



# **CITIES OF THE BIBLE**

**BIBLE STUDY AND PUZZLES**

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## ANTIOCH

There were two cities named Antioch during Paul's ministry, Antioch of Pisidia and Antioch of Syria. Both played a part in the early church history and spread of the gospel.

During Paul's first missionary journey, he preached in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia and founded a church there.

Acts 13:1 lists "certain prophets and teachers" who were there at the church in Antioch of Syria: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul.

Out of jealousy and rivalry, the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia caused influential people to turn against the gospel and had Paul driven out of the city:

"But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region."  
(Acts 13:50)

This caused Paul and Barnabas to shake the dust off from their feet against them, and they moved on to Iconium.

Antioch of Syria is located in modern-day Turkey and is now known as Antakya.

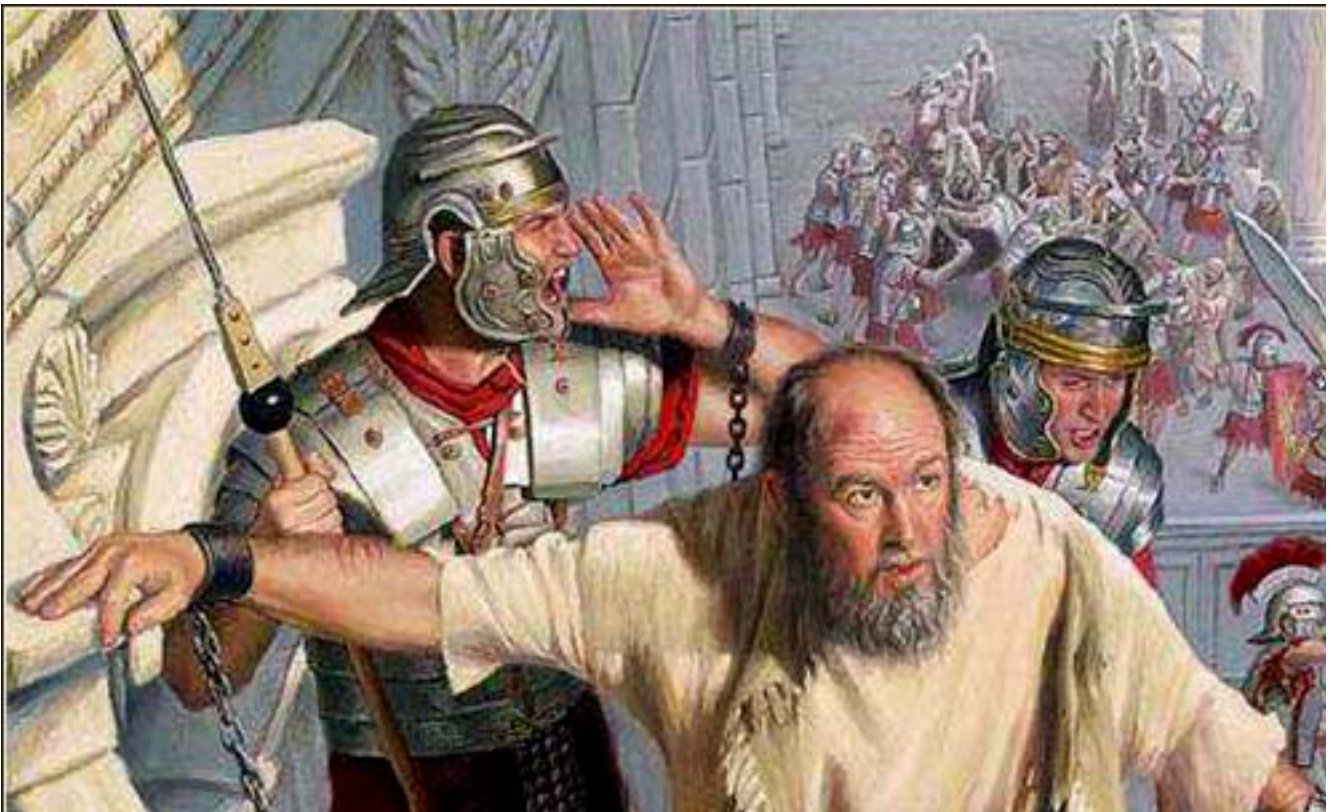


## ANTIPATRIS

Built by Herod the Great, Antipatris was on the Plain of Sharon, located on a military road used by Roman soldiers traveling from Jerusalem to Caesarea. When Paul was transported by Roman soldiers to see Felix, they stopped in Antipatris for lodging en route:

"Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris." Acts 23:31

The city of Aphek found in the Old Testament in I Samuel 4:1 and I Samuel 29:1 is referred to in the New Testament as Antipatris.



The king of Aphek was defeated by Joshua and the Israelites during the battles to take the Promised land.

After Herod rebuilt Aphek, he named it Antipatris in honor of his father, Antipater.

From Antipatris, Paul was taken to Caesarea to plead his case before Felix, the Roman governor.



## ASHKELON

Ashkelon was one of five Philistine cities. It was located on the coast of the Mediterranean, 12 miles north of Gaza.

After the death of Joshua, Ashkelon was captured and briefly controlled by Judah. A few years later, Samson slew 30 men there:

"Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle." Judges 14:19

Amos denounced Ashkeon (Amos 1:8); Zephaniah prophesied the Jews would return and occupy the ruins of Ashkelon (Zeph. 2:4,7), and Zechariah prophesied the destruction of Ashkelon because of their evil and idolatry. Jeremiah also told of its destruction (Jeremiah 25:17-20, Jeremiah 47:5, and Jeremiah 47:7).



## AZOTUS

Azotus is mentioned in Acts 8:26-40, the passage about Philip and the Ethiopian official. Philip was directed by an angel of the Lord to travel along a certain road, which he does, and he sees a man reading from Isaiah 53:7-8. Philip explains the passage to the man, who believes and is baptized. Philip is then snatched away in miraculous fashion to Azotus, which was about 20 miles north from where he had been in Gaza:

"Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea." (Acts 8:39-40)

The Greek word used for "caught" is "*harpazo*," which means "to snatch away." The same "*harpazo*" is found in I Thessalonians 4:17:

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

The same snatching away that happened to Philip will happen to those Christians who are alive at the time of the rapture of the church.





## BAAL-HAZOR

Baal-Hazor is found in II Samuel 13:23-29. Going back to verse 1 of chapter 13, we read that Absalom had a lovely sister named Tamar, and Amnon, the son of David loved her. We learn later that this was lust, not love.

Tamar was Absalom's full sister and she was half sister to Amnon. Absalom was David's third son. Absalom's sheep were being sheared at Baal-Hazor, so he invited all of David's sons to come to a feast.

Sounds nice; doesn't it? And pleasant? The sheep were being shorne and Absalom invited all of his brothers and half brothers to a feast. Actually, he was plotting revenge for the rape of his sister, Tamar, which Amnon had committed. Amnon had contrived circumstances so that he could be alone with Tamar and then raped her. (II Samuel 13:1-22.)

Absalom's rage festered for two years. He then had his servants kill Amnon during the feast of sheep shearing. He did not commit the actual murder himself, but like his father David had done with Uriah, Absalom had someone else do the deed.





## BABEL

"Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.'

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."

(Genesis 11:1-9)



The people had been instructed to scatter and fill the earth in Genesis 9:1: "So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'"

Staying in the land of Shinar was therefore an act of disobedience to the command of God. They wanted a high tower to be a monument to their abilities. It's a picture of man's pride, which God answered by confusing their language so they did not understand each other.

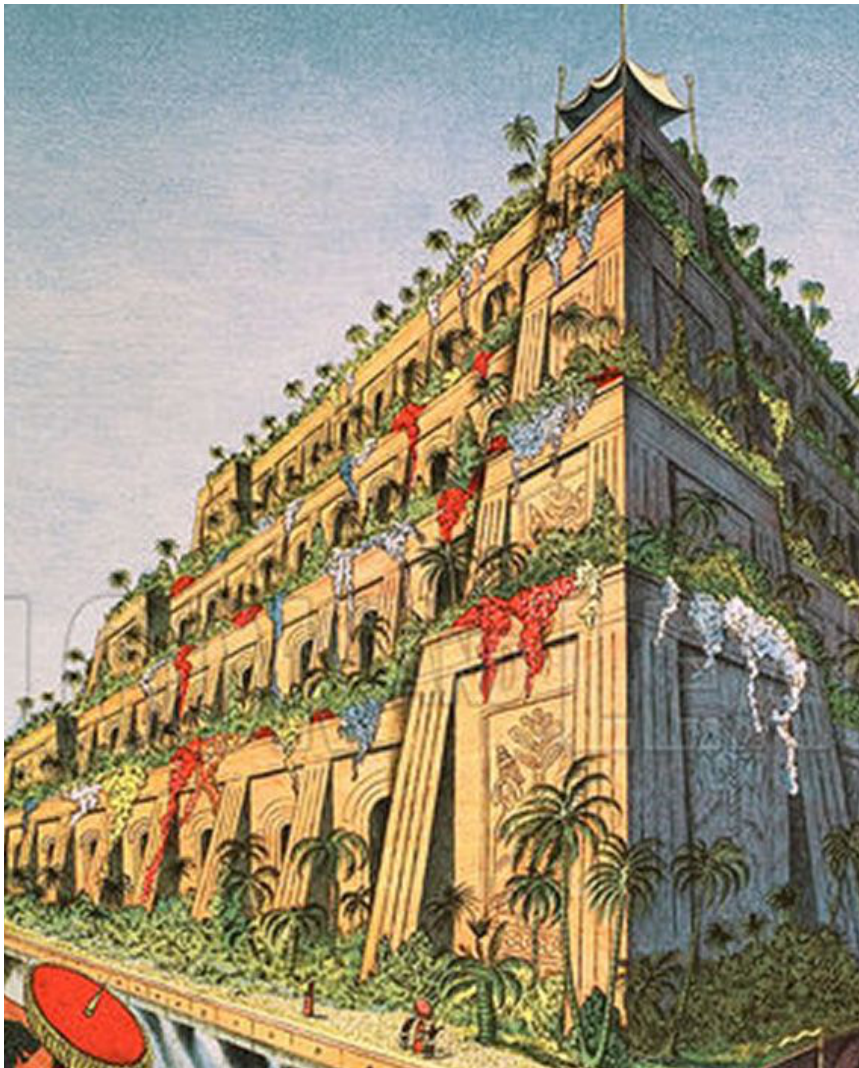
Compare this passage to the one in Acts 2:11. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on all the people, they understood one another, even though they spoke different languages. When we live in accordance with God's will, barriers are removed. When we act in selfishness and pride, barriers are put in place.





## BABYLON

Ancient Babylon was a walled city located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and was the capital of the Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar II was the greatest king of ancient Babylon. He enlarged the city and beautified it. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar is believed to have constructed The Hanging Gardens as a gift to his wife.



Captured kings were brought to Nebuchadnezzar's court in Babylon. These included Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:15) and Zedekiah (II Kings 25:3-7).

Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Babylon because of their destruction of Jerusalem (Isaiah 14:22; 21:9; 43:14 and Jer. 50:9; 51:37.)

In the book of Revelation, the world in rebellion against God is called Babylon; it represents a society that persecuted God's people, but which God will eventually destroy:

"The rulers will be afraid of her suffering and stand far away. They will say, 'Terrible! How terrible, O great city, O powerful city of Babylon! Your punishment came in one hour!'" (Revelation 18:10.)



## BEERSHEBA

God appeared to three people at Beersheba: Hagar, in Genesis 21:17; Isaac, in Genesis 26:23-33; and Jacob, in Genesis 46:1-5. It was also the place where Abraham and Abimelech settled their differences over a well of water.

Abimelech was the king of Gerar, a Philistine territory. Genesis 21:22 reads, "About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. 'God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do.'" Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant and swore an oath of mutual assistance. (Genesis 21:13)



Abraham pledged to Abimelech seven ewe lambs, dug a well, and planted a tamarisk tree, as reminders of the treaty between the two:

"Then Abimelech asked Abraham, 'What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?' And he said, 'You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well.' Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there." (Gen. 21:29-31)

"Beersheba" means "well of the oath."

Beersheba is a picture of God's provision. He provided safety and security for Abraham through the pact with Abimelech. He provided water from the well for Hagar. He provided peace for Isaac through a second treaty with Abimelech, and provided peace for Jacob about his departure to Egypt.

**JEHOVAH-JIREH**, the Lord will provide!





## BEREA

Berea was a city of Macedonia, located west of Thessalonica, which is modern-day northern Greece. Paul preached there on his first missionary journey, as described in Acts 17:

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."



## BETHANY

Bethany was a village on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead there (John 11).

During Jesus' final week, He spent at least one night in Bethany, according to Matthew 21:17.

The home of Simon the leper was in Bethany, and it was at Simon's home where Jesus was anointed by Mary (Matthew 26:6-13).

From a site near Bethany, Jesus ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50).





## BETHLEHEM

Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem, founded around 1400 BC, and is still inhabited. It was the burial place of Rachel, the ancestral home of David, and much of the Book of Ruth is set there (Ruth 1:1, 19; 4:9-11). It is called "Ephrath" in Genesis and Ruth.

But what we most remember about Bethlehem is that it was the birthplace of Jesus. Micah predicted that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of Messiah (Micha 5:2).



"Bethlehem" means "house of bread." Christ, Who is the bread of life, was born in a town whose name means "house of bread."

"And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)



## BETHSAIDA

Bethsaida was located two miles north of the Sea of Galilee, and east of the Jordan River. It was the home town of Peter, Andrew and Philip (John 1:44). Jesus healed a blind man there, fed the 5,000, and healed the multitudes. The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle of Jesus to appear in all four gospels.

LUKE 9:10-17:



"And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him, and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.

When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, 'Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.'

But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat.'

And they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men.

Then He said to His disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of fifty.' And they did so, and made them all sit down.

Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them."





## CANA

Cana was a small town near Nazareth. The first miracle performed by Jesus was performed in Cana, at a wedding, where Jesus turned water into wine: (John 2:1-11:)

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

Jesus said to them 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drun, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!'"



### THE EIGHT MIRACLES FOUND IN JOHN:

1. Water to wine (John 2:1-12)
2. Nobleman's son healed (John 4:46-54)
3. Lame man healed at Bethesda (John 5:1-17)
4. Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-14)
5. Jesus walking on water (John 6:15-21)
6. Blind man healed at the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-41)
7. Lazarus raised from the dead (John 11:17-45)
8. The multitude of fish caught (John 21:6)

This sign is the first of eight that John describes which demonstrate Jesus' deity. It is a miracle of creation, changing the molecular structure of water into the much more complex structure of new wine.

Only God can create from nothing. He can create new life for us, our own "*vintage*," so to speak, which is so much better than a watered-down life without Jesus.

Just as the wine Jesus made was the best, life in Him is better than life on our own. Why wait until everything else runs out before turning to Him?

## CAPERNAUM

Capernaum was a city on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Much of Jesus' earthly ministry took place in Capernaum. It had its own synagogue, in which Jesus frequently taught (Mark 1:21, Luke 4:31-38, John 6:59). Jesus had been rejected at Nazareth (Matt. 13:53-58), His hometown. After that, He went to Capernaum.

Many miracles were performed by Jesus in Capernaum:

- The healing of the Centurion's servant (Matt. 8:5-13)
- The paralytic who was carried by four friends (Mark 2:1-12)
- Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14-15, Mark 1:29-31)
- The nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)

Yet, for all of these miracles, the people of Capernaum did not follow Jesus. He pronounced a curse on the city for its unbelief (Matt. 11:23-24) and predicted its ruin (Luke 10:15).



MATTHEW 11:23-24:

"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Jesus had chosen Capernaum to be His headquarters, yet the city was indifferent to Him, a sin 16 worse than Sodom's.

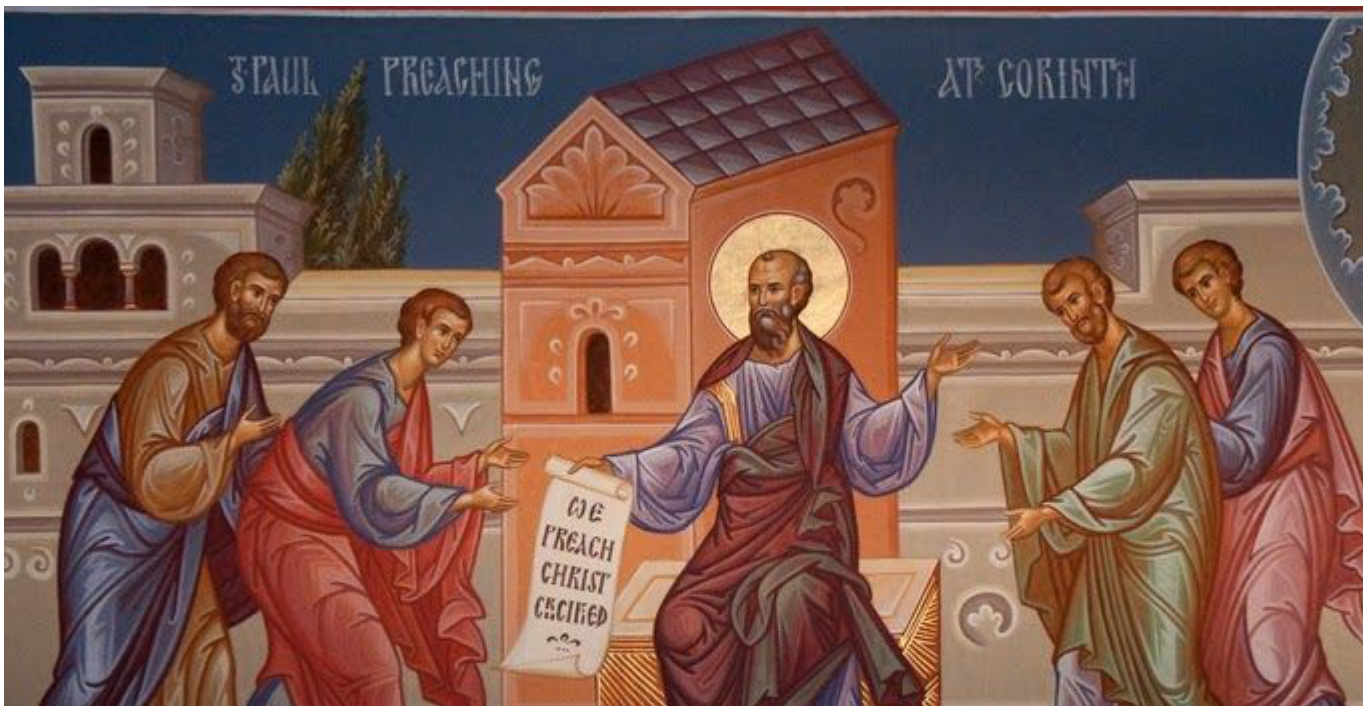


## CORINTH

Corinth was an important trade city in Ancient Greece. Located on an isthmus between the Ionian and Aegean Seas, it connected Rome with the East.

Paul established a church there in about AD 51 (Acts 18:1-18). He met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth while on his second missionary journey. There were many Christians there, according to Acts 18:9-10:

"One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, 'Don't be afraid! Speak out! Don't be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me.'"



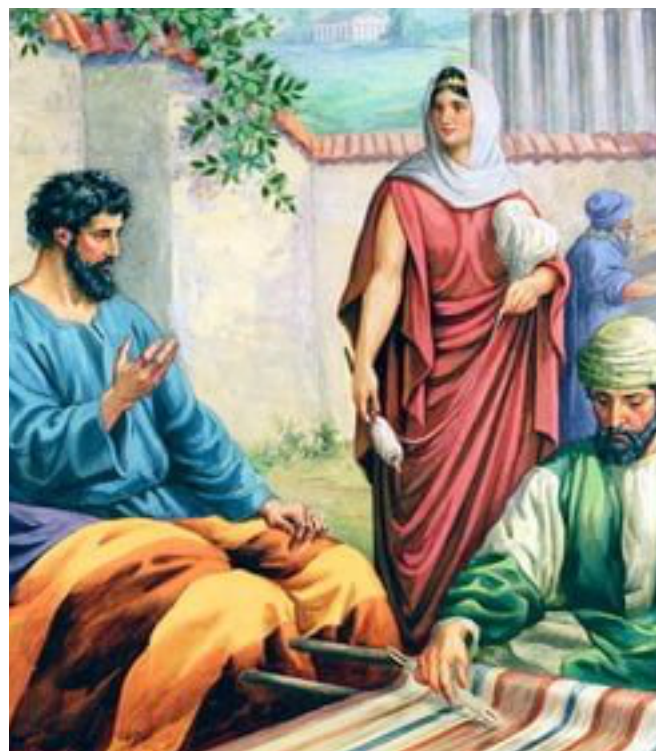
### PRISCILLA AND AQUILA

Priscilla and Aquila had been forced to leave Rome due to a decree by Claudius that all Jews were to depart from Rome (Acts 18:2).

Paul met them and stayed with them, working as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3).

Paul mentions them in Romans 16:3 as having risked their lives for his:

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."



# EMMAUS

I love the Emmaus Road passage found in Luke 24:13-32, where Jesus appears to two disciples after His Resurrection and explains to them passages about Himself found in the Old Testament (verse 27): "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." What a walk that must have been! Isn't it glorious to know that our risen Savior walks with us too! Spurgeon said, "When two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company. Talk of Him, and you will soon talk with Him."

## MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS

**Isaiah 53:3-5:** "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."



**Isaiah 50:5-7:** "The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed."

**Daniel 9:26:** "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself."

**Zechariah 12:10:** "They will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, They will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

Dear Heavenly Father, open *our* eyes to see Jesus, as He walks with us daily and is with us all of the time. Amen!





## GAZA

Gaza was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. It was allotted to the tribe of Judah by Joshua (Joshua 15:47). The prophet Amos prophesied its destruction by fire (Amos 1:6-7). Phillip met the Ethiopian official on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26). But, mostly, when we think of Gaza, we think of Samson, who through his weakness with women, most notably Delilah, was betrayed for silver, taken captive, and blinded.

Judges 16:1: "Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her."

His strength had come from his relationship with God. Delilah finds out the secret of his strength and betrays him. He thinks he will overcome the Philistines as he had done in the past, "But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him" (Judges 16:20).

Samson prays, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once" (Judges 16:28). God enabled him to destroy the temple and all who were within it, including himself. "So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life" (Judges 16:30).



## JERICHO

Jericho was and is a city located near the Jordan River. It still exists today. It is still inhabited and is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Jesus healed Blind Bartimaeus at Jericho (Mark 10:46-52), Zaccheaeus was converted at Jericho (Luke 19:1-10), and the Parable of the Good Samaritan took place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30-37). But what usually comes to mind when we hear "Jericho" is Joshua and trumpets; right? Here's the passage from Joshua 6:1-5:

"Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the

mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat."

It must have been something to see, all of the marching and shouting! But notice that God had already given them the victory (verse 2 - "See, I have give Jericho into your hand), just as we already have victory through Christ Jesus. I Corinthians 15:57 says, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen!

Jericho is really a picture of the world; isn't it? It's strong, formidable, highly fortified. The battles there must be won by faith and obedience to God's word.

We have the comfort of knowing that Jesus has overcome the world. John 16:33 tells us to "Fear not, for I have overcome the world." And Romans 8:37, too, tells us the overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us. Isn't it wonderful to know that the battle belongs to the Lord!









## JERUSALEM

So much could be said about Jerusalem! It is found in both Biblical history and prophecy. The name "Jerusalem" means "peace." Jerusalem is called by many names in scripture: Salem, Ariel, Jebus, the City of God, the Holy City, the City of David, and Zion. It first appears in Genesis 14:18 as Salem, when Melchizekek, its king, brought bread and wine and blessed Abram.

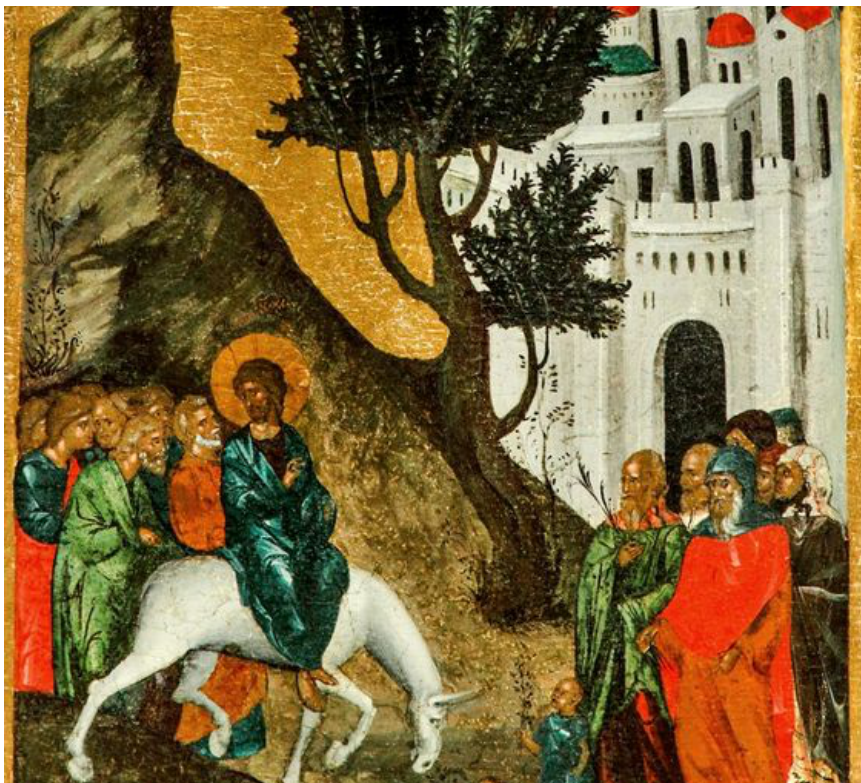
Jesus went to Jerusalem at age 12 and taught in the temple where He astounded the Jewish leaders with His wisdom and knowledge. He later entered Jerusalem on a colt (Matthew 21:1-11); He cleansed the temple there of the money changers (Matthew 21:12-17); and, He was crucified, buried and resurrected just outside of Jerusalem at Golgotha (Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33 and John 19:17).

Jesus wept over Jerusalem in Luke 19:41-44, and in Matthew 23:27, He said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

In Revelation 21:1-27, John sees a vision of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. During the millennial kingdom, Jesus will reign over the earth from Zion and the nations will come to Jerusalem for instruction and blessing, according to Isaiah 2:2-4 and Psalm 102:20-22.

We're told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem in Psalm 122:6, and II Kings 21:7 says it is the only city in the world where God has put His name.

Psalm 122:6: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces."





## JOPPA

Joppa was an ancient seaport city on the Mediterranean Sea, about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Joppa was the town into which the cedars of Lebanon had been floated and shipped to Jerusalem for use in the Temple construction. Jonah left from the port of Joppa on his ill-fated trip.

A disciple named Tabitha lived in Joppa. The passage about this woman is found in Acts 9:36-42:

"There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg, 'Please come as soon as possible!' So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them. But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, 'Get up, Tabitha.' And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive. The news spread through the whole town, and many people believed in the Lord. And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa living with Simon, a tanner of hides."

Tabitha lived a life of kindness and generosity which impacted her community. Isn't it awesome how God uses both the great preachers like Peter as well as those gifted for lives of service like Tabitha. What a beautiful example Tabitha has given us from her home town, the city of Joppa. Are you a Tabitha? Am I? Hmmm.





## LAODICEA

Laodicea was one of the seven churches of Asia Minor. It was a wealthy and important commercial center, and it had three industries; banking, raven black wool from the sheep in the area, and medicine in the form of salve for the eyes. Laodicea is found in Revelation 3:14-19:

"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things say the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.'"

The Laodiceans were comfortable with their wealth and thought they didn't need Jesus, but He reveals to them their true condition. Notice how Jesus meets them where they are at by offering them spiritual counterparts to their worldly holdings: "gold refined in the fire" rather than their earthly commerce, "white garments" rather than garments woven from the black wool produced in their area, and salve for spiritual sight rather than the medicine they produced for physical sight.

God's plan is always so much better than ours. Let's seek after what He offers to us, not what the world may offer; amen? AMEN!



## MEGIDDO

The ancient city of Megiddo was located on the main road which linked Egypt and Syria and overlooked the Valley of Jezreel. It was enclosed by a wall built by King Solomon, referenced in I Kings 9:15. Many battles were fought here in Old Testament times. In Judges 5:19, Deborah and Barak wiped out the army of Sisera "by the waters of Megiddo." Zechariah prophesied a great mourning would take place in the plain of Megiddo (Zechariah 12:11). The fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy will be the battle of Armageddon, where God will destroy the armies of the beast and the false prophet, as told in Revelation 16:12-16.



REVELATION 16:12-16: "Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 'Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.' And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."



## NAIN



Nain was a small town southeast of Nazareth. It appears in Luke 7:11-15, where Jesus raised the widow's son:

"Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother."

Touching a coffin would have been considered a defiling act by the Jews of Jesus' day, it would make a person ceremonially unclean.

But Jesus was impervious to such defilement. He was not tainted by it; rather, death fled His presence! This is one of three passages in scripture wherein Jesus raises someone from the dead. The raising of Lazarus is found in John 11:20-44.

There is also the passage in Luke 8:49-56, where He raises a little girl from death:

"While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.' But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.' When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.' Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately.

## ROMANS 6:9

"We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him."

**AMEN AND AMEN!**





## ROME

During Paul's time, Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire, which was the dominant military and political force. At that time the population of Rome was around one million people. Rome had been influenced by Greek mythology, and the inhabitants there worshipped different gods depending on their preferences, so many temples and shrines existed there. Most religions were tolerated as long as you included the emperor. Christians proclaimed there is only one God, which was the reason they began to experience persecution. Emperor Nero was known for capturing Christians and setting them on fire. Paul wrote the Book of Romans during the early part of Nero's reign. Paul wanted to see the Christians in Rome but was arrested before he was able to meet with them. Church tradition holds that Paul was beheaded in Rome.



Paul's house arrest was in Rome and took place after the shipwreck on Malta (Acts 28:11-15 tells of the journey from Malta to Rome). Paul was allowed to live by himself but was chained to a guard (Acts 28:16). Local Jewish leaders met with Paul, and "He witnessed to them from morning 'til evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he said but others would not believe." (Acts 28:23-24.)

It's interesting to note how God used Paul's house arrest. First, he kept on preaching. Acts 28:30-31: "And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered." (NASB.)

It's the last word of the Book of Acts - "unhindered." Paul didn't let his imprisonment keep him from proclaiming Jesus. While under house arrest in Rome, he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. God used Paul's house arrest to embolden other believers too. Philippians 1:12-14 notes that most of the brethren had more courage to speak the word of God without fear because of Paul's example.

No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, whether it's house arrest like Paul, physical restrictions, or limitations we have no control over, we can still be used by God for His purposes, whether we're in Rome or in our own backyard. 27

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