

LESSON 38

Palestine - Its main division and cities

- Objective** : To know about the main divisions of Palestine and important cities which were the areas of work for the Lord Jesus Christ and the early apostles
- Study Aids** : The Map of Palestine
- References** : 2 Samuel, 5:2, 2 Kings; 5
- Memory Verse** : 16:5-6

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? Let's 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. 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 Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. The city and the temple were rebuilt by those who returned from exile. AD 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. (Mt 23; 37 - 39)

After the first world 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 veiy ancient city 5 miles south of Jerusalem. It was formerly called Ephrata (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 (gen23:2).This is where the men of old like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David lived . Find out certain incidents in the Bible connected with theses 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 (Gen28:19). It is 12 miles north of Jerusalem. This was one of the cities of Canaan where Abraham first settled (Gen 12:4-9)the place was named after 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 center of idolatry (1 king 12:28 -33)

6. Jericho:

This is a town near the point where the river Jordan merges in to the Dead sea. Joshua destroyed this town and pronounced a curse on he who rebuilt it.(Josh6:26)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 Gods word was 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.19:1 1)

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 (I King 16:24). It was the capital of Isarel for 200 years. It was a center of idolatry as well in this city, the prophet Elijah and Elisha mighty ministered. The Assyrian king destroyed this city and took took the people to Assyria as prisoners (2Kings 17). In Place of the Israelites, the king (Shalmaneser) repeopled samaria with Babylonians who intermarried with the remaining Hebrews and their decedents were the Samaritans. The Jews kept away from those mixed blood, The Lord and the apostles,however went to them with the Gospel (jn4 Act,8)

SOME PRINCIPAL CITIES OF GALILEE:

1. Nain (Lk7:11) The Lord raised a widow here.
2. Nazareth: The Lord grew up here, It was obscure town (Lk. 4:16, Jn. 1:45, 46)
3. Cana - The Lord performed the miracle of turning water in to wine here(Jn. 2:1-11)

Bethesda , Capernaum,Korazin etc. were the cities where the Lord mostly worked and showed his mighty deeds(Mttl 1:20 - 24)But those cities neglected the good opportunity they got and did not repent. These cities were good commercial centers 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 Ruben on the south, gad in the middle and the half tribe of Manasseh on the north.

Important places on the eastern bank were Bashan, Gilead Amon etc.. Other places like Peniel, Sycooth 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. 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 the half tribe Manasseh. On the North were Issachar, 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 allocation of each tribe in the map of Palestine.

