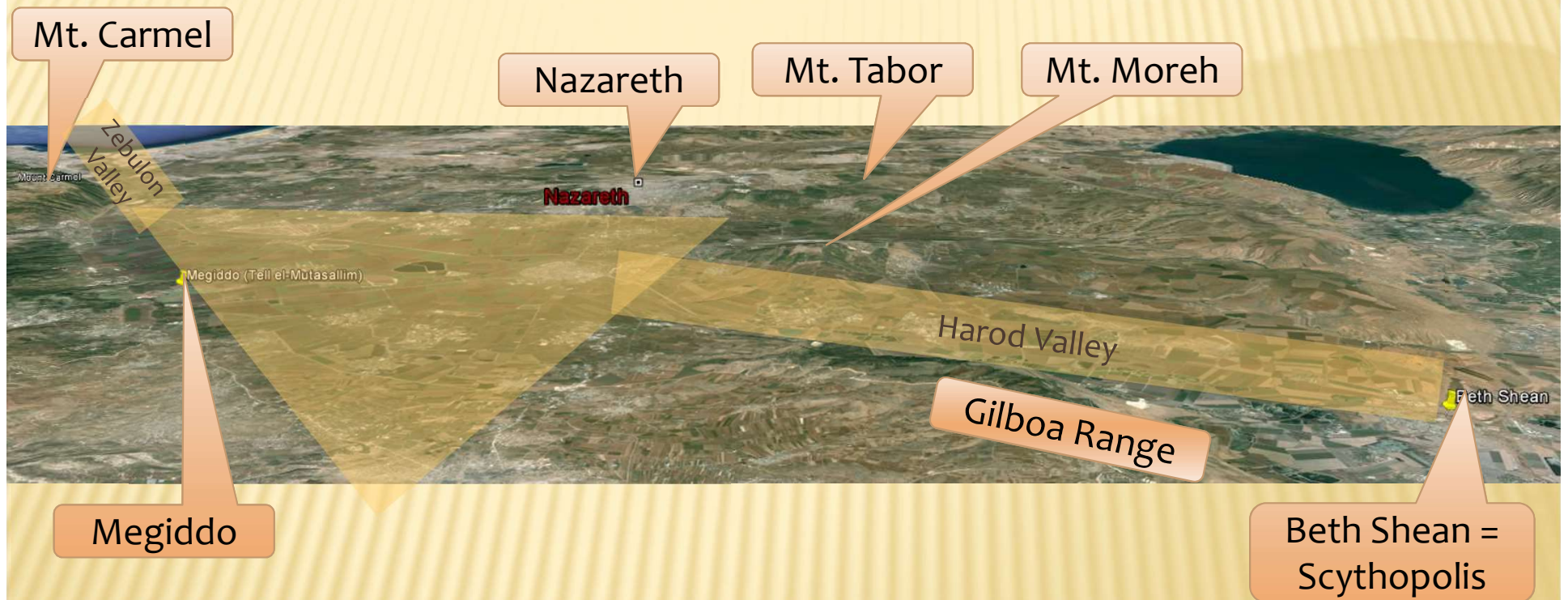


Looking northeast

JEZREEL VALLEY FROM MEGIDDO

JEZREEL VALLEY FROM MT CARMEL TO BETH SHE'AN

Looking north

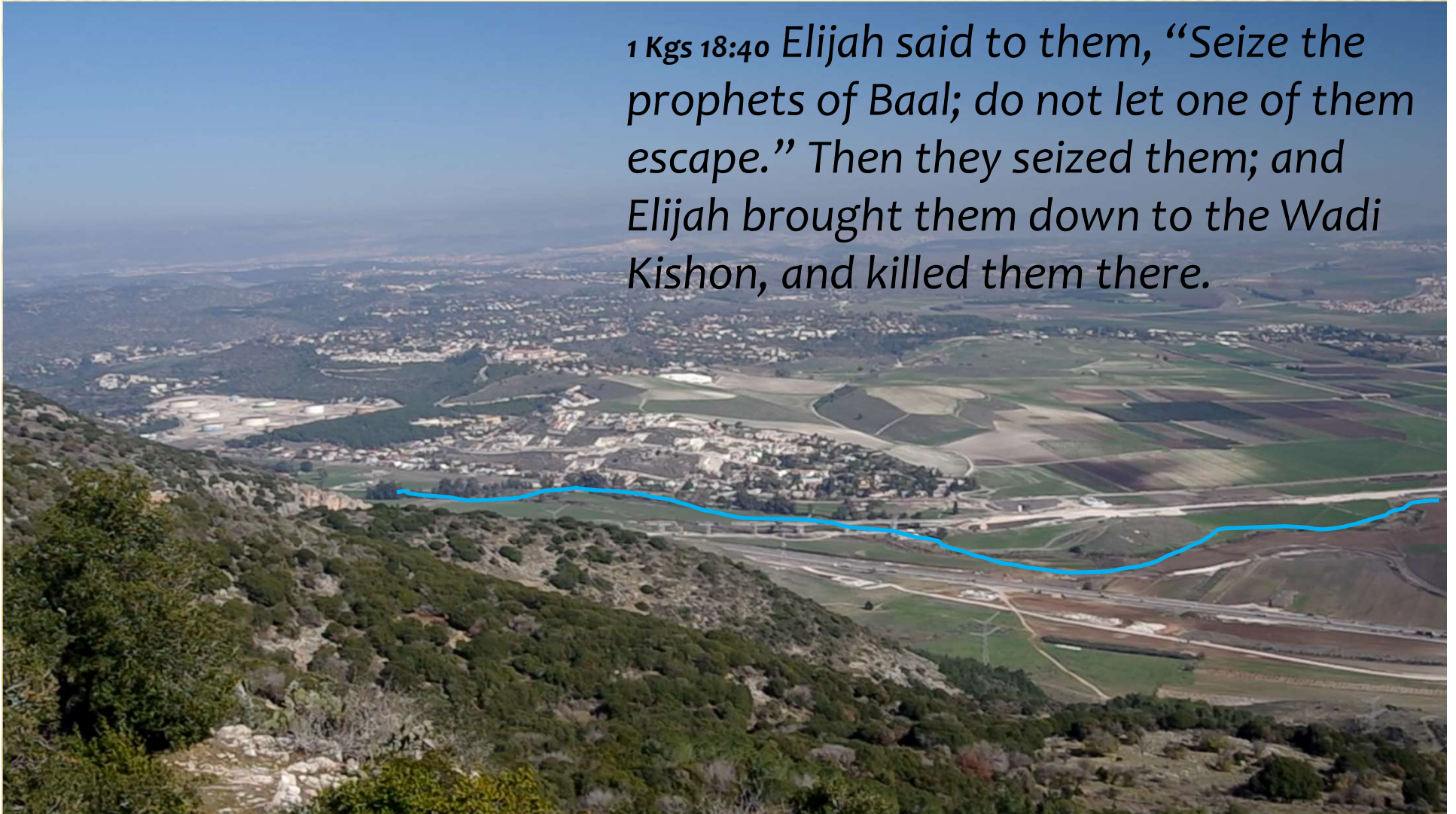


The Jezreel Valley is also known as Campus Legionis, Esdraelon, Esdraelon Valley, Plain of Megiddo, Plains of Megiddo, Great Plain, Great Plain of Esdraelon, Great Plain of Megiddo, Merj ibn-'Amir, Plain of Megiddo, "The Valley," Valley of Megiddon

VIEW FROM MT. CARMEL

Looking north and swinging around to south

1 Kgs 18:40 Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.” Then they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon, and killed them there.





HILL COUNTRY

Looking S from
Samaria/Sebaste

WILDERNESS & JORDAN VALLEY & TRANSJORDAN

Looking W from St. George
Monastery to Jericho and
Jordan Valley



COASTAL PLAIN

Looking N from Ashkelon



SHEPHELAH

Looking W from Beth Shemesh
up the Soreq Valley

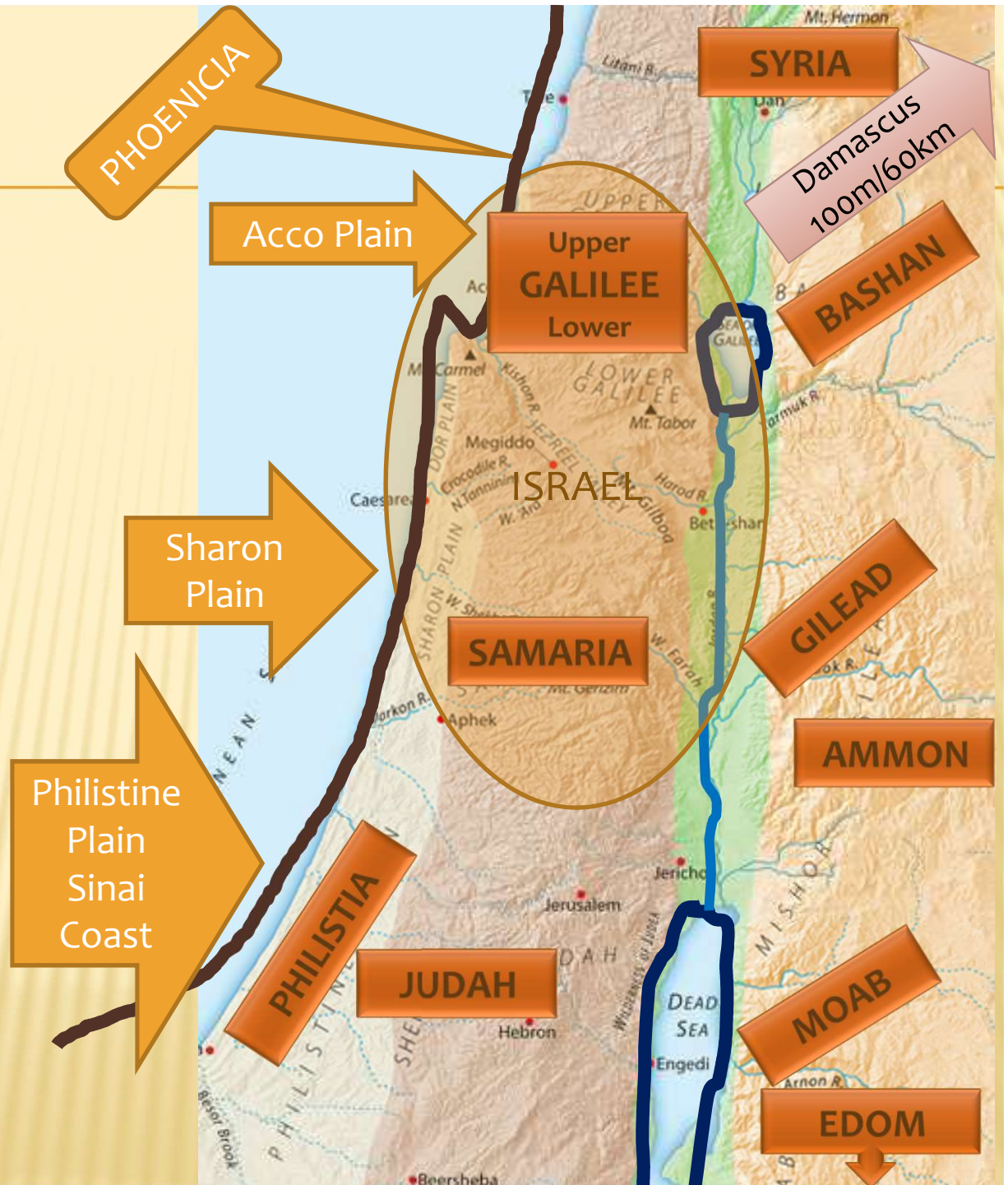
NEGEV

Looking S from Beersheva



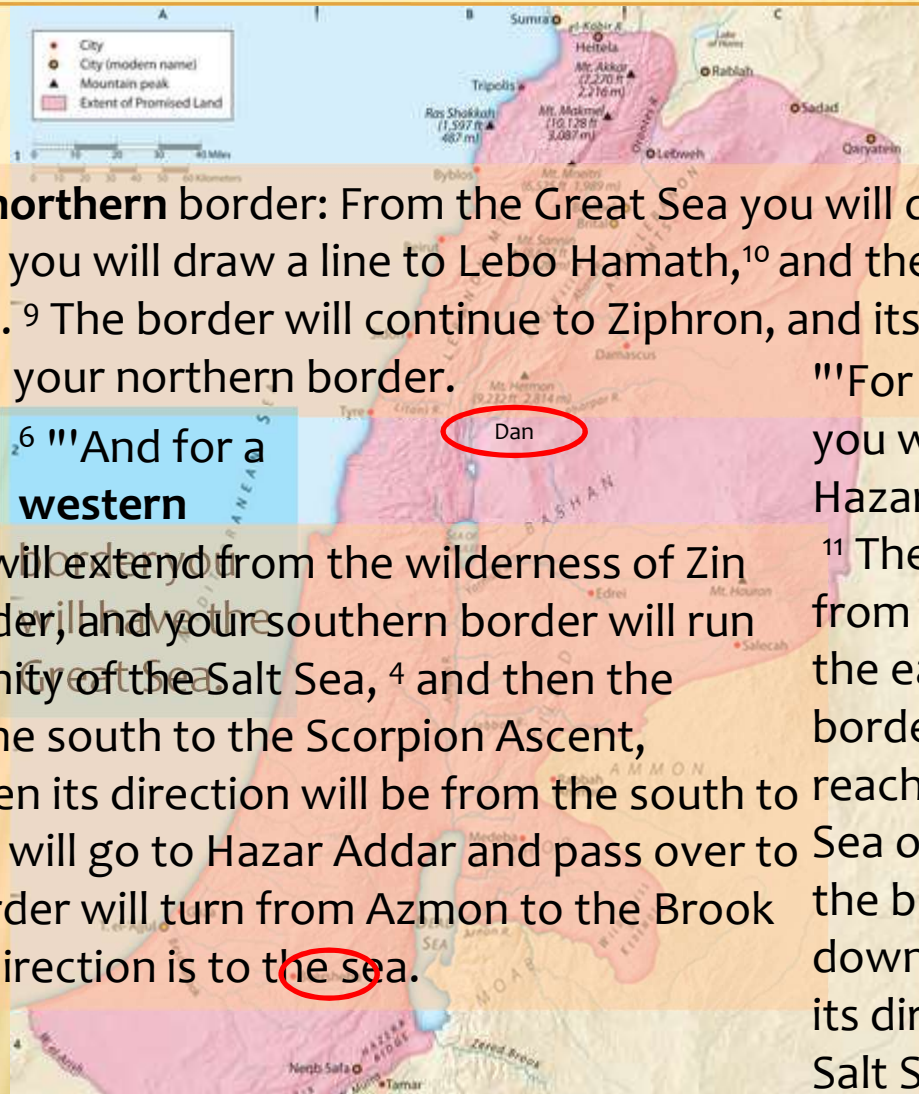
REGIONAL OVERVIEW:

CANAAN /
PALESTINE /
SYRIA /
JUDEA /
ISRAEL
JORDAN



THEOLOGICAL BORDERS OF HOLY LAND

NUMBERS 34:1-12: "THIS WILL BE YOUR LAND BY ITS BORDERS THAT SURROUND IT."



"And this will be your **northern** border: From the Great Sea you will draw a line to Mount Hor; ⁸ from Mount Hor you will draw a line to Lebo Hamath,¹⁰ and the direction of the border will be to Zedad.⁹ The border will continue to Ziphron, and its direction will be to Hazar Enan. This will be your northern border.

⁶ "And for a **western**

Your **southern** border will extend from the wilderness of Zin along the Edomite border, and your southern border will run eastward to the extremity of the Salt Sea, ⁴ and then the border will turn from the south to the Scorpion Ascent, continue to Zin, and then its direction will be from the south to Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and pass over to Azmon. ⁵ There the border will turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and then its direction is to **the sea**.

"For your **eastern** border you will draw a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham.

¹¹ The border will run down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain, and the border will descend and reach the eastern side of the Sea of Chinnereth. ¹² Then the border will continue down the Jordan River and its direction will be to the Salt Sea.

1 Kings 4:25 During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all of them under their vines and fig trees.

What Do We Call This Land?

- ✘ Near East, Middle East (whose perspective?)
- ✘ Western Asia
- ✘ Levant = Eastern (Mediterranean) = Can include Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria (and Cyprus)
- ✘ Canaan
- ✘ Israel
 - + >> Judah // Israel / Samaria
- ✘ Palestine / Syria Palaestina
- ✘ Promised Land / Holy Land



What Do We Call This Land?

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- ✗ Canaan
- ✗ Israel
 - + >> Judah // Israel / Samaria
- ✗ Palestine / Syria Palaestina
- ✗ Promised Land / Holy Land

When talking about ancient history, I intend a neutral, descriptive use of these terms. We need to keep in mind that each has possible historical, geographical, political, or religious connotations with modern implications.



Biblical Geography

Land forms, water, travel, climate, agriculture...

Biblical History

People, settlements, migrations, wars, cultures

Biblical Story

The narrative of what God is doing in history

How are these three perspectives related?

Geography, History, Story

Geology and geography explain why things happened *where* they did.

Ancient literature and archaeology explain *what* happened.

The Bible explains *why* things happened.

Big Bible Questions

- ✘ How does geography matter?
- ✘ How does geography shape history?
How the history is told?
- ✘ How do geography and history affect the biblical story and how it is told?

Big Church Questions...

- ✘ What is the 'geography' of your congregation?
- ✘ What are the routes of entrance?
- ✘ What are the barriers blocking entrance?
- ✘ How does a congregation's geography and history affect the Gospel they share?