

The figure of the young Helios in his chariot, or *quadriga*, is also known from the mosaic floor in the synagogue at Beth Alpha in the Beth-Shean valley south of Hammath Tiberias, among other sites (see Slide 120). The god drives his chariot above the sea, his curly hair circled by the rayed crown of the sun. His right arm is raised in blessing, and his left arm holds the orb of the universe, emblem of his sovereign power. He wears the purple *paludamentum*, the cloak of the caesars, with a long-sleeved, girdled tunic beneath. His chariot and horses were destroyed by construction of the later wall. Perhaps this figure was acceptable to the Jewish community because of Psalm 19:1-6, which compares the sun to a young bridegroom. In other words, they may have viewed the figure as an astral image and not as a deity.