

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10, Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10, Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Newman's lecture focuses on the geography of Palestine, including Jerusalem, during New Testament times to better understand the Synoptic Gospels. The lecture examines the major regions from west to east, including the coastal plain, hill country, and Rift Valley, as well as minor features from north to south, like the Sea of Galilee and the wilderness of Judea. **Newman also discusses the bodies of water in Palestine, political divisions, and major cities during Jesus's ministry.** Furthermore, the lecture outlines major roads and Herodian fortifications, offering a detailed view of Jerusalem's natural features, city walls, and significant buildings. **The lecture aims to provide listeners with a clear understanding of the geographical and political context of the Gospels.**

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10 – Double click icon
to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Gospels → Synoptic Gospels).**



**Newman_Synoptics
_Session10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10, Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture transcript, including relevant quotes:

Briefing Document: Geography of Palestine in the Synoptic Gospels

Source: Excerpts from "Newman_Synoptics_EN_Lecture10.pdf"

Overview: This lecture by Dr. Robert C. Newman focuses on the geography of Palestine, particularly during the New Testament period, to provide context for understanding the Synoptic Gospels. The lecture explores the physical features of the region, its climate, major geographical regions (east to west and north to south), political divisions during Jesus' ministry, major cities, roads, Herodian fortifications, and specific geographical details of Jerusalem. The lecturer emphasizes that understanding the geography is crucial for interpreting events in the Gospels and the broader biblical narrative.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Importance of Geography:

- Having a grasp of the relevant geography is "desirable to have a handle on the relevant geography" for understanding the Bible, especially the Gospels.
- The basic geography has remained largely unchanged since New Testament times, making its study relevant.

1. Major Geographical Regions (West to East):

- **Coastal Plain (Plain of Sharon):** "A very low, rather flat plain, which is fertile where it's not too sandy or too salty." It was easily accessible for military invasion.
- **Shephelah (Low Rolling Hills):** More rolling terrain than the coastal plain, also fertile and relatively easy to invade.
- **Central Hill Country:** "A region of rather sharp hills and v-shaped valleys." Difficult to invade due to the terrain, requiring travel along ridges. Farming was more suited for olives and grapes than grains.
- **Rift Valley:** A deep geological fault running north-south, including the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. "At the Dead Sea, the surface of the Dead Sea is actually over 1,000 feet below sea level." Hot and arid climate, dependent on the Jordan River for water.

- **Transjordan Plateau:** Higher than the hill country, receiving some moisture on its western edge but quickly transitioning into desert to the east.

1. **Minor Geographical Features (North to South):**

- **Mount Hermon:** The highest peak in the area (over 9,000 feet), generally snow-covered.
- **Galilee:** A hilly region north of the Jezreel Valley, the best-watered area in Palestine, with substantial rainfall. "This is about equal in rainfall to the eastern United States."
- **Jezreel Valley (Plain of Esdraelon):** An east-west valley connecting the coast to the Jordan Valley, separating Galilee from Samaria. It served as "the easiest transportation corridor to get from the Mediterranean Sea to the Rift Valley."
- **Wilderness of Judea:** A badlands area west of the Jordan River in the rain shadow of the hill country, sparsely vegetated and largely uninhabited except for seasonal nomadic grazing.
- **Negev:** An arid land south of Hebron with good soil but very little rainfall due to the latitude effect. Ingenious methods were used to concentrate water for agriculture.

1. **Major Bodies of Water:**

- **Mediterranean Sea:** Israelites were mainly middlemen in sea trade, lacking natural ports compared to other regions.
- **Sea of Galilee (Lake of Tiberias/Kinneret):** A freshwater lake important for fishing, prone to "fierce storms" due to its topography and climate.
- **Jordan River:** Originates on Mount Hermon, flows through the Sea of Galilee, and ends in the Dead Sea.
- **Dead Sea (Lake Asphaltites):** "Its surface is the lowest point on earth, 1,296 feet below sea level." Extremely salty, supporting no fish life.

1. **Political Divisions During Jesus' Ministry:**

- **Judea:** Included Samaria and Idumea. Ruled by various Herods and Roman procurators. "The population of this Judea proper was mostly Jews, but Samaria mostly Gentiles...and the Idumea were mostly descendants of the Edomites."

- **Galilee:** Ruled by Herod Antipas. "Some considered Galilee a hotbed of revolutionaries."
- **Perea:** East of the Jordan River, with the same rulers as Galilee.
- **Tetrarchy of Philip (Ituraea Trachonitis):** Multi-ethnic region northeast of the Sea of Galilee, ruled by Philip.
- **Decapolis:** A league of Hellenistic cities, mostly Gentile, independent of Jewish control.

1. **Cities of Palestine (1st Century AD):**

- **Jerusalem:** The Jewish religious capital, located on the ridge in the hill country.
- **Caesarea:** The Roman capital, built by Herod the Great, with an artificial harbor.
- **Sebastia (Samaria):** Rebuilt by Herod the Great for his army veterans, mostly Gentile inhabitants.
- **Tiberias:** Built by Herod Antipas on the Sea of Galilee, named after Emperor Tiberius. Notably, Jesus is not explicitly referenced as being *in* the city.
- **Caesarea Philippi:** Built by Philip northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

1. **Major Roads:**

- **Via Maris (Way of the Sea):** Coastal highway from Egypt to Damascus.
- **King's Highway:** Transjordan Plateau road from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus.
- **Ridge Route:** A road along the ridge of the hill country, used by Jews traveling between Galilee and Jerusalem. "It was less important for international traffic because it was not as easy to travel along."

1. **Herodian Fortifications:**

- Built due to Herod's insecurity and awareness of external threats (Parthians) and internal rebellions.
- **Machaerus:** East of the Dead Sea, where John the Baptist was put to death.
- **Masada:** West of the Dead Sea, a palace and fortress where Zealots made their last stand against the Romans.
- **Herodium:** Southeast of Bethlehem, a built-up hill with a palace, believed to be the site of Herod's tomb.

1. Geography of Jerusalem

• Valleys Surrounding Jerusalem

- Hinnom Valley: The location where garbage was burned and the term Ge-Hinnom became a picture in Jewish thought of hell.
- Kidron Valley: Between the Temple and the Mount of Olives.
- Tyropoeon: Cheesemakers Valley, between the Temple Mount and the western part of Jerusalem where the upper city was.

• Hills Surrounding Jerusalem

- Ophel: Area south of the Temple, the area was called the city of Jebusites.
- Moriah: Site of the Temple and of Abraham's almost sacrifice of Isaac.
- Mount of Olives: Outside the city and where the site of Jesus' ascension was.
- **City Walls** The walls roughly follow the valleys to make it difficult for a person to attack a city.
- South wall runs around where the Kidron and the Hinnom Valley run together.
- East wall is up the slopes of the Kidron Valley and along the east side of the temple.
- West wall on the Hinnom Valley, but on the east side of it.

• Sections of the City

- Old city of David: South of the temple.
- Temple Mount north of that built by Solomon on Mount Moriah.
- The lower city: West of Ophel and before you get up onto the upper western part of the city, the upper city, the lower city.
- Upper city: This hill that runs, is to the west of the Tyropoeon Valley and the Hinnom Valley.
- The second quarter: Between the first and second city walls.
- New City or Bezetha: Between the second third wall, so these would both be extensions out to the north of the city.

- **Major Buildings**

- The temple complex consisted of a platform with the courts, the outer court of the Gentiles, the court of the women, the court of the men, the court of the priests, and the temple complex itself.
- Fortress Antonia
- Joppa Gate with 3 towers
- Herod's palace
- Sanhedrin building
- Hippodrome
- Theater

- **Sites Related to Jesus' Ministry**

- Pool of Bethesda
- Pool of Siloam
- Upper Room
- Caiaphas House
- Gethsemane
- Calvary or Golgotha

Quote Highlights:

- "For the Synoptic Gospels, this is that of Israel in New Testament times."
- "We have the Mediterranean, we have the coastal plain, we have the Shephelah or low rolling hills, we have the hill country, we have the rift valley, and then the Transjordan Plateau."
- "After the death of Herod the Great, when his territory was split up under his will, this was ruled by Herod Antipas, and he shows up in the Gospel accounts..."
- "One of the reasons Herod is called Herod the Great is not because of his great personality but because of his great building activities..."

Significance for Understanding the Gospels:

- The lecture provides the geographical context necessary for understanding the locations and movements of Jesus and other figures in the Gospels.
- Understanding the terrain helps explain travel routes, military strategies, and agricultural practices mentioned in the biblical text.
- Knowing the political divisions sheds light on the authority structures and power dynamics at play during Jesus' ministry.
- Knowledge of Jerusalem's geography enhances comprehension of events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

This briefing document should provide a solid foundation for understanding the geographical context of the Synoptic Gospels based on Dr. Newman's lecture.

4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10, Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem

Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels

Study Guide

I. Major Regions of Palestine (West to East)

1. **The Mediterranean Sea:** The western boundary, influencing climate and trade.
2. **Coastal Plain:** A flat, fertile strip along the Mediterranean, also known as the Plain of Sharon.
3. **Shephelah (Lowlands):** Rolling hills and wide valleys between the coastal plain and the hill country.
4. **Central Hill Country:** Sharp hills and V-shaped valleys, the backbone of Palestine.
5. **Rift Valley:** A deep geological fault running north-south, including the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea.
6. **Transjordan Plateau:** Higher plateau east of the Rift Valley, transitioning into the Syrian/Arabian Desert.

II. Minor Features of Palestine (North to South)

1. **Mount Hermon:** Highest peak in the area, part of the Anti-Lebanon Range, snow-capped.
2. **Galilee:** Hilly region around the Sea of Galilee, well-watered, divided into Upper and Lower Galilee.
3. **Jezreel Valley (Plain of Esdraelon):** East-west valley connecting the coast to the Jordan Valley, separating Galilee and Samaria.
4. **Mount Carmel:** Marks the southern edge of the Jezreel Valley, forms a barrier to north-south travel.
5. **Wilderness of Judea:** Badlands area west of the Jordan River, rain shadow of the hill country, sparsely vegetated.
6. **Negev:** Arid land south of Hebron, good soil but very little rainfall, ingenuity allowed for some crop growth.

III. Major Bodies of Water

1. **Mediterranean Sea:** Western boundary, influenced trade.
2. **Sea of Galilee (Lake of Tiberias/Kinneret):** Freshwater lake fed by the Jordan River, important for fishing, prone to sudden storms.
3. **Jordan River:** Flows from Mount Hermon through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.
4. **Dead Sea (Lake Asphaltites):** Lowest point on earth, extremely salty, no fish, source of minerals.
5. **Lake Merim:** A small lake north of the Sea of Galilee, now farmland due to Israeli resettlement efforts.

IV. Political Divisions in the Time of Christ

1. **Judea:** Territory around Jerusalem, including Samaria and Idumea, ruled by various Herods and Roman procurators.
2. **Galilee:** West of the Sea of Galilee, ruled by Herod Antipas, considered a hotbed of revolutionaries.
3. **Perea:** Narrow strip east of the Jordan River, ruled by Herod Antipas.
4. **Tetrarchy of Philip (Ituraea and Trachonitis):** Multi-ethnic region northeast of the Sea of Galilee, ruled by Philip.
5. **Decapolis:** League of ten Hellenistic cities, mostly Gentile, independent of Jewish control.

V. Cities of Palestine in the First Century AD

1. **Jerusalem:** Religious capital of Judea.
2. **Caesarea (Maritima):** Roman capital, built by Herod the Great.
3. **Sebastia:** Old Testament Samaria, rebuilt by Herod and named after Augustus.
4. **Tiberias:** Capital of Galilee, built by Herod Antipas and named after Emperor Tiberius.
5. **Caesarea Philippi:** Capital of the Tetrarchy of Philip, located near the headwaters of the Jordan River.
6. **Decapolis Cities:** Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Gerasa, Philadelphia.
7. **Galilean Towns:** Nazareth, Cana, Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida.

8. **Judean Towns:** Jericho, Bethany, Bethlehem, Emmaus.

VI. Major Roads

1. **Via Maris (Way of the Sea):** Coastal highway from Egypt to Damascus.
2. **King's Highway:** Road on the Transjordan Plateau from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus.
3. **Ridge Route:** Road along the ridge of the hill country, important for Jewish pilgrims, passed through Samaria.

VII. Herodian Fortifications

1. **Machaerus:** East of the Dead Sea, palace and fortification, location of John the Baptist's execution.
2. **Masada:** West of the Dead Sea, mesa with palaces and fortifications, last stand of the Zealots during the Jewish Revolt.
3. **Herodium:** Southeast of Bethlehem, artificial hill with palace and potential site of Herod's tomb.

VIII. Geography of Jerusalem

1. **Valleys Around Jerusalem:** Hinnom Valley (Ge-Hinnom, associated with hell), Kidron Valley (east of the Temple, location of Gethsemane), Tyropoeon Valley (Cheese Makers Valley, between the Temple Mount and the upper city).
2. **Hills Around Jerusalem:** Ophel (original Jebusite city), Moriah (site of the Temple), Zion (originally Ophel or Moriah, later the Western Hill/Upper City), Mount of Olives (east of the city, site of Jesus' ascension).
3. **City Walls:** South wall (Kidron and Hinnom valleys), East wall (Kidron Valley), West wall (Hinnom Valley), North walls (three different walls built over time to protect the city from the north).
4. **Sections of the City:** City of David (Ophel Hill), Temple Mount (Mount Moriah), Lower City (Tyropoeon Valley), Upper City (Western Hill), Second Quarter (between the first and second north walls), New City/Bezetha (between the second and third north walls).
 - **Major Buildings and Structures:** Temple Complex (platform, courts, porticos).
 - Fortress Antonia (Roman garrison).

- Joppa Gate (three towers).
- Herod's Palace (potential site of Jesus' Roman trial).
- Sanhedrin Building (Hall of Hewn Stones).
- Hippodrome and Theater (locations uncertain).
- Pool of Bethesda (site of Jesus' healing).
- Pool of Siloam (site of Jesus' healing).
- Upper Room (site of the Last Supper, traditional location).
- Caiaphas House (potential site of Jesus' preliminary hearing).
- Gethsemane (olive grove).
- Calvary/Golgotha (Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Gordon's Calvary, Mount of Olives suggestion).

Quiz

1. Describe the significance of the Jezreel Valley in terms of geography and transportation.
2. What is the Rift Valley, and what major bodies of water are found within it?
3. Explain the rain shadow effect and how it impacts the climate of Palestine.
4. Name the major political divisions of Palestine during the time of Jesus and identify a key ruler associated with each.
5. What are the three major roads in Palestine during the New Testament period, and what was the significance of each?
6. What were Herod's motivations for building fortifications, and name three of his major fortifications?
7. Describe the geographical features of Jerusalem, including the valleys and hills surrounding the city.
8. Explain the function of the three successive North Walls of Jerusalem.
9. Identify at least four significant structures or buildings located within Jerusalem during the time of Jesus and describe the function of each.
10. Describe the three suggested locations of Golgotha.

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Jezreel Valley was a significant east-west valley that connected the Mediterranean coast with the Jordan Valley, separating Galilee from Samaria. Its relatively low terrain made it the easiest transportation corridor between the coast and the interior, resulting in a trade route.
2. The Rift Valley is a deep geological fault that runs north-south through Palestine. Major bodies of water found within it include the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea.
3. The rain shadow effect occurs when moist air rises over a mountain range, releases its moisture on the windward side, and descends on the leeward side, becoming warmer and drier, resulting in less rainfall. In Palestine, this impacts areas east of the central hill country.
4. The major political divisions were Judea (ruled by various Herods and Roman procurators), Galilee (ruled by Herod Antipas), Perea (ruled by Herod Antipas), the Tetrarchy of Philip (ruled by Philip), and the Decapolis (independent of Jewish control).
5. The Via Maris was a coastal highway connecting Egypt and Damascus and facilitating trade. The King's Highway ran along the Transjordan Plateau, also connecting to Damascus and facilitating trade from the south. The Ridge Route followed the hill country and was important for Jewish pilgrims traveling between Galilee and Jerusalem.
6. Herod built fortifications due to his unpopularity with the Jews and fear of Parthian invasions and possible rebellions. Three of his major fortifications were Machaerus, Masada, and Herodium.
7. Jerusalem is situated on the ridge of the hill country, surrounded by the Hinnom Valley to the west and south, the Kidron Valley to the east, and the Tyropoeon Valley between the Temple Mount and the upper city. Notable hills include the Ophel, Moriah, Zion, and the Mount of Olives.
8. The three North Walls of Jerusalem were built to protect the city from attacks from the north, where there were no natural barriers like valleys. As the city expanded, each successive wall enclosed a larger area, providing additional defense and space for suburban development.

9. The Temple Complex served as the center of Jewish religious life, including the location for ritual sacrifices. The Fortress Antonia housed the Roman garrison, which kept watch over the Temple. Herod's Palace was used by Roman governors when they were in the city. The Pool of Bethesda, according to the gospel of John, was where Jesus healed a lame man.
10. The traditional site of Golgotha is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Gordon's Calvary is another proposed site, though its historicity is debated. Ernest Martin has suggested a location on the Mount of Olives, citing typological reasons.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the role of geography in shaping the political and military history of Palestine during the Old and New Testament periods. Consider factors such as the coastal plain, hill country, and major roadways.
2. Discuss the economic significance of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River in the context of first-century Palestine. How did these bodies of water contribute to the livelihoods of the people living in the region?
3. Compare and contrast the characteristics of Galilee and Judea during the time of Jesus. How did their distinct geographical features, political situations, and populations influence Jesus' ministry?
4. Examine the ways in which Herod the Great utilized architecture and fortifications to solidify his power and influence in Palestine. How did his building projects impact the landscape and the lives of the people?
5. Assess the importance of Jerusalem's geographical location and physical features in its role as a religious, political, and cultural center during the time of Jesus. How did the city's valleys, hills, and walls contribute to its identity and significance?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Coastal Plain:** The flat, fertile land strip along the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Shephelah:** The region of rolling hills between the coastal plain and the central hill country.
- **Central Hill Country:** The mountainous region forming the backbone of Palestine.
- **Rift Valley:** A major geological depression extending from Lebanon to East Africa.

- **Transjordan Plateau:** The elevated region east of the Jordan River.
- **Mount Hermon:** The highest peak in the region, located north of Galilee.
- **Jezreel Valley:** A fertile east-west valley separating Galilee and Samaria.
- **Negev:** The arid southern region of Palestine.
- **Sea of Galilee:** A freshwater lake in northern Palestine, also known as Lake Tiberias.
- **Jordan River:** The primary river in Palestine, flowing from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea.
- **Dead Sea:** A highly saline lake, the lowest point on Earth.
- **Judea:** The southern region of Palestine, centered around Jerusalem.
- **Galilee:** The northern region of Palestine, known for its fertile land and Sea of Galilee.
- **Perea:** A region east of the Jordan River.
- **Decapolis:** A league of ten Hellenistic cities located primarily east of the Jordan River.
- **Via Maris:** An ancient trade route that ran along the coast of Palestine.
- **King's Highway:** An ancient trade route located east of the Jordan River.
- **Herodium:** A fortress and palace built by Herod the Great.
- **Masada:** An ancient fortress located on a high plateau overlooking the Dead Sea.
- **Hinnom Valley (Ge-Hinnom):** A valley bordering Jerusalem, later associated with hell.
- **Kidron Valley:** A valley east of Jerusalem, separating the city from the Mount of Olives.
- **Tyropoeon Valley:** A valley that once bisected Jerusalem, now largely filled in.
- **Mount of Olives:** A prominent hill east of Jerusalem.
- **Ophel:** The ancient city of David, located south of the Temple Mount.
- **Moriah:** The hill upon which the Temple was built in Jerusalem.

- **Zion:** A term initially referring to the city of David, later applied to Jerusalem as a whole.
- **Fortress Antonia:** A Roman fortress located adjacent to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
- **Calvary/Golgotha:** The site of Jesus' crucifixion, located outside Jerusalem.
- **Sanhedrin:** The Jewish high court.
- **Rain Shadow:** A dry area on the leeward side of a mountain range.

5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 10, Geography of Palestine and Jerusalem, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

FAQ on the Geography of Palestine During the Time of the Synoptic Gospels

- **What are the major geographical regions of Palestine from west to east, and how does the prevailing wind direction affect their climate?**
- The major regions, moving from west to east, are: the Mediterranean Sea, the Coastal Plain (or Plain of Sharon), the Shephelah (low rolling hills), the Hill Country, the Rift Valley (containing the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, and Dead Sea), and the Transjordan Plateau. The prevailing winds from the Mediterranean bring moisture that is deposited as rainfall as the land rises towards the Hill Country. The eastern side of the Hill Country experiences a rain shadow effect, leading to drier conditions, while the Transjordan Plateau receives some moisture before transitioning into desert.
- **How did the geography of the Hill Country impact travel and agriculture in that region?**
- The Hill Country, characterized by sharp hills and v-shaped valleys, made travel along the valleys difficult, necessitating travel along the ridges. This also made the area more difficult to invade militarily. While not ideal for growing grains, the terraced slopes of the limestone hills were suitable for growing olives and grapes.
- **What is the significance of the Rift Valley in Palestine, and what are its key features?**
- The Rift Valley is a significant geological fault running north to south through Palestine, encompassing the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is notably the lowest point on Earth, significantly below sea level. The valley's climate is generally hot and arid, requiring irrigation for agriculture, but the Jordan River provides some water.

- **What are the main geographical features going from north to south in Palestine, and how did they influence life in the region?**
- Key features include Mount Hermon, a high, snow-covered peak in the north; the Galilee region, known for its relatively high rainfall and fertile land; the Jezreel Valley (or Plain of Esdraelon), an east-west valley that serves as an important transportation corridor; the Wilderness of Judea, a barren area with limited vegetation; and the Negev, an arid land in the south where inhabitants developed innovative techniques to concentrate water for crop cultivation.
- **What were the main bodies of water in and around Palestine, and what were their uses and characteristics?**
- The Mediterranean Sea was to the west, used primarily by others while the Israelites acted more as middlemen in trade. The Sea of Galilee (or Lake Tiberias/Kinneret) was a freshwater lake used for fishing, but prone to sudden, fierce storms due to its topography and climate. The Jordan River flowed from Mount Hermon through the Sea of Galilee and into the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea, extremely salty and devoid of fish, was a source of minerals and salts.
- **What were the major political divisions of Palestine during the ministry of Jesus, and who were their rulers?**
- The major political divisions included Judea (ruled by Roman procurators or Herod Agrippa I at different times), Galilee (ruled by Herod Antipas and then Roman procurators/Herod Agrippa I), Perea (ruled by the same rulers as Galilee), the Tetrarchy of Philip (ruled by Philip and then Roman procurators/Herod Agrippa I), and the Decapolis (a league of Hellenistic cities that was independent of Jewish control).
- **What were some of the most important cities in Palestine during the first century AD, and what were their main characteristics?**
- Key cities included Jerusalem (the Jewish religious capital), Caesarea (the Roman capital, built by Herod the Great), Sebastia (Old Testament Samaria, rebuilt by Herod), Tiberias (built by Herod Antipas as the capital of Galilee), and Caesarea Philippi (built by Philip northeast of the Sea of Galilee). Several Decapolis cities, such as Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Gerasa, and Philadelphia, were also significant.

- **What were the major roads in Palestine during the New Testament period, and how did they impact travel and trade?**
- The Via Maris (Way of the Sea) was a coastal highway running north-south. The King's Highway ran along the Transjordan Plateau, also north-south. The Ridge Route followed the ridge of the Hill Country and was primarily used by Jews traveling between Galilee and Jerusalem. These roads facilitated trade and travel, with the Ridge Route being particularly important for religious pilgrimages, though it passed through Samaria, which some Jews avoided.