

Lessons from the Holy Lands



Bellevue Church of Christ
Summer 2021

Helpful Link



<https://www.teamagee.com/class/>

✎ Copies of the slides with my notes

The Dead Sea



Gen 14:3; Num 34:3, 12; Deut 3:17; 4:49; Josh. 3:16, 12:3, 15:2, 5, 18:19;
2 Kgs 14:25; Ezek 47:18; Zech 14:8





The Dead Sea



- ❧ The Dead Sea is the lowest place in the world at 1,412 ft (430m) below sea level.
- ❧ The water in the Dead Sea is 36% salt, 8 times more than any ocean. Needless to say, nothing can grow in this lake. It is 50 km long, 18 km wide, and 300 m deep at its lowest point.
- ❧ The Dead Sea used to be much larger, but that since the flow of the Jordan River is now being controlled by a dam, the water in the Dead Sea is receding 1.5 meters every year.

The Dead Sea (Cont.)



- ❧ Scripture contains 16 references to the Dead Sea.
- ❧ It is referred to by the names “Salt Sea” (Gen 14:3; Num 34:3, 12; Deut 3:17; Josh. 3:16, 12:3, 15:2, 5, 18:19), “Sea of the Arabah” (Deut 3:17, 4:49; Josh 3:16, 12:3; 2 Kgs 14:25) and the “Eastern Sea” (Ezek 47:18; Zech 14:8).
- ❧ The names are used once each to communicate direction (*toward the*).
- ❧ Only once is the Dead Sea designated as a location (Gen 14:3).
- ❧ The remaining 12 references to the Dead Sea are used in the context of describing the borders of the promised land.



Sunrise at the Dead Sea (Southern End – Resort Area)



Salt on the bank of the Dead Sea, just south of Jericho



Salt on the bank of the Dead Sea, just south of Jericho / Wild goats (ibex)



Floating on the Dead Sea



Rocks and salt crystals that line the bottom of the sea



Sinkholes near the Dead Sea that are being caused by the rapid shrinking of the sea.



Canals that are bringing water from the northern end of the Dead Sea to the resort area in the south.



Pools that are being used to collect water from the canals at the resort area in the south.



Pools that are being used to collect water from the canals at the resort area in the south.

Tel Be'er Sheva / Be'er Sheba



Genesis 21:25, 32-22; 22:19; 26:23, 25; 46:1

"From Dan to Beersheba" - Judges 20:1; 1 Samuel 3:20; 2 Samuel 3:10,
17:11, 24:2, 15; 1 Kings 4:25; 1 Chronicles 21:2; 2 Chronicles 30:5



Tel Be'er Sheva



- ❧ Tel Be'er Sheva lies east of the modern city of Be'er Sheba and west of the new Bedouin town of Tel Sheva.
- ❧ 15 strata have been discovered at this Tell, but most of what has been excavated, and is visible, is from the 9th century BC (time of Ahab).
- ❧ The name of this ancient city is derived from "be'er," meaning "well or fountain" and "sheva," meaning "oath."
- ❧ Be'er Sheva (or Beer-sheba) is mentioned 33 times in the Bible.
- ❧ "From Dan to Beersheba" is a biblical phrase used nine times to refer to the settled areas of the Tribes of Israel between Dan in the North and Beersheba in the South (Judges 20:1; 1 Samuel 3:20; 2 Samuel 3:10, 17:11, 24:2, 15; 1 Kings 4:25; 1 Chronicles 21:2; 2 Chronicles 30:5).

Tel Be'er Sheva (Cont.)



- ✧ It was a significant center in the patriarchal narratives:
 - ✧ Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba (Genesis 22:19)
 - ✧ Abraham and Abimelech entered a covenant at Beer-sheba (Genesis 21:32)
 - ✧ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beer-sheba (Genesis 21:33).
 - ✧ The Lord spoke to both Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's son and grandson respectively, at Beer-sheba (Genesis 26:23; 46:1).
- ✧ Beer-sheba is the site of two significant wells from scripture: Abraham's well at Beer-sheba was seized by Abimelech's men (Genesis 21:25), and Isaac's servants dug a well at Beer-sheba also (Genesis 26:25).



Remains of city wall at Be'er Sheva from 9th Century BC / Most of this has been reconstructed / Note line near the ground



70-meter deep well outside the wall that could possibly either be the well of Abraham that is described in Gen 21 or the well of Isaac as described in Gen 26.



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Overview of the excavations at Be'er Sheva / Note store houses in the upper left and main gate to the upper right



Entrance to ancient water system at Be'er Sheva



Feral cat at Be'er Sheva



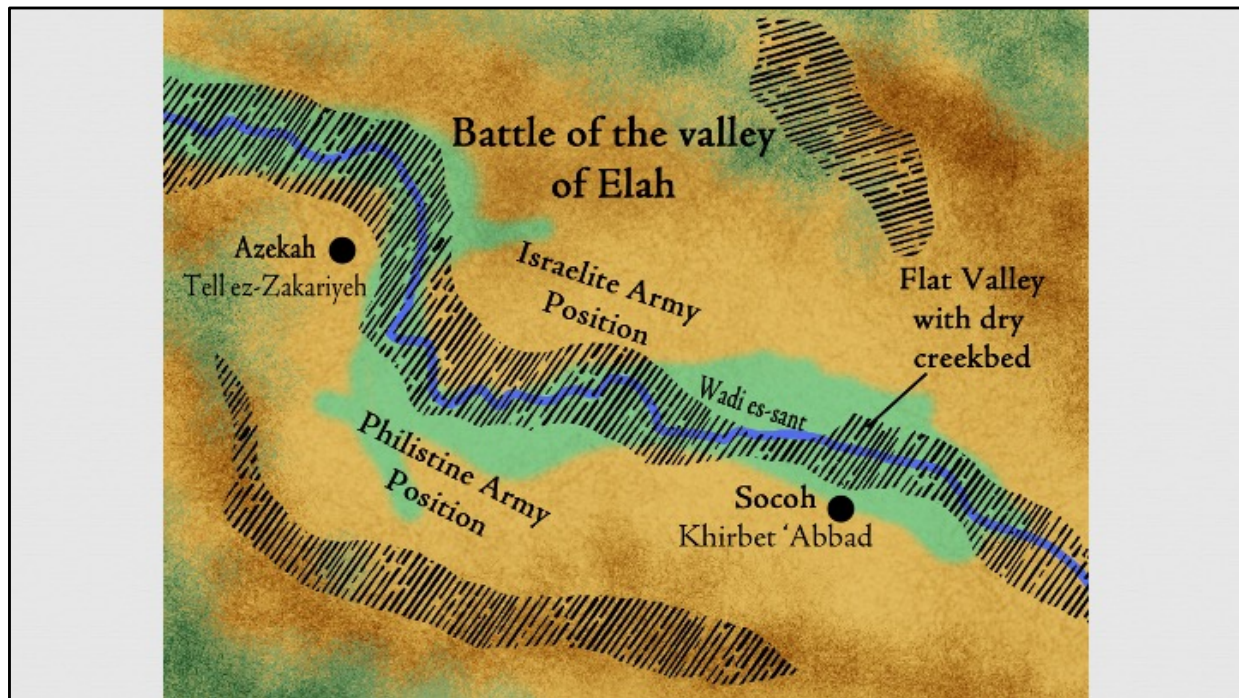
Feral cat at Be'er Sheva

Valley of Elah



1 Samuel 17; 21:9





Valley of Elah



- ✧ The Valley of Elah is the modern Wadi es-Sant, and is the location where David killed Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 (Also mentioned in 21:9 in connection with the battle).
- ✧ It is home to several important archaeological sites, including those identified as the ancient towns of Azekah and Socho (1 Sam 17:1).
- ✧ The Valley of Elah ran east to west between Israelite and Philistine territory, with Gath to the west, which made it a likely spot for a clash between the two powers.
- ✧ In 1 Samuel 17, the Israelite forces were probably on the hills on the north side of the valley, with the Philistines opposite them.



Dry creek-bed (Wadi) in the Valley of Elah



Dry creek-bed (Wadi) in the Valley of Elah



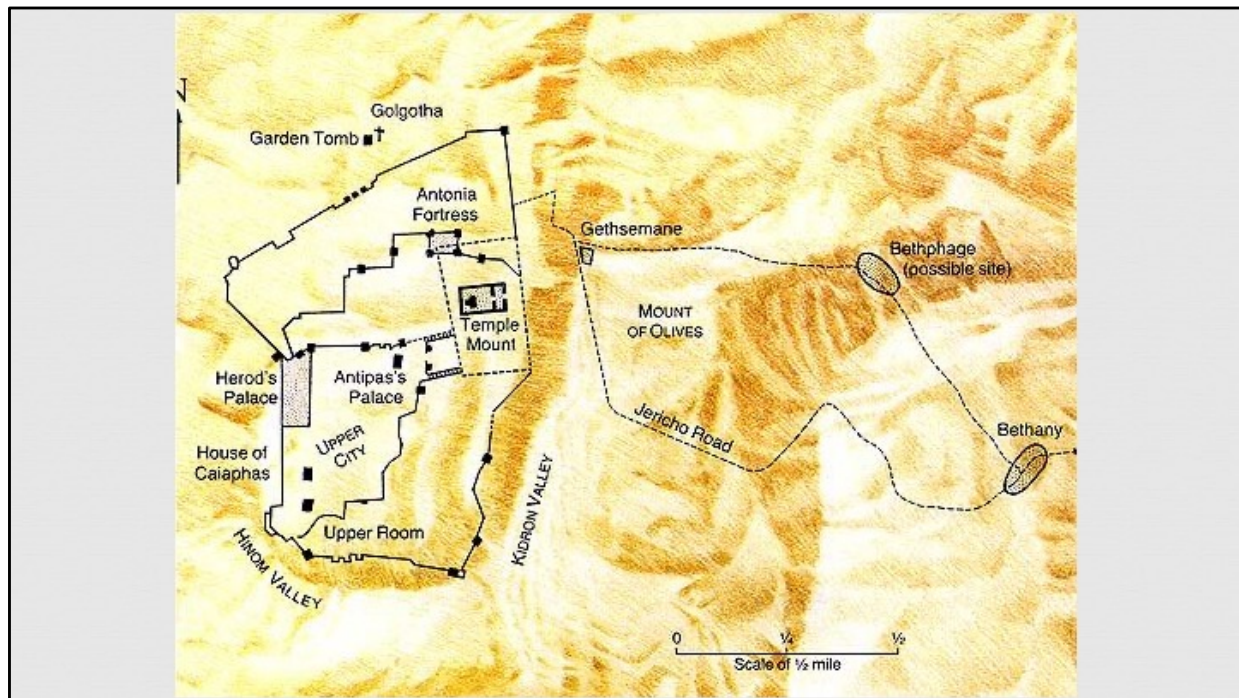
Selecting five smooth stones from the wadi

Mount of Olives



2 Samuel 15:30; 1 Kings 11:7; Ezekiel 11:23; Zechariah 14:4;
Matthew 21:1-11; 24:1 – 25:46; 26:30-56; Mark 11:1-11; 13:1-37;
14:26-50; Luke 19:28-44; 21:21:5-37; 22:39-53; 24:50-52; Acts 1:11-12





Mount of Olives



- ✧ The Mt. of Olives is a ridge running along the east side of Jerusalem, separated from the city walls by a ravine and the Kidron Valley.
- ✧ Today the Mount of Olives is dotted with many churches, including the Church of All Nations, the Church of Mary Magdalene, the Church of the Assumption, the Church of Dominus Flevit, the Church of St. Lazarus, and the Chapel of the Ascension.
- ✧ Today it is also covered in Jewish tombs.
- ✧ In the time of Jesus, this would have simply been a mountain filled with olive trees.

Mount of Olives (Cont.)



- ✧ The Mount of Olives was the site of many events in the Bible:
 - ✧ When David's son Absalom took control of Jerusalem, David and his loyal followers fled the city via an eastern route and David went up the Mount of Olives weeping (2 Samuel 15:30).
 - ✧ King Solomon used the Mount of Olives for idol worship (1 Kings 11:7).
 - ✧ In one of Ezekiel's visions, the prophet sees the glory of the Lord depart from Jerusalem and come to rest above the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:23).
 - ✧ Jesus made many visits to the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37). It was His "custom" to go there when in the vicinity of Jerusalem (Luke 22:39).
 - ✧ Every time Jesus visited Lazarus and Mary and Martha, He was on the Mount of Olives, for their village of Bethany was situated on the eastern slope.

Mount of Olives (Cont.)



✧ Jesus visits the Mount of Olives three times in the last week of life, and each time something of significance happened.

1. The first visit during His final week was during the triumphal entry:

✧ The donkey Jesus rode that day was found in the area of Bethany and Bethpage, on the east side of the Mount of Olives (Matthew 21:1–11, Mark 11:1–11, Luke 19:28–44).

✧ Then, “when he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen” (Luke 19:37).

✧ While still on the Mount of Olives, Jesus looked at the vista in front of Him, wept over the city, and pronounced a judgment against it (Luke 19:41–44).

Mount of Olives (Cont.)



2. Jesus' second visit that week was to deliver what has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse, recorded in Matt 24:1 – 25:46. Parallel passages are found in Mark 13:1–37 and Luke 21:5–36. The content of the Olivet Discourse is Jesus' response to His disciples' question "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

Mount of Olives (Cont.)



3. Jesus' third visit that week was on the night He was betrayed. That evening began with the Last Supper in Jerusalem and ended in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives (Matt 26:30-56; Mark 14:26-50; Luke 22:39-53).
 - ✠ He took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane (literally, "Garden of the Olive-press") located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.
 - ✠ There Jesus prayed in agony as He contemplated the day to come.
 - ✠ After Jesus prayed, Judas Iscariot arrived with a multitude to betray and arrest Jesus.

Mount of Olives (Cont.)



- ✧ After His resurrection, Jesus once again stood on the Mount of Olives where He ascended into Heaven (Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:11-12). Acts 1:12 specifies that “the vicinity of Bethany” was indeed the Mount of Olives.
- ✧ According to the prophet Zechariah, Jesus will return not only in the same way, but to the same place. In a prophecy related to the end times, Zechariah declares, “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (Zechariah 14:4).



Photo is taken from the western slope of the Mount of Olives toward the Old City of Jerusalem (This is city is NOT the city of Jesus' time but is built on top of the city of Jesus' time). Between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem is the Kidron Valley.



Today the Mount of Olives is covered in Jewish tombs.



View of the western slope of the Mount of Olives from the City of David covered in tombs.



Kidron Valley below the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem - The brook and valley are on the eastern side of Jerusalem. This location is mentioned numerous times in scripture as a boundary (2 Sam 15:23, 1 Kgs 2:37, etc.).



Traditional spot of the Garden of Gethsemane (While we know that the garden was on the western side, we don't know the exact spot). This location contains 8 ancient olive trees that are dated to be approximately 900 years old (much past the time of Jesus).



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They are located next to the Church of All Nations or the Church of Agony, named after Jesus' prayer of agony in the garden. The front facade of this church building is covered in beautiful mosaics, and the inside contains mosaics depicting Judas' betrayal kiss (Matt 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-46; Luke 22:47-48), Jesus' prayer of agony (Luke 22:44), and Jesus healing the ear of Malchus after Peter cut it off (Luke 22:51; John 18:10).



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