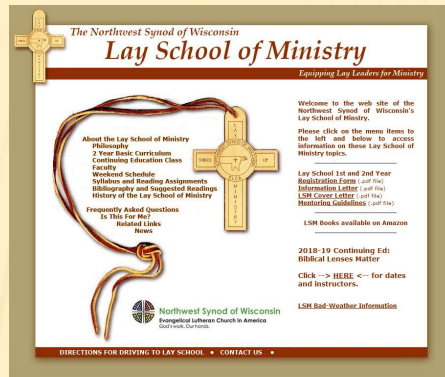


GPS: God's Positioning System

Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens



Session 2

What? Where? Why?
Archaeology, Ancient Travel, and the Bible

HOW DO WE LEARN ABOUT THE PAST?

- ✘ Read ancient texts and inscriptions
 - + *How do we acquire such writings?*
 - + *How do we determine what is reliable?*
- ✘ Excavating the past > ARCHAEOLOGY
 - + “The systematic study of the material remains of human behavior in the past... [Its aim is] to discover, record, observe, and preserve the buried remains of antiquity and to use them to help reconstruct ancient life.”

HOW DO WE LEARN ABOUT THE PAST?

- ✘ Where will we look for “material remains of human behavior in the past”?
- ✘ What kind of things might we expect to find?
- ✘ What material remains of the past are we **not** likely to find?

BET SHE'AN = SCYTHOPOLIS



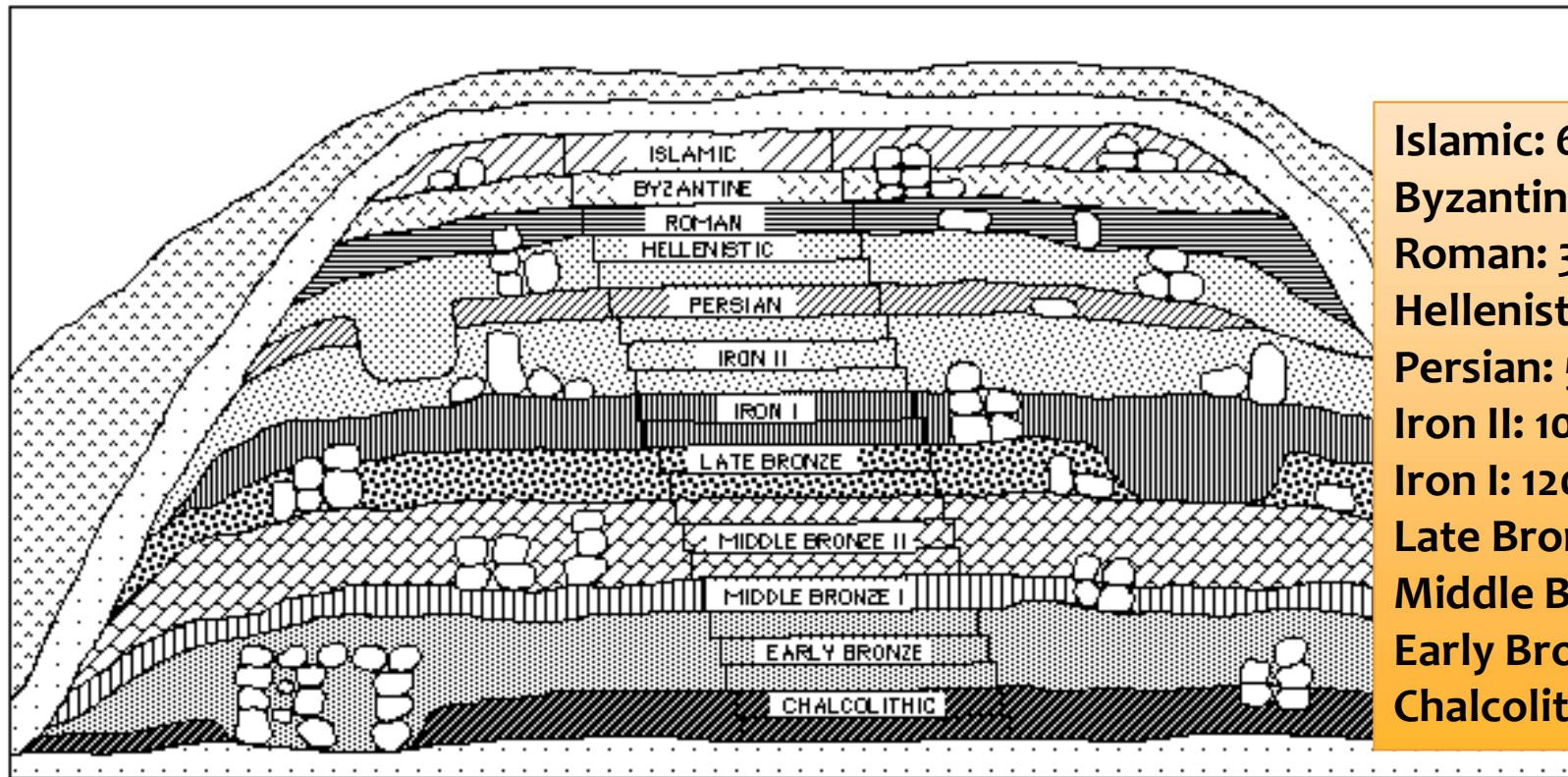
Circa 1930 and 2012

ANCIENT CITIES

- ✘ How do we find ancient cities?
- ✘ What is a “tell”?
 - + A **tell** or **tel, tal**, (from Hebrew תֵּל, Arabic: تَلّ) is a type of archaeological mound created by human occupation and abandonment of a geographical site over many centuries. A classic tell looks like a low, truncated cone with a flat top and sloping sides.



A schematic drawing of a typical tell shows the various levels of occupation. (HBD p. 47)



Islamic: 640
Byzantine: 324 CE
Roman: 37 BCE
Hellenistic: 332
Persian: 586
Iron II: 1000
Iron I: 1200
Late Bronze: 1550
Middle Bronze: 2200
Early Bronze: 3150
Chalcolithic

GESHUR / BETHSAIDA

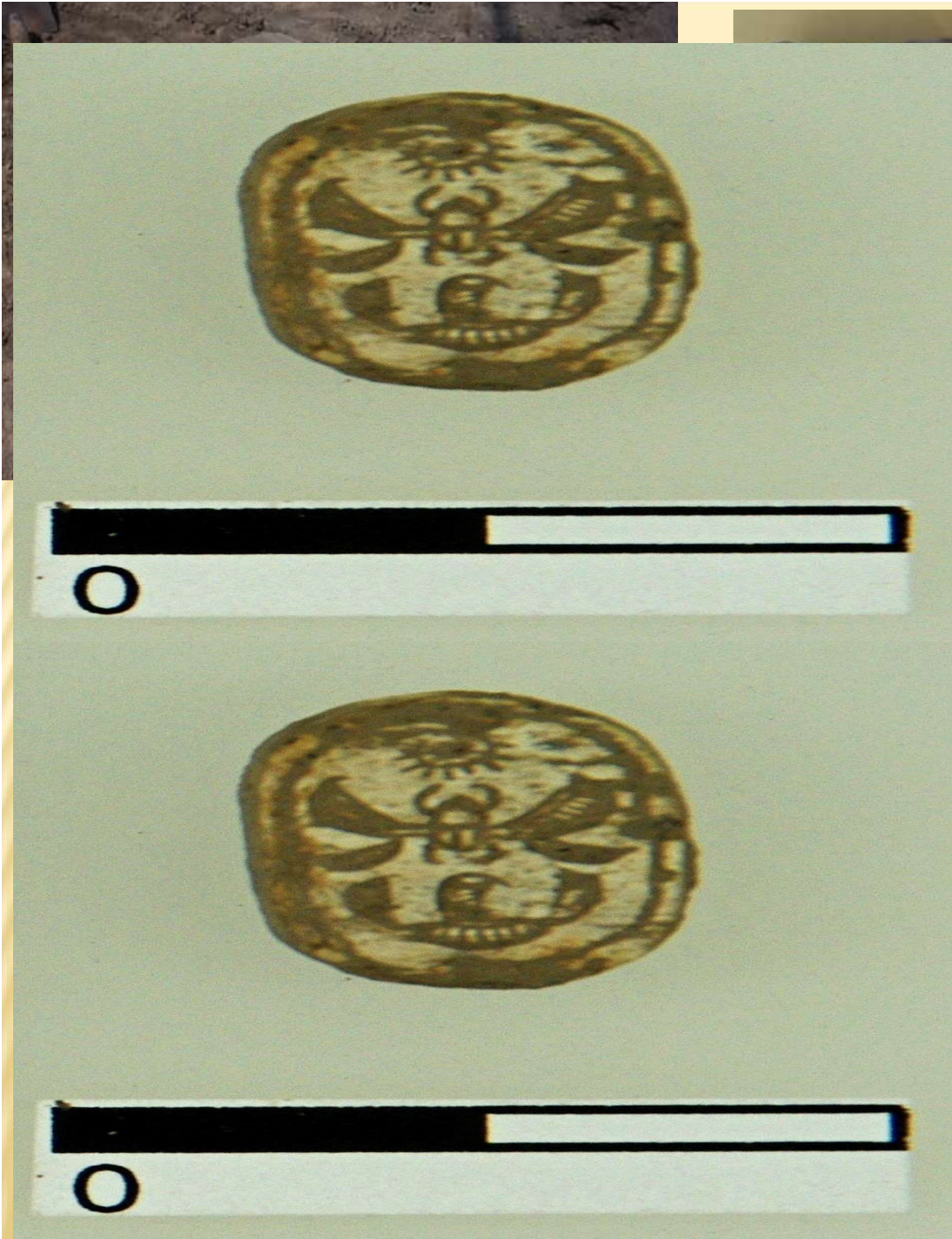


^ Artist reconstruction of
Geshur in 8th century BCE

< Aerial view of excavations 2010



**Geshur (OT)
Bethsaida (? NT)
et Tell (today)**



ANCIENT CITIES

- × Why was (is) there a city (tell) here?
- × Location factors
 - + Water
 - + Food availability
 - + Climate
 - + Accessible (roads and waterways)...
 - + ... but defensible
 - + Economic: Trade routes, ports, borders (taxes)
 - + Political
 - + Religious

ANCIENT CITIES

Location factors

- Water
- Food availability
- Climate
- Accessible ...
- ... but defensible
- Economic
- Political
- Religious

Canaan during the Early Bronze Age:
3200-2200 BCE



ANCIENT CITIES: STRUCTURES

In Bronze – Hellenistic Periods

× What is found at a tell?

+ Administrative:

- × Palace, Temple(s), Food storage, Residences of elites

+ Passageways and defensive structures:

- × Streets, walls, terraces, gates

+ Water provisions:

- × Protected springs, reservoirs, aqueducts

ANCIENT URBAN PLANNING

Tell Beer-Sheva

Iron Age (~1200-700 BCE)

City Features

- Elevated mound
- Casemate walls
- Four (six) chamber city gate
- Storage facilities



ANCIENT URBAN PLANNING

Tell Beer-Sheva

Iron Age (~1200-700 BCE)

City Features

- Elevated mound
- Casemate walls
- Four (six) chamber city gate
- Storage facilities
- Secure water system
- Government structures
- Temple or *bama*



ANCIENT CITIES: STRUCTURES

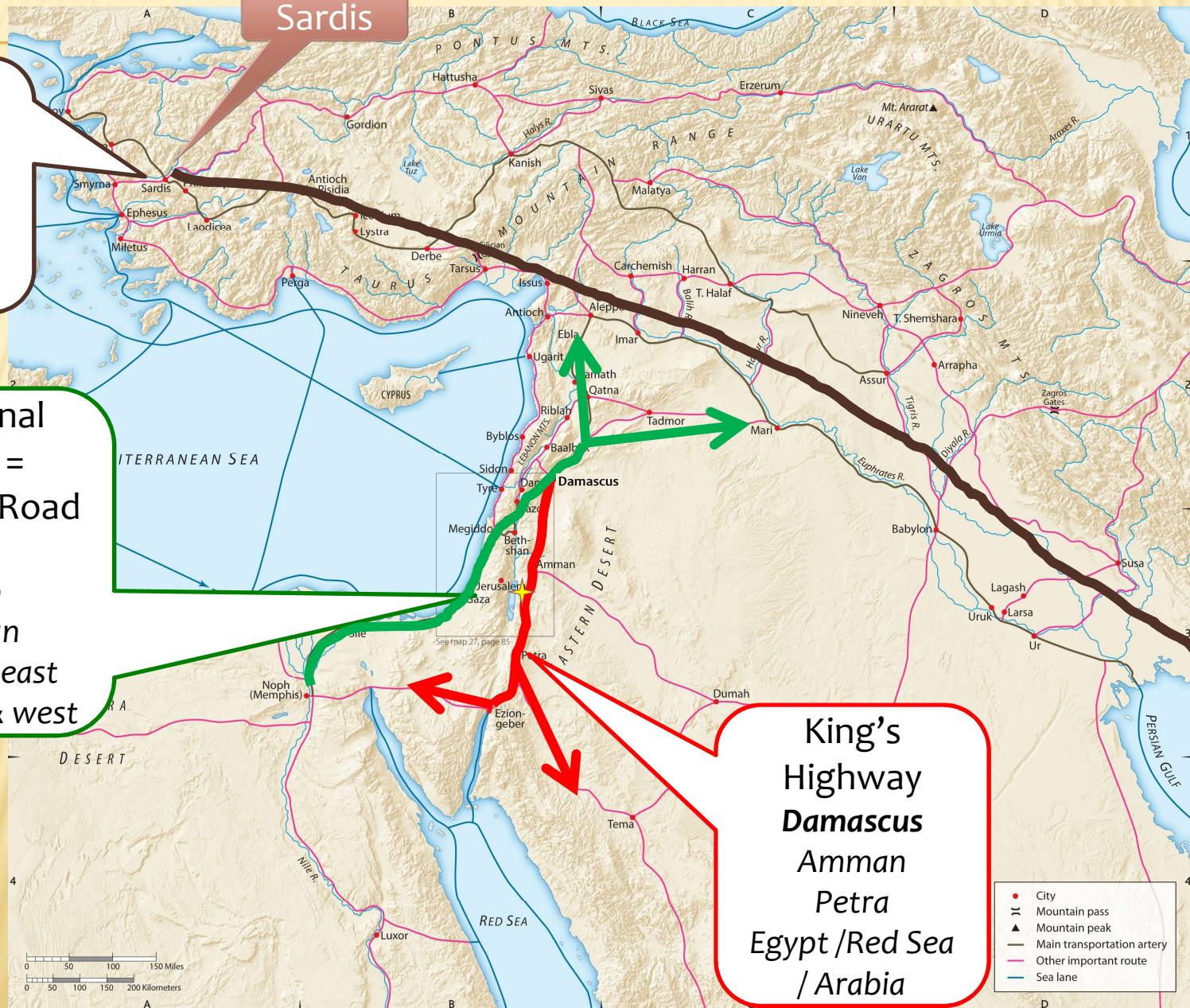
In cities of Hellenistic and Roman Empires (4th BCE >...):

- ✘ Based on Hippodamus Plan (5th BCE)
- ✘ Decumanus (E-W) and Cardo (N-S); streets at right angles
- ✘ Acropolis
 - + Lots of temples, altars, elite residences
 - + Gates but not necessarily defensive structures
- ✘ Entertainment
 - + Theaters, Odeion, Hippodrome, Nymphaeum
- ✘ Hygiene facilities
 - + Baths, Latrines
- ✘ Agora (marketplace) / Forum (political center)

PHILIPPI: URBAN PLANNING



TRANSPORT ROUTES OF THE BIBLICAL WORLD



Persian Royal Road (5th BCE)
Sardis to Persepolis

International Highway = Great Trunk Road
Egypt
Megiddo
Hazor / Dan
Damascus & east
Points north & west

King's Highway
Damascus
Amman
Petra
Egypt / Red Sea / Arabia

- City
- ⌄ Mountain pass
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Main transportation artery
- - - Other important route
- Sea lane

SARDIS: PERSIAN/ROMAN HIGHWAY



TRANSPORT ROUTES OF THE BIBLICAL WORLD



The **Royal Road** was an ancient highway reorganized and rebuilt by the Persian king Darius the Great (Darius I) of the Achaemenid Empire in the 5th century BC.^[1] Darius built the road to facilitate rapid communication throughout his very large empire from Susa to Sardis ...^[2] Mounted couriers could travel 1677 miles (2699 km) in seven days; the journey from Susa to Sardis took ninety days on foot. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote, "There is nothing in the world that travels faster than these Persian couriers." Herodotus's praise for these messengers—"**Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds**"—was inscribed on the James Farley Post Office in New York and is sometimes thought of as the United States Postal Service creed.



TRANSPORT ROUTES OF THE BIBLICAL WORLD



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25/7

— Other important route
— Sea lane

TRAVEL IN ANCIENT CANAAN / ISRAEL

If you were wanting to travel north/south or east/west or southwest/northeast, what would the elevation features suggest?

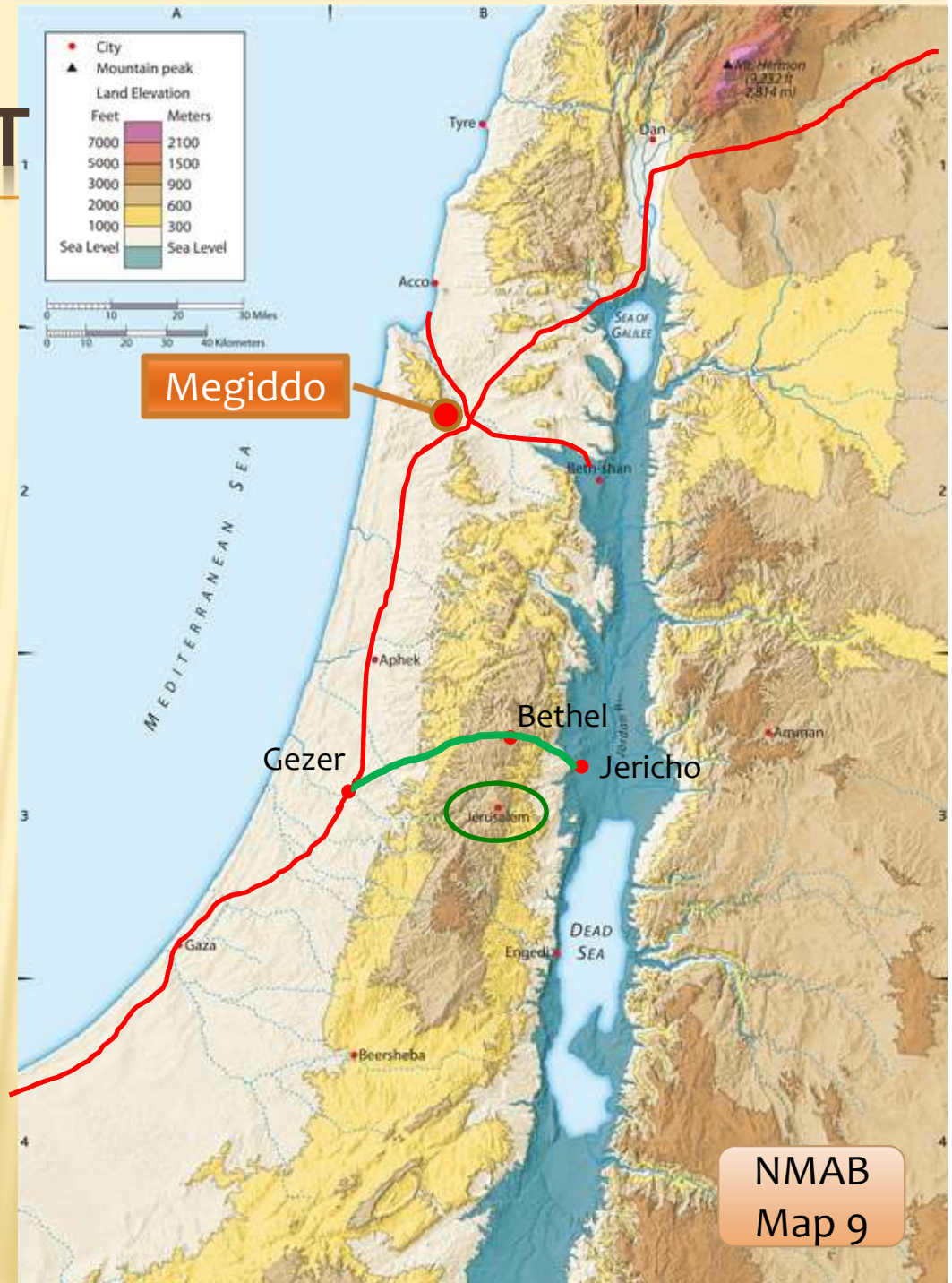
Note:

Coastal swamps

Megiddo

Jerusalem?

In OT: Jericho > Bethel > Gezer

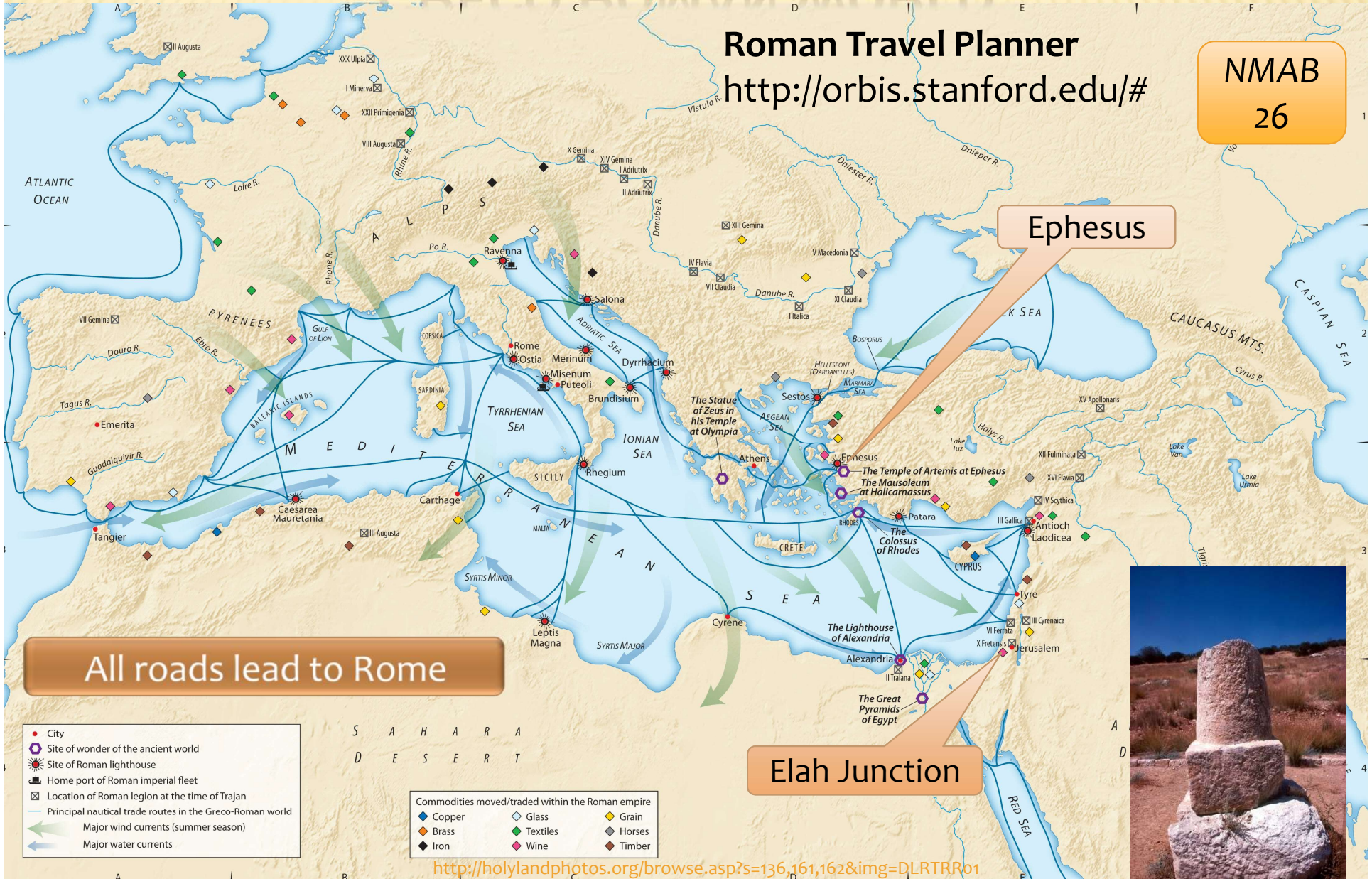


TRANSPORT ROUTES OF THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Roman Travel Planner

<http://orbis.stanford.edu/#>

NMAB
26



Ephesus

All roads lead to Rome

Elah Junction



- City
- ☉ Site of wonder of the ancient world
- ☼ Site of Roman lighthouse
- ⚓ Home port of Roman imperial fleet
- ☒ Location of Roman legion at the time of Trajan
- Principal nautical trade routes in the Greco-Roman world
- ↖ Major wind currents (summer season)
- ↙ Major water currents

- S A H A R A
D E S E R T
- | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|
| ◆ Copper | ◇ Glass | ◆ Grain |
| ◆ Brass | ◆ Textiles | ◆ Horses |
| ◆ Iron | ◆ Wine | ◆ Timber |
- Commodities moved/traded within the Roman empire

<http://holylandphotos.org/browse.asp?s=136,161,162&img=DLRTRR01>

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW: ACTS & PAUL



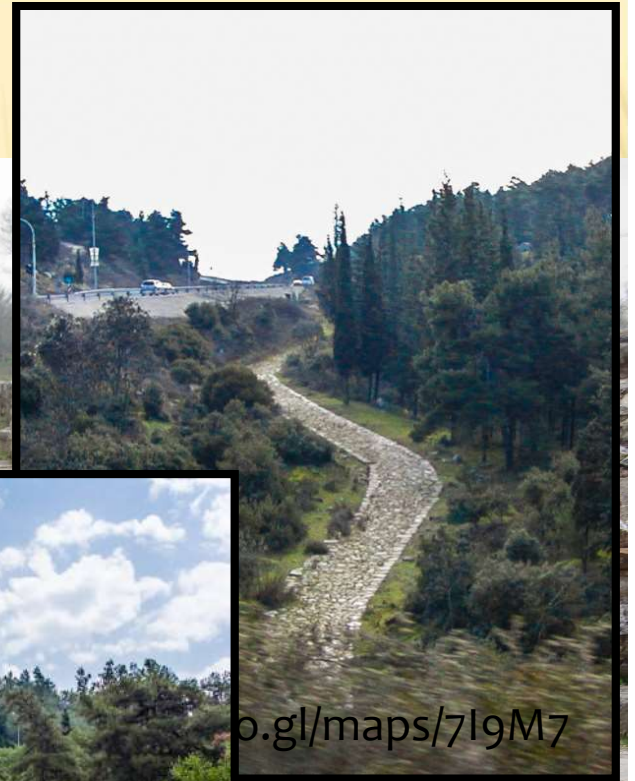
VIA EGNATIA

Via Egnatia



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Egnatia#/media/File:Via_Egnatia-en.jpg

PHILIPPI: VIA EGNATIA



<https://www.google.com/maps/@40.5166667,24.7166667,15z>



STREETS

SEPPHORIS: CARDO

EPHESUS: CURETES STREETS



THE ROADS OF PALESTINE

“Way of the Sea”
Via Maris – Isa 9.1

Sepphoris
/ Nazareth

NMAB
27

Jezreel
Valley
Way

Beth
Shean

Megiddo

Jordan
Valley
Way

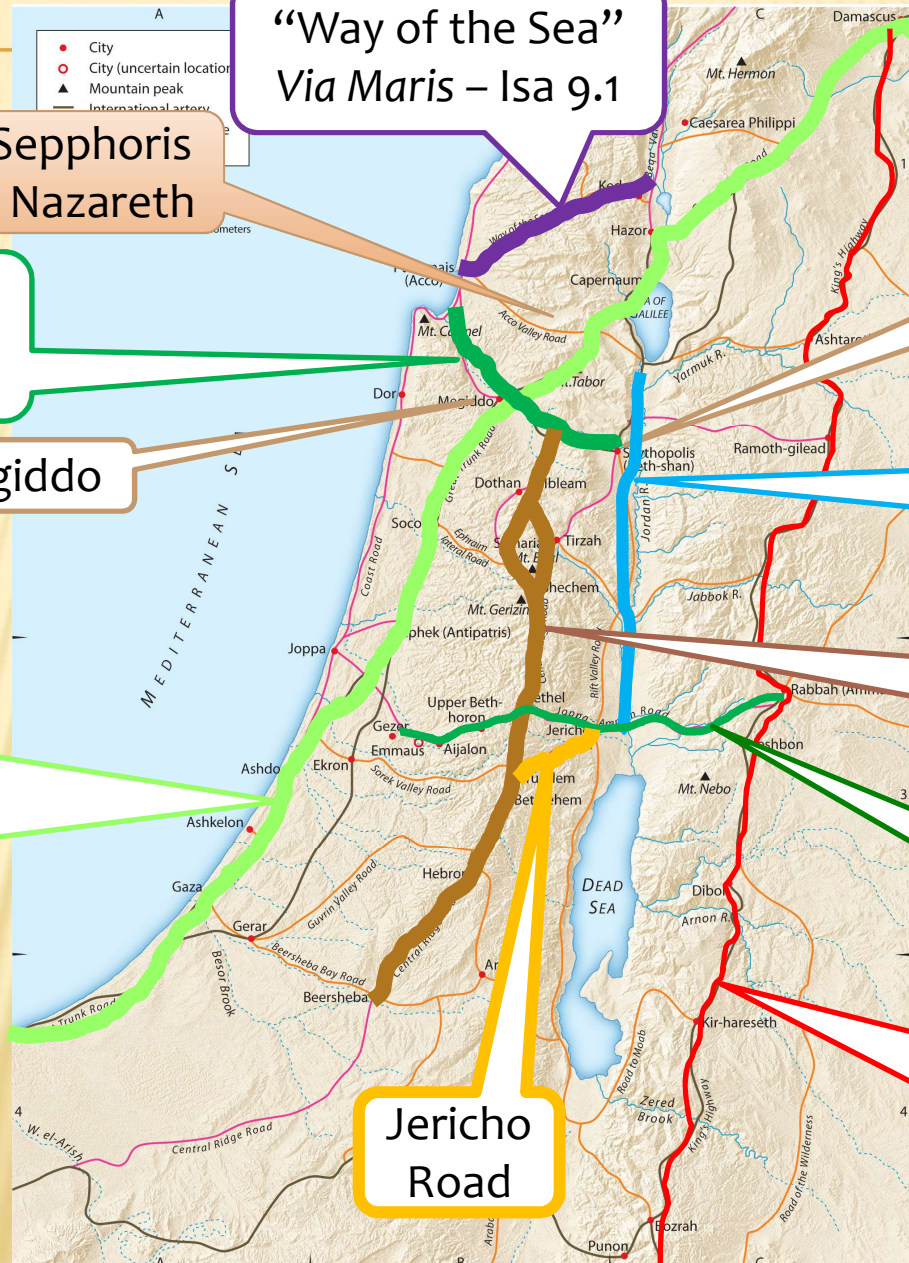
International
Highway =
Great Trunk Road
Egypt
Megiddo
Hazor / Dan
Damascus

Central
Ridge
Way

Gezer, Bethel,
Jericho, Amman
Road

Jericho
Road

King’s Highway
Damascus Amman,
Petra
Red Sea

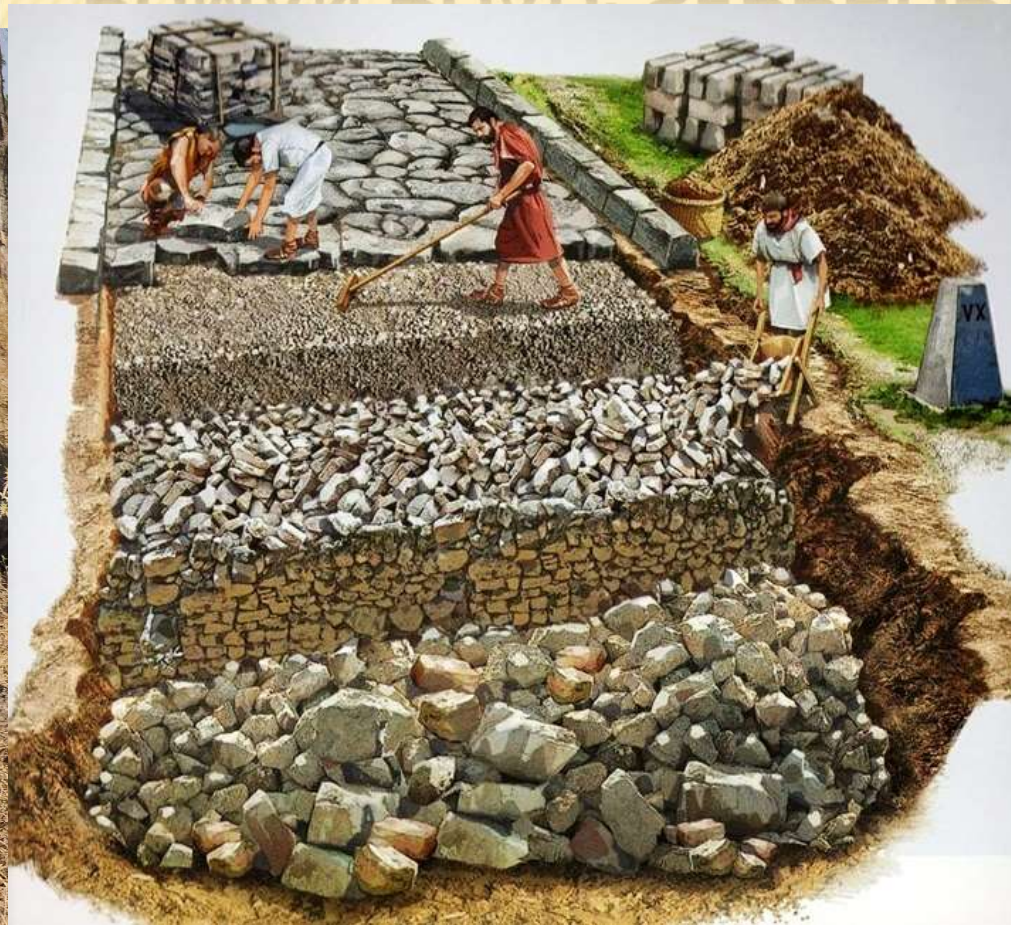




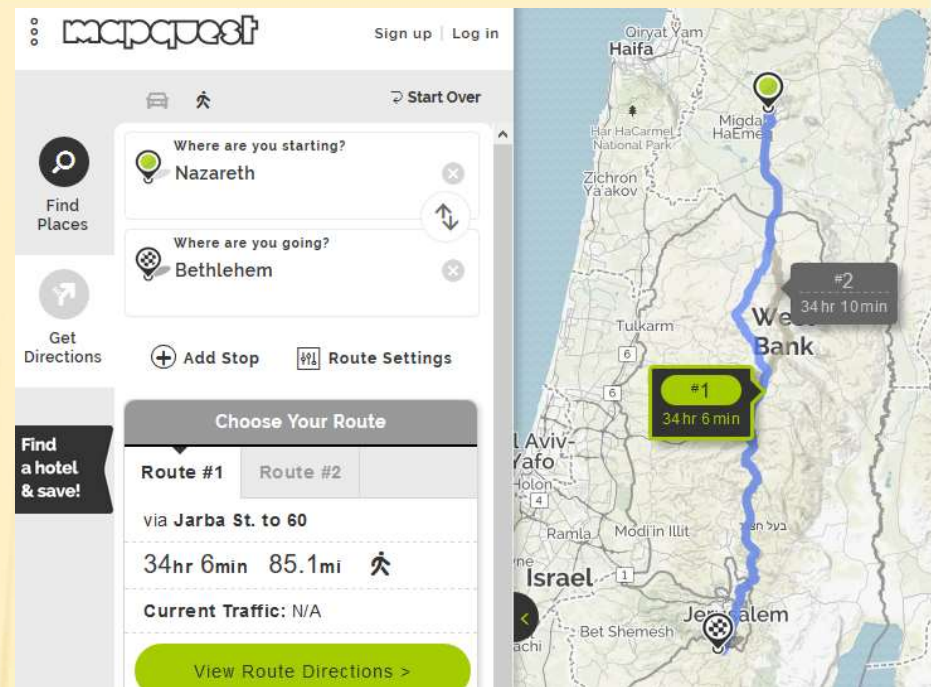
NMAB
Map 102

ROMAN ROAD: SEPPHORIS > SEA OF GALILEE

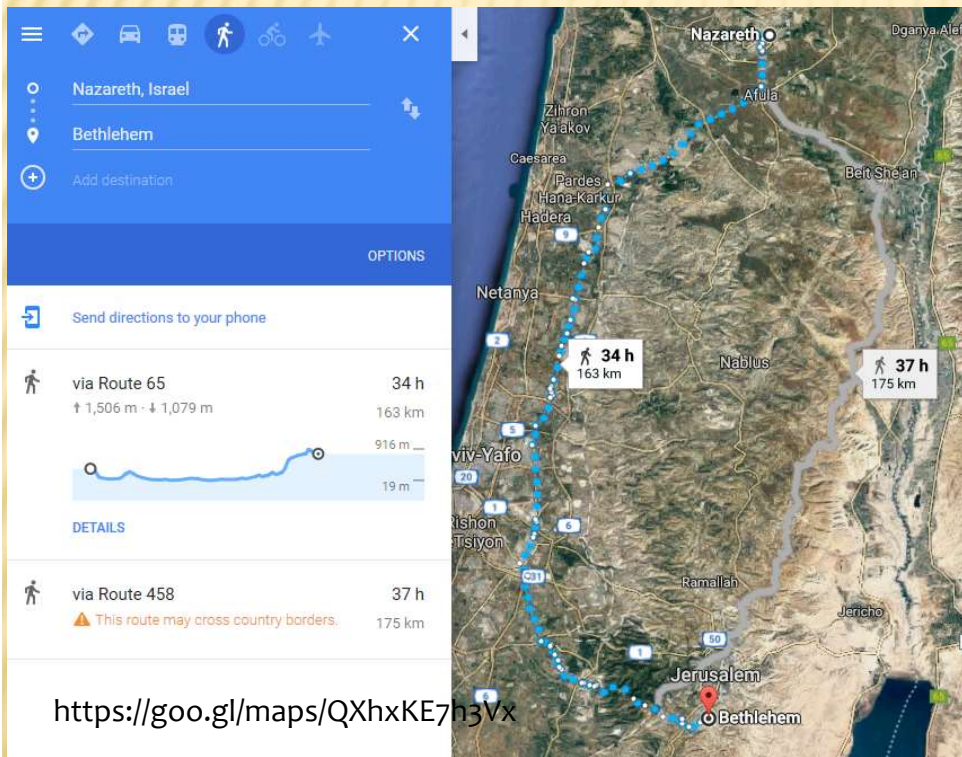
<http://goo.gl/maps/foO4N>



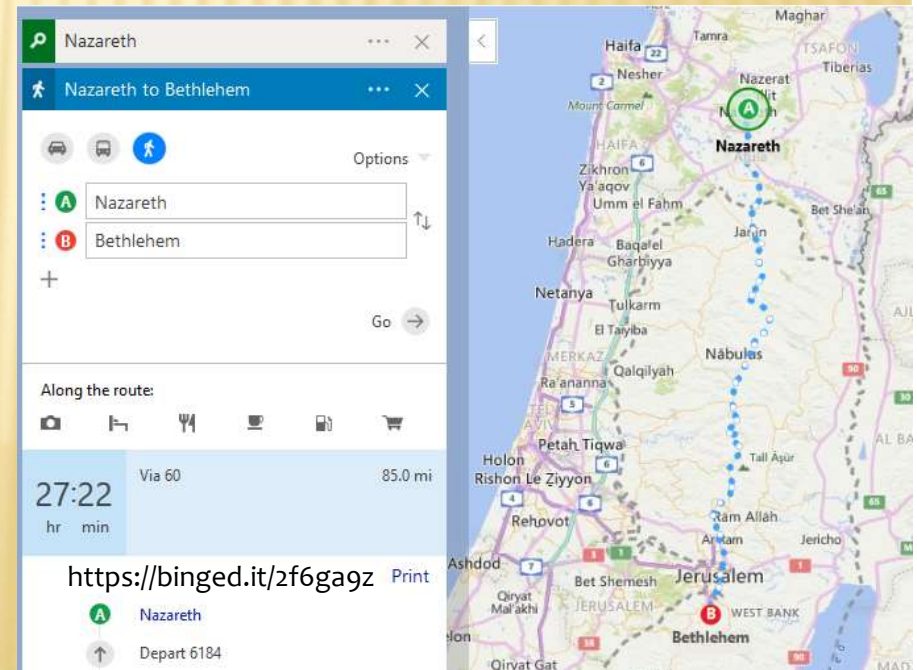
Walking from Nazareth to Bethlehem



<http://mapq.st/2wJVBHl>



<https://goo.gl/maps/QXhxKE7h3Vx>



<https://binged.it/2f6ga9z>

THE ROADS OF PALESTINE

Central
Ridge Route
Hebron /
Jerusalem /
Shechem /
Samaria /
Galilee



NMAB

27

Bing Maps
Walking from
Nazareth to
Bethlehem
88.2 mi,
28 hr 23 min

Ancient Shechem
(Abraham & Sarah)

Jacob's Well /
Sychar / Jesus &
Samaritan Woman



LUKE 9⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³ but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.



FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM





Seven Churches of Revelation

PATMOS

ANCIENT CITIES: CHALLENGES

- × Geographical changes
 - + Earthquakes
 - + Floods
 - + Silting
- × Political and Economic changes
 - + Wars, destruction
 - + Political moves, boundary changes
 - + Trade routes, tax stations
- × Other changes
 - + Famine, drought
 - + Disease

CHURCHES TODAY: CHALLENGES

- *Why is your church located where it is?*
- *What are the main physical and external challenges to your congregation?*
- *What changes in your congregation can you control? Which ones can't you control?*
- *How have transportation patterns affected your congregation?*
- *What difference do these make in your mission strategies?*