

LESSON 38

PALESTINE - Its Main Divisions And Cities

References : 2 Samuel. 5 : 2, 2 Kings : 5

Memory verse : Psalms . 16 : 5 - 6

Objective: To know about the main divisions of Palestine and important cities which were the arenas of work for the Lord Jesus Christ and the early apostles.

Study Aid:

The Map of Palestine.

Introduction: Where was Jesus Christ born? Where is that place located in Palestine? Which was the capital of the Jews? Under which division does it come? Lets study about the location of Jerusalem and Bethlehem and their importance.

THE PRINCIPAL CITIES :

1. Jerusalem (City of Peace)

Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine. Salem was its former name (Gen. 14: 18). Melchizedek was the king of Salem. Later, it came to be known as the City of Jebusites. David conquered it and made it his capital (2 Sam. 5). Solomon's Temple was built on the mount Moriah in Jerusalem. This famous city where the Kings of Judah ruled 400 Years was completely destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezar in 586 B.C. The city and the Temple were re- built by those who returned from exile. But in A. D. 70 Titus the Roman Emperor destroyed this city and the Jews were scattered. Jesus fore - saw the plight of the city and warned against it. (Mtt. 23:37-39).

After the first world war, however, the Jews who returned to

Palestine rebuilt this city and in 1948 it drew the attention of the world as the capital of Israel. Our Lord will rule the earth for a thousand years in the same city.

2. Bethany:

It is a town near Jerusalem. Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived here (Jn. 11:1)

3. Bethlehem (The house of bread)

It is a very ancient city 5 miles south of Jerusalem. It was formerly called 'Ephrath' (Gen. 35 : 19). Rachel was buried here. Boaz belonged to this place (Ruth. 2:4) David and our Lord were born here (Lk. 2:11)

4. Hebron (Fellowship);

This town lies twenty miles South of Jerusalem. Its former name was 'Kiriath _ Arba' (Gen. 23. 2). This is where the men of old like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David lived. Find out certain incidents in the Bible connected with these men. Hebron is one of the cities of refuge. (Josh. 21: 13). David ruled for seven years here (2 Sam. 5:5)

5. Bethel (The house of God) :

The former name of this place was Luz (Gen. 28: 19). It is 12 miles north of Jerusalem. This was one of the cities in Canaan where Abraham first settled (Gen. 12: 4-9). The place was named Bethel after the vision Jacob had here while he fled from his avengeful brother (Gen. 28: 10- 22). But by the time of the kings, this place became a centre of idolatry (I King 12; 28-33).

6. Jericho:

This is a town near the point where the river Jordan merges into the Dead Sea. Joshua destroyed this town and pronounced curse on he who rebuilt it (Josh. 6; 26) . During the time of Kings someone named Hiel took the courage to re-build it (Josh.6: 26, I King 16:34). Just as Joshua said, Hiel lost his son when he laid the foundation of Jericho, and his youngest son when he built the gates. See how exactly was God's word fulfilled. This was a famous city of the ancient times. The blind Bartimaeus was held here. (Mk. 10: 46- 52) Zacchaeus belonged to this place. (Lk. 19:11)

7. Samaria:

It was the capital of the southern division of Israel Kingdom.

This city situated in the central Palestine was built by Omri, the king of Israel (1 King. 16; 24). It was the capital of Israel for 200 years. It was a centre of idolatry as well. In this city, the prophet Elijah and Elisha mightily ministered. The Assyrian King destroyed this city and took the people to Assyria as prisoners. (2 King. 17). In place of the Israelites, the king (Shalmaneser) re-peopled Samaria with Babylonians who intermarried with the remaining Hebrews, and their descendants were the Samaritans. The Jews kept away from those mixed bloods, The Lord and the apostles, however, went to them with the Gospel (Jn. 4, Act, 8).

SOME PRINCIPAL CITIES OF GALILEE;

1. Nain (Lk. 7:11); The Lord raised the son of a widow here.
2. Nazareth : The Lord grew up here. It was an obscure town (Lk. 4: 16, Jn. 1; 45, 46).
3. Cana- The Lord performed the miracle of turning water into wine here (Jn. 2: 1-11).

Bethesda, Capernaum, Korazin etc. were the cities where the Lord mostly worked and showed his mighty deeds (Mtt. 11:20- 24). But those cities neglected the good opportunity they got and did not repent. These cities were good commercial centres being port- cities.

THE DIVISION OF PALESTINE:

The area east of Jordan was distributed by Moses to the two and a half tribes. There they lived according to the allocation as Reuben on the south, Gad in the middle and the half tribe of Manasseh on the north. Important places on the eastern bank were Baashan, Gilead, Arnon Etc.. Other places like Peniel, Sycchoth and Gadara were also here.

The west of Jordan area was distributed among the nine and half tribes. Joshua allocated each tribe their portion of land from south to north. At the farthest South Simeon received their portion and adjacent to it Judah and just adjacent to it was that of Benjamin. In the middle lay Ephraim and the half tribe Manasseh. On the north were Issacher, Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, Dan etc. This is how the land was distributed to the 12 tribes.

During Jesus Christ's days the western part of Jordan was divided

into three. Judea on the South, Samaria in the middle and Galilee on the north, The eastern part of Jordan was known as Perea in general (Most of the incidents mentioned in Luke chapter 10-18 took place here.

Understand these facts by the help of a map.

Mark the allocations of each tribe in the map of Palestine.

EXERCISE - 38

Answer the following questions

1. What is the Capital of Palestine?
2. What was the former name of Jerusalem?
3. Where was Solomon's Temple built?
4. Which kings destroyed the city of Jerusalem?
5. After the first world war, who rebuilt this city?
6. Who lived in Bethany?
7. What was the former name of Bethlehem?
8. What is the importance of Bethlehem?
9. What is the meaning of Bethlehem?
10. What is the meaning of Hebron? What was its former name?
11. Who lived in Hebron?
12. What is the meaning of Bethel? What was its former name?
13. Who cursed the City of Jericho?
14. What happened when Hiel took courage to re-build Jericho?
15. Who built the city of Samaria?
16. Which prophets ministered mightily in the city of Samaria?
17. Who destroyed this city.
18. Name the important cities of Palestine?
19. Name the principal cities of Galilee.
20. Which places of Palestine were distributed to the 12 tribes?
21. Which are the three divisions of Jordan?

