I. Introduction

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Galilee in antiquity was a forested, mountainous area in northern Israel, roughly circular in shape and barely 46 miles from north to south by 40 miles from east to west.

The northern boundary of Galilee was the Litani River, then known as the Tyrian River, today's Nahr el-Kasimiyeh in southern Lebanon. The Huleh Valley and the Jordan Valley (including the Sea of Galilee) mark the eastern boundary, while the southern boundary is the Nazareth fault. At the Nazareth fault the mountain ridges of Lower Galilee give way to the Plain of Jezreel, sometimes counted as part of Galilee in antiquity and sometimes not. The Mediterranean is Galilee's western boundary.

Galilee is naturally divided into Upper and Lower Galilee. Upper Galilee is a mountainous plateau, once heavily forested, whose major peak is called today Mt. Meiron, or the Jebel Jarmuq (see Slide 109). Mt. Meiron rears up just short of 4,000 feet above sea level. The largest and most important biblical city in Upper Galilee was "Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali" (Joshua 20:7). The deep gorge of the Litani River separates Mt. Meiron from the mountains of Lebanon. A steep slope on the south side of Mt. Meiron divides upper from Lower Galilee.

Lower Galilee is a series of low mountain ridges that run from east to west for about 20 miles from the Plain of Acco to the Sea of Galilee. Four valleys cut the wide expanses between the ridges. The biblical names of the valleys and ridges are unknown, but from north to south they are known today as the Valley of Beth Hakerem, the Valley of Sakhnin, the Valley of Beth Netopha and the Valley of Turan. Biblical Ramah (Joshua 19:36) is in the Valley of Beth Hakerem, biblical Hannathon (Joshua 19:14) guards the western end of the Valley of Beth Netopha and the extinct volcano known as the Horns of Hattin (see Slide 132) stands at the east end of the Valley of Turan. Perhaps the biblical Adamah of Naphtali (Joshua 19:36) was located on the Horns of Hattin. New Testament Nazareth (see Slides 133-134) stood in a natural bowl on the south edge of Lower Galilee on the descent to the Plain of Jezreel (see Slide 4).

The Plain of Jezreel is a small, triangular valley connecting the coastal plain to the Jordan Valley. It is about 15 miles east to west by 11 miles north to south. On its western side were several biblical cities (from south to north): Ibleam (Joshua 17:11), Taanach (1 Kings 4:12), Megiddo (Judges 5:19) (see Slides 26-33) and Jokneam (Joshua 19:11). The River Kishon cut across the middle of the plain westward to empty into the Mediterranean Sea, south of Acco (see Slides 128-131). The most prominent landmark at the east end of the plain of Jezreel is Mt. Tabor (see Slides 6-7), the highest elevation in Lower Galilee at 1,929 feet above sea level. The Spring of Harod (Judges 7:1) flows eastward through the Beth-Shean Valley to the Jordan River east of Mt. Tabor, the Hill of Moreh and Mt. Gilboa.

At the eastern side of the Galilee, the terrain descends suddenly from 1,500 feet above

sea level to 686 feet below sea level at the sea of Galilee, or Chinnereth (see Slide 1). Ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee once stood a freshwater lake known as Lake Huleh (see Slide 139), now almost completely drained. Southwest of Lake Huleh once stood the biblical city of Hazor (see Slides 22-25). The western shore of the Sea of Galilee contained some of the most important cities of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

There has been human occupation in Galilee for thousands of years. The old Stone age, or Paleolithic (25,000-10,000 B.C.), is well represented in western Galilee. Early Bronze (3150-2200 B.C.) and Middle Bronze (2200-1550 B.C.) peoples founded mighty cities and worked the rich soil. In 1468 B.C. Pharaoh Thutmosis III of Egypt claimed that he sacked 23 of these cities in Galilee and 96 others in the rest of Canaan. He referred in an inscription at Thebes to the great northern Galilean city of Kedesh as “Galilee.” This is the first historical mention of Galilee and the first mention outside the Bible.

From the time of the conquest by Joshua and the Israelites, Galilee was associated with the tribes of Asher, Naphatali, Issachar and Zebulun. These tribes were soon under attack by Jabin, king of Hazor (in the Huleh Valley), who headed a coalition of Canaanite kings (Judges 4:2-24). The Israelite Judge Deborah mustered a volunteer army from the northern tribes and defeated Jabin decisively, apparently within the tribal territory of Issachar (Joshua 11) in eastern Lower Galilee. During the 11th century B.C., Gideon, the son of Joash of the tribe of Manasseh, drove off the marauding Midianites with 300 picked Israelites (Judges 7).

Galilee--and the rest of Israel--encompassed its greatest area in about 1000 B.C. under David, who apparently subdued the coastal plain around Acco and added this area to western Galilee. David organized his kingdom into 12 administrative districts, naming each one after a tribe. The Galilee included Naphatali, Zebulun, Issachar and parts of Asher (1 Chronicles 27:18-19). This was also the period of the levitical cities, which belonged to the tribe of Levi. Sixteen of them were located in Galilee (Joshua 21:1; 1 Chronicles 6:39-66). Under David’s son, Solomon, the territory of Galilee contracted when Solomon paid his debt to Hiram, king of Tyre, by handing over 20 Galilean cities in Asher to pay for Hiram’s assistance with his building programs (1 Kings 9:12).

In 921 B.C. Israel was divided into two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The Galilean cities threw in their lot with Jeroboam, king of the northern territory of Israel (1 Kings 12:20). Shortly after Jeroboam came to power in 921 B.C., Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt invaded Judah and Israel, sacking 150 cities, six of which were in Galilee (2 Chronicles 12:2-9).

The high point of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. in Galilee was marked by the career of Elijah, and the low point was marked by Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 17-21). About 885 B.C. Ben-Hadad I of Damascus invaded and reduced “all the land of Naphtali” (1 Kings 15:18-20; 2 Chronicles 16:2-5), a reference to eastern Galilee. In 841 B.C. Shalmaneser III of Assyria attacked the forces of King Hoshea at Mt. Carmel (2 Kings 17:3). Shortly thereafter Isaiah described Galilee as “Galilee of the nations”

(Isaiah 9:1), evidently referring to a dominant non-Jewish population. Finally in 732 B.C., the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser IIII captured 13 cities in Galilee and made “all the land of Naphtali” one of his own provinces (2 Kings 15:29). He exiled the inhabitants of these northernmost cities in Galilee to Syria and Mesopotamia.

The kingdom of Israel continued to exist, however, in a much smaller form for another decade. Scholars are unsure whether Shalmaneser V or his successor Sargon II applied the finishing blow, but in any case the Assyrian army captured the Israelite kingdom’s capital city, Samaria, in 722/721 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah, based in Jerusalem, would itself be destroyed by the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

We know very little of the subsequent history of Galilee until the time of Alexander the Great, about 335-331 B.C. As Alexander advanced toward Egypt southward along the coast after his victory over Darius at Issus in Asia Minor, Tyre fell before his siege, but Acco gave up without a fight. Foreign elements and the Greek language now began to dominate Galilee, especially from the coast inward. Galilee was not to gain a significant Jewish population again until after the Maccabean revolt (165 B.C.). Judas Artisobulus I, king of Judea (the Greek name for Judah) for less than one year, conquered and annexed Galilee, but not Acco, about 104 B.C. His successor and brother, Alexander Jannaeus, ruled until 76 B.C. apparently pushing the borders of Galilee all the way to those of Phoenicia on the north and to the territory of the city of Ptolemais (Acco) on the west. The latter existed as a free city. The Galilee now administered by Alexander Jannaeus was less than half the size of the Galilee of King David about 1,000 years earlier.

When Rome annexed the Jewish state in 63 B.C., the Roman proconsul in Syria set up five governing councils, or *synedria*, in Judea, one of which was located at Sepphoris (see Slides 104-108) in the center of Lower Galilee. Eventually Galilee and the rest of the Jewish nation fell to the rule of Herod the Great in 37 B.C. At Herod’s death in 4 B.C., his son Herod Antipas became tetrarch of Galilee and of the area beyond the Jordan called Perea, ruling until 39 A.C. This is the period of the ministry of Jesus in Capernaum and its environs.

The ministry of Jesus in Galilee occupied perhaps one year, though estimates vary. He began his ministry at abut 30 years of age, according to Luke 3:23. He left Nazareth (see Slides 133-134), his home village, to take up residence in Capernaum (Mark 2:1) (see Slides 86-93), a frontier town between the realms of Herod Antipas and his half-brother Herod Philip, and therefore a town with a customs post (Matthew 9:9).

Many events associated with Jesus in the New Testament are set in the Galilee. At Capernaum Jesus called his first disciples (Matthew 4:18-22), preached and healed in the local synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-38), taught the people (Matthew 17:24-27) and healed an official’s son (John 4:46-54). Capernuam became “his own city” (Matthew 9:1). From Capernaum he returned to visit Nazareth, where his sermon was not heard gladly (Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:53-58; Luke 4:16-30). He visited Cana in the

Valley of Beth Netopha, where he changed water to wine (John 2:11) and, on a second visit, healed the son of a “king’s man” (John 4:46). From Capernuam he visited Nain in the Plain of Jezreel, a little over six miles south-southeast of Nazareth. At Nain he healed the widow’s son (Luke 7:11-17). He also visited Chorazin (see Slides 94-99), just two miles north of Capernuam, but the details of that visit are not recorded (Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13). From Capernaum his ministry extended to Bethsaida, at the foot of the cliffs of the Golan Heights east of the Jordan, where he healed a blind man (Mark 8:22) and fed 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17). Jesus’ only excursion outside Galilee, aside from journeys to Jerusalem, was a trip from Capernaum to the territory of Tyre, Sidon and Caesarea Philippi, detouring through the Decapolis, or league of ten cities, on his return (Mark 7:24-31).

Galilee passed into relative obscurity after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. The 24 priestly “courses,” or family divisions who were assigned temple duties by lot, fled to Galilee following the destruction and settled in 24 different cities and villages there. The area was dominated by its largest cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias (see Slide 3), though Upper Galilee may have functioned as a kind of refuge. Christianity became the dominant religion from the fourth century A.D., usually understood to be the beginning of the Byzantine period, but Jewish villages and Jewish populations in the main cities maintained a vigorous life. The Arabs invaded in 637 A.D. They continued Byzantine government but eventually changed the name of the Galilee to Urdun (Jordan), after its main eastern boundary and the topographical center.

The slides that follow are arranged, for the most part, chronologically, with general views at the beginning. Readers will recognize that some localities mentioned in the Bible were occupied over several centuries. In that case, all the slides for that site appear in the dominant period. Sites from the Golan Heights are included, even though the Golan is outside the boundaries of the Galilee. Certain Golan sites that are included had a close relationship with the cities of the Galilee in the early Roman period.

II. General Views

[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA1: Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee is called the Chinnereth, or Kinneret, in Hebrew. This is the largest freshwater lake of Israel. It is about 13 miles long and about 7 1/2 miles across. Its maximum depth is less than 150 feet, but its surface lies 686 feet below sea level. The Jordan River feeds the lake from the north and various rivulets and springs feed directly into the lake, especially in winter. Some of the most important cities of the Old and New Testaments lie on its shores: Canaanite Beth Yerah (Hellenistic Philoteria) on the southwest beside the outlet of the Jordan, Roman Hammath Tiberias (Israelite Hammath) (see Slides 80-85), Roman Tiberias (Israelite Rakkat), Roman Gennesaret, Roman Magdala-Taricheae, Israelite Chinnereth, Roman Capernaum (see Slides 86-93), Roman Bethsaida-Julias, Roman Hippos-Susita (see Slides 58-60) and Byzantine

Kursi (see Slides 102 and 103).

GA2: Boats on the Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee has been exploited for its edible fish ever since human beings occupied its shores. In the Bible the people of Naphtali took its western and southern shores (Joshua 19:35), leaving Gad the southeast. The Arameans of Damascus conquered the entire region early in the ninth century B.C.E. (1 Kings 15:20), but Ahab (874-853 B.C.E.) regained the territory (1 Kings 20:26-34). Tiglath-pileser III took the region for Assyria (2 Kings 15:29) in 732 B.C.E. Of course the lake is famous as the setting of much of the ministry of Jesus. He called his first disciples here (Matthew 4:18-22). He fed the 5,000 apparently on the northwest shores of the lake (Luke 9:10-17). At Gennesaret sick people asked to touch the hem of his garment to be healed (Matthew 14:34-36). At Kursi on the eastern shores he healed the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). The Sea of Galilee is called Lake of Gennesaret, the Greek form of Chinnereth, in Luke 5:1.

For a view of the Arbel cliffs overlooking the Sea of Galilee, see Slide 48.

GA3: Tiberias

Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, built Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, naming it after the Roman emperor Tiberius. He founded it upon a Jewish cemetery and the small village of Rakkat (Joshua 19:35). Tiberias is not mentioned in the New Testament except as an alternative name for the Sea of Galilee, “Lake Tiberias.” In spite of its controversial origins on a cemetery, Tiberias was an important city with a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish population. Tiberias became a great Jewish intellectual center after the failure of the two Jewish revolts against Rome in 66-73 and 132-135 C.E. Rabbi Judah the Prince moved the Sanhedrin, or religious court, to Tiberias about 200 C.E. At Tiberias the Palestinian (also called the Jerusalem) Talmud was completed about 400 C.E. By the sixth century C.E. in Tiberias the pointing of the Hebrew text of the Bible to indicate vowels and the cantillation to designate melody were completed. A Christian church was built here for the first time in the fourth century C.E. Many synagogues and churches were here when the Moslem armies took the city peacefully in 637 C.E. Tiberias changed hands several times during the Crusades, but in 1247 it passed into the hands of the Sultan of Egypt. Most of the towers and ancient buildings to be seen today in Tiberias, such as this well-preserved portion of a medieval castle, date from this time or later.

GA4: Plain of Jezreel

This view of well-tended fields amid the gently rolling countryside is of the Plain of Jezreel, which takes its name from a biblical city of that name west of Beth-Shean (Joshua 19:18; 1 Kings 4:12, 18:45; 2 Kings 10:7). Its Greek name was the Valley of Esdraelon. The plain extended from Mt. Carmel (see Slide 5) and Megiddo (see Slides 26-33) on the west to Mt. Gilboa and the Beth-Shean Valley (see Slides 72-76) on the cast. At the northern end of the plain, one encounters the hills of Lower Galilee at the Nazareth fault. Its southern tip is located at biblical Taanach (Joshua 12:21). The River Kishon flows through the plain from east to west, emptying into the Mediterranean north of Haifa and south of Acco (Judges 4:7). The western end of the plain is sometimes called the Plain of Megiddo after the city of that name. Several decisive battles of the

biblical period were fought here. The great debacle of the Canaanites under King Jabin of Hazor by Deborah and the northern tribes took place in the west end of the plain (Judges 4-5) (see Slides 6 and 7). The Plain of Jezreel is the setting of the great rout of the Israelites under Saul by the Philistines under Achish (1 Samuel 31:1-7). At Megiddo in the Plain of Jezreel, Pharaoh Necho killed King Josiah of Israel (2 Kings 23:28-30). Finally the New Testament places the last battle--Armageddon--at Megiddo (Revelation 16:16).

GA5: Mt. Carmel, the Muckraka

Mt. Carmel is the northwestern extension of the mountains of Samaria. The Carmel ridge, whose Canaanite name means "Vineyard of El," rises to a height of 1,732 feet above sea level. According to Joshua 19:26, Mt. Carmel forms the southwest boundary of Asher. The River Kishon flows through the Plain of Jezreel and past the foot of Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:40). The limestone block that forms the mountain favors the formation of caves, many of which are to be found on its south slopes. Remains of human habitation in caves on the Carmel date to as early as 54,000 B.C.E. (see Slide 14). Its dense greenery, rich soil and wooded inclines led several biblical authors to use Carmel as a symbol of beauty (Jeremiah 50:19; Isaiah 35:2; Song of Songs 7:5). According to 1 Kings 18:17-46, the priests of Baal set up a Canaanite altar to Baal on top of Mt. Carmel. Elijah challenged the 450 prophets of Baal and decisively defeated them at Mt. Carmel. At the end of the account Elijah girded up his loins and ran before King Ahab's chariot to the entrance of the Plain of Jezreel (1 Kings 18:46).

The extreme west end of the Plain of Jezreel, seen here from Mt. Carmel, is called in Arabic the Muckraka, or the place of running, commemorating the victory of Elijah. On the east end of Mt. Carmel is the Cave of the Prophet Elijah, venerated by Christians, and the cave at the Mosque of el-Khader, venerated by Sephardic Jews, Christians and Moslems. The latter cave was cleaned in 1967 and found to contain about 100 graffiti in Greek and one in Hebrew dating from the fourth to the sixth centuries C.E.

GA6: Mt. Tabor

Mt. Tabor, in the background of this view, marks the southern limit of Lower Galilee. It stands 1,200 feet above the east end of the Plain of Jezreel, and its summit is 1,929 feet above sea level. Tabor is an arresting sight because it rises abruptly from the Plain of Jezreel, isolated from the other mountains of Galilee. In the Bible it is often associated with Mt. Carmel (Jeremiah 46:18) or Mt. Hermon (see Slide 9) (Psalms 89:12). Also in the Bible, Mt. Tabor marks the spot where the tribal territories of Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali converged (Joshua 19:23, 34). In the time of the Israelite Judges (12th-11th centuries B.C.E.), Deborah and her armies, led by her general Barak, gathered at Mt. Tabor to successfully engage the Canaanite forces under Sisera (Judges 4:6, 12, 14).

For another view of Mt. Tabor, see NT66: Mount Tabor.

GA7: Mt. Tabor

Mt. Tabor has a commanding appearance in Lower Galilee. Therefore it should be no surprise that there may have been a Canaanite sanctuary on top Mt. Tabor (Hosea 5:1). Early in the Hasmonean period (from 152 B.C.E.), the Ptolemaic rulers built a fortress

on top Mt. Tabor. Later the Jewish king Alexander Jannaeus, who ruled from 103 to 76 B.C.E., conquered Mt. Tabor and its fortress (Josephus, *War* 2.573). During the Byzantine period (324-640 C.E.), Mt. Tabor was associated with the transfiguration (see Slide 138).

GA8: Jordan River

The name of the Jordan in Hebrew means “that which goes down.” In fact, the Jordan descends from 1,312 feet above sea level near Caesarea Philippi (ancient Paneas, or Banyas) (see Slide 47) to 686 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee. This severe drop in only 25 air miles accounts for the turbulent water that makes the Jordan not navigable, as this view shows. From the Sea of Galilee, the river then descends to 1,300 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea over a length of 65 air miles. One can imagine that lions might be seen here in the dense thickets of vegetation as in biblical times (Genesis 49:9).

GA9: Mt. Hermon

The peak of Mt. Hermon, 9,200 feet above sea level, bears snow year round. It is the southernmost peak of the Anti-Lebanese mountains. In Arabic the name is therefore Jebel et-Talj, or “Mountain of Snow.” Mt. Hermon marks the northern limit of the conquests of Joshua east of the Jordan and of the early Israelite expansion (Joshua 11:17; Judges 3:3; Deuteronomy 3:8, 4:48). Mt. Hermon towers above the Valley of the Lebanon (Joshua 11:17) and dominates the land of Mizpah where the Hivites lived (Joshua 11:3-9). According to Deuteronomy 3:9 the inhabitants of Sidon called Mt. Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites called it Senir. The name “Senir” is known in the Egyptian execration texts (curses) and in certain 16th-century B.C.E. documents from ancient Ugarit in Syria. Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria, the king to whom Israel paid tribute in the eighth century B.C.E. (2 Chronicles 28:21), knew the mountain as Saniru. A sanctuary of Baal-Hermon was built here (Judges 3:3; 1 Chronicles 5:23). In the Roman period, a temple was built on Mt. Hermon, perhaps to Zeus. The scant remains of this temple can be viewed today near the snow line.

GA10: Near the Acco-Safed Road

The richness of Galilee became proverbial, particularly in olive oil (an olive grove is shown here). An example is the blessing on the Galilean tribe of Asher: Asher shall “dip his foot in oil” (Deuteronomy 33:24). The olive was one of the seven species with which Israel was blessed: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey (Deuteronomy 8:8). In Jotham’s parable it is the first tree asked to rule over all the others, and by its fatness gods and men are honored (Judges 9:8-9). Samuel warns that fields, vineyards and olive orchards will suffer confiscation by a monarch (1 Samuel 8:14). The Bible uses the olive tree as a proverbial designation for beauty: “his beauty shall be like the olive” (Hosea 14:6; also Jeremiah 11:16). On the other hand the destruction of the olive tree was a sure sign of disaster, like the destruction of the vineyard or the fig (Deuteronomy 28:40; Amos 4:9; Habakkuk 3:17; Haggai 2:19).

At other places in the Bible it is said of the Galilean tribes that the land of Asher is so fertile that “Asher’s food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties” (Genesis 49:20). Naphtali will be fertile “and bear comely fawns” (Genesis 49:21). Likewise the land of Issachar is “pleasant” (Genesis 49:15). Adding to the region’s beauty are the spring

poppy flowers that bloom throughout the area.

GA11: Waterfall in Upper Galilee

Near Metullah a winter stream falls down an embankment in Upper Galilee. During the winter months it rains in excess of 36 inches in much of Upper Galilee, so scenes like this are not rare. Only in the dry summer do the fields turn yellow from the sun, but ready to harvest (John 4:35).

GA12: Nahal Dalioth

The Nahal Dalioth is a deep ravine, or wadi, bounding the hill of Gamla in the Golan Heights. In this slide, we look across the ravine from Gamla toward the Sea of Galilee. That is, this is a view to the west and south from Gamla. The foreground is the Golan Heights.

GA13: Yarmuk River

The Yarmuk (or Jarmuk in English), in the lower right of this slide, is the largest and swiftest tributary of the Jordan River. It enters the Jordan about four miles south of the Sea of Galilee. The Yarmuk forms the natural boundary between Bashan to the north, of which Golan is a part, and Gilead to the south. Today the southern end of the Yarmuk marks the place where the borders of Syria, Israel and Jordan meet. One source of the Yarmuk is the springs of Bashan in upper Transjordan. Bashan was famous in the Bible for its lush oak forests (Isaiah 2:13; Ezekiel 27:6) and rich pastures (Deuteronomy 32:14; Jeremiah 50:19). A second source of the Yarmuk is rivulets in the Hauran, the northeastern part of Transjordan. The Hauran stands on the border of the country described by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47:15-18). The Yarmuk is not mentioned in the Bible, but figures often in the Talmud, the definitive collection of Jewish law and teachings (the Talmud was compiled in two versions; the Palestinian Talmud was completed in the mid-fifth century C.E., and the Babylonian Talmud was completed in the mid-sixth century C.E.).

III. Before the Hebrews
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GA14: Mt. Carmel Caves

Mt. Carmel is famous among archaeologists for the prehistoric caves on its south flank. Shown here are three of the most well known. From right to left one sees the Cave of the Oven (Mugharet ha-Tannur) with the great archaeological dump in front, the Cave of the Kid (Mugharet es-Sukhul) and the Cave of the Valley (Mugharet el-Wad) almost concealed behind the trees at extreme left. Excavations in these caves began in 1929 under the direction of Dorothy Garrod on behalf of the British School of Archaeology. In the Cave of the Oven, one Neanderthal skeleton and one jawbone were found. In the Cave of the Kid, about ten skeletons were found in ancient burials. Some researchers have identified these as Cro-Magnon, while others have insisted that they are intermediate between Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon (both groups emerged between 125,000 and 100,000 years ago). Thousands of stone tools were found, and Carbon-14 dates of 52,000 years Before Present were calculated for the Mousterian cultures, which used these tools. Natufian remains of human burials were dated to 10,000 to

7500 B.C.E.

GA15: Chalcolithic Burial Urn

During the Chalcolithic period (4000-3150 B.C.E.), reburials sometimes took place in large urns or ossuaries (a vessel for reburial of bones), such as this one from the Hazorea Archaeological Museum in western Galilee. Often infants were buried beneath the floors of houses as though the family wanted them close by the living members of the household. The top of this urn has a large, open mouth so that the skull can fit into it. The figure of a human being is modeled in relief on one side. In front of the urn are the remains of a jaw that were found in it.

GA16: Yiftael, House Foundations

In Lower Galilee, about 4 1/2 miles west of Sepphoris, is the ancient site of Yiftael. This is the best preserved Chalcolithic and Early Bronze I (3150-2850 B.C.E.) village in the Galilee. The round or elliptical houses contain a single room about 15 feet in diameter. A stone base for a wooden pillar lies in the center of each house. Next to the pillar base was often found a roughly square, flat stone with two holes. What the ancient villagers used this stone for is unknown. Pre-pottery Neolithic (8300-6300 B.C.E.) remains were also found here.

GA17: Stone Circles in the Golan

Some of the most puzzling remains in the Near East are found in the Golan Heights. These mysterious, concentric circles of ruined stone walls are to be seen at Rujum el-Hiri. The cairn, or heap of stones, in the center still stands some 20 feet in height, and the whole measures about 500 feet across the diameter of the largest circle. No one is certain what these circles were used for, and their reuse by later nomads has made these remains difficult to understand. Their date remains unknown until they are excavated, but speculation today places these circles in the Early Bronze II period (2850-2650 B.C.E.) because the earliest pottery found at the site is of that date.

GA18: Natufian Carved Bone

The Natufian culture is named for the Wadi Natuf between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv where it was first studied. The Natufian period had its beginnings about 10,000 B.C.E. These people lived in caves or in groups of small, round houses made of mudbrick. They participated in one of the great revolutions that changed human beings forever: the transition from food gathering to agriculture. Their art, which was both naturalistic and schematic, includes this polished, incised and carved bone depicting a young deer. It was probably a sickle shaft. The piece is about 4 1/4 inches long and is from one of the best-known Natufian sites, the Cave of el-Wad on Mt. Carmel.

GA19: Stone Dolmen

Dolmens are known in Europe as well as in the Near East, but their exact nature and function are still debated. At its simplest, a dolmen is simply a huge table formed of three gigantic stones, such as this one found near Gamla in the Golan Heights. Other dolmens are constructed of several of these tables lined up in an arc. Thousands of dolmens are known in the eastern Transjordan area, including the Golan Heights, and also in eastern Galilee. Archaeologists sometimes find burials beneath them, and sometimes one must remove a huge cairn of stones to investigate the interior. They

usually date to Early Bronze IV or Middle Bronze I periods (2350-2000 B.C.E.).

GA20: Burial at Achzib

Biblical Achzib was a Canaanite city on the Mediterranean coast about 11 miles north of Acco. As early as the Middle Bronze IIB period (1850-1750 B.C.E.), a strongly fortified city stood here. This slide shows an ordinary citizen's burial from that period. The black-and-white stick at left is 1 meter long, equal to just over 39 inches. Unknown attackers destroyed Achzib at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, or about 1550 B.C.E. Eventually, at the beginning of the Iron Age, the city belonged to the Israelite tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:29). The Asherites, however, did not drive out the inhabitants of Achzib (Judges 1:31-32). The later, Israelite city of the tenth and ninth centuries B.C.E. expanded to a full 20 acres, a respectable size in the ancient world, and was only abandoned in the third century B.C.E. There is evidence of strong Phoenician (Punic) influence in the archaeological remains of Israelite Achzib, including in the burials. Under the Greeks and Romans it was known as Ecdippa. During this late period in the first century C.E., ancient Jewish literature mentions Ecdippa as the northern border of Israel.

GA21: Nahariya "Horned Goddess" Mold

This stone mold (at right) for casting a bronze figurine of a "Horned Goddess," probably Astarte, was found at Nahariya. This is an open mold, the simplest mold of all, into which the molten bronze is poured, "poled," or stirred with green twigs, then allowed to cool with a cover to prevent formation of an oxide. The mixture of about 12 percent tin and 89 percent copper melts at about 1000 °F and usually requires a charcoal fire.

The excavations at this Mediterranean coastal site revealed a temple of the Hyksos period (17th-16th centuries B.C.E.) and a striking Canaanite High Place about 45 feet in diameter. Numerous animal bones revealed the practice of animal sacrifices. Other furniture of the temple cult included pottery bowls with seven cups, miniature offering vessels, jewelry, hundreds of beads, animal figurines and many bronze and silver figurines of women. The figurine to the left is a modern cast from the mold revealing the artistic detail of Middle Bronze Canaanite art.

For other cultic remains, see Slides 23, 24, 29, 30, 33 and 46.

IV. Iron Age, Persian and Hellenistic Periods (1200-63 B.C.E.)
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA22: Hazor, Aerial View

Hazor was one of the largest and most important cities of ancient Canaan and played a prominent role in Joshua's conquests. The site is in the extreme north of Israel in that finger of land that extends north between the Golan Heights and Lebanon. Hazor is really in two parts, as this view shows. The mound, or upper city (the bottle-shaped mound at left center, within the bend of the road) occupies about 30 acres, while the lower city, the great enclosure to the east (at center), covers fully 175 acres. Hazor first appears in Egyptian execration texts (curses) of about 1900 B.C.E. it also appears in

the Mari letters from the Mesopotamian city of Babylon of the 18th century B.C.E., in Egyptian documents of the New Kingdom (1567-1085 B.C.E.) and especially in the 14th-century B.C.E. el-Amarna correspondence of the kings of Canaan with Pharaoh Amenhotep III of Egypt.

A coalition of Canaanite kings under Jabin, king of Hazor, engaged in an unsuccessful war against Joshua (Joshua 11:15). Joshua conquered the city (Joshua 11:10-13, " … and he burnt Hazor with fire"). Later, according to 1 Kings 9:15, Solomon rebuilt Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor. Tiglath-pileser III, the king of Assyria from 745-727 B.C.E., conquered the city in 732 B.C.E. during the general destruction of Israel, according to 2 Kings 15:29. Finally, in 1 Maccabees 11:67, Jonathan Maccabee and his army camped on the plain of Hazor near Cadasa (ancient Kedesh).

GA23: Hazor, Shrine of the Stelae

One of the most exciting discoveries from the southwestern corner of the lower city of ancient Hazor was this intact shrine from the Holy of Holies of a small, broadhouse temple (that is, it is entered on the long side rather than the narrow side). This is a Late Canaanite or Late Bronze II temple of the 13th century B.C.E. Eight tall standing stones, or stelae, carved from basalt provide a focus for the worshipper. The central standing stone depicts two suppliant hands engraved with a lunar crescent and circle between and above the hands. To the right stands a massive stone (an orthostat), originally from the temple's porch, displaying a lion carved with artistic skill in low relief. To the left a statuette of a man or god sits on his throne, or chair, holding a cup. According to the excavator of Hazor, Yigael Yadin, the shrine was destroyed by Joshua in a general conflagration in the 13th century B.C.E. (Joshua 11:10-13).

GA24: Hazor, Cult Mask

The excavations at Hazor unearthed some of the finest examples of Canaanite religious and cultic materials. This pottery mask of the 14th century B.C.E. (the el-Amarna period) was found in the southwestern corner of the lower city in a potter's workshop. It resembles another found at the eastern edge of the lower city. The potter's shop stood near the small, broadhouse stelae temple (see Slide 23). The exact use of the mask is unknown. The mask was attached to the head by a string, which fit through the holes visible next to the ears and on the forehead.

GA25: Upper City of Hazor

This view to the northeast in the upper city of Hazor shows the excavations in the center of the mound. This was the site of John Garstang's soundings in 1928, but the slide shows the results of Yigael Yadin's excavations from 1955 to 1958. The pillared building in the center is a storehouse of the Omride dynasty of the ninth century B.C.E. Barely visible in the trench beyond the narrow end of the pillared building are the foundations of the earlier casemate wall, constructed of two parallel walls separated into rooms by perpendicular divider walls. The ninth century B.C.E. was a period of major building activity at Israelite Hazor that included the construction of the city water tunnel providing hidden access to the spring water at Hazor. In the foreground to the right are large rooms from the city of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.E.), when this entire area became a residential quarter with shops and stores. Yadin believed that the city was destroyed by an earthquake during Jeroboam's last days (Amos 1:1). Snowcovered Mt. Hermon, on

the border between Israel, Lebanon and Syria, is visible in the background.

GA26: Megiddo, Aerial View

This view to the south shows Tell Mutesellim, identified as ancient Megiddo, which lies at the western end of the Plain of Jezreel and east of Haifa. This view shows mainly the exposure from the excavations of the University of Chicago under Fisher, Guy and Loud from 1925 to 1939. Excavations showed that the occupation at Megiddo goes back to the Pre-pottery Neolithic period of the second half of the fifth millennium B.C.E. On the other hand, the earliest mention of Megiddo is in the annals of Pharaoh Thutmosis III, who defeated a Canaanite army at Megiddo in 1468 B.C.E. The city appears in the el-Amarna correspondence of the 14th century B.C.E., and it looms large in the Bible. Megiddo was among the cities of Canaan not conquered by the Israelites (Judges 1:27), and it is mentioned in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:19). Solomon fortified Megiddo (1 Kings 9:15) and named his fifth administrative district after it (1 Kings 4:12). King Ahaziah of Judah died there in a battle with King Jehu of Israel (2 Kings 9:27). Megiddo fell to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria in 732 B.C.E. and became the capital of an Assyrian province. In the New Testament Megiddo survives in the Book of Revelation as Armageddon, the site of the last great battle at the Last Judgment (Revelation 16:16).

The water system described in Slide 31 is seen here as the deep round hole and long shaft in upper right. The grain silo (see Slide 32) is the circular pit at the T formed by two intersecting foot paths.

GA27: Megiddo, Lion Seal

This is one of the most famous seals from ancient Israel. It was used to imprint an official impression onto a piece of moist clay on a document. At the top it reads in Hebrew “[Belonging] to Shema.” At the bottom, below the striding and roaring lion, it reads “Servant of Jeroboam.” Second Kings 22:12 mentions the same title for a certain Asaiah, “Servant of the King,” who served Josiah. Evidently the Shema on this seal was an important official in the entourage of King Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.E.) of Israel.

GA28: Megiddo, Ivory Plaque

Dated by the finds discovered with it to about 1140-1130 B.C.E., this plaque was found in the destruction of the Late Bronze palace. In the palace treasury a cache of about 200 ivories was found. The scene may have decorated a piece of furniture, as the left end is provided with holes for ivory pegs. To the left sits a king or prince on his throne drinking from a bowl, with two servants with animal-headed rhytons, or drinking cups, standing behind him. Before him stands a richly dressed woman offering him a lotus blossom. Behind her stands a female musician. Further to the right an armed soldier leads two nude, bound prisoners to be reviewed by the king. The figure in the chariot may be the king, portrayed in a second scene. The traditional interpretation of this setting is that it is the celebration of the king after a victorious expedition.

GA29: Megiddo, Ivory Winged Bes

Some of the most beautifully carved ivories known from the ancient Near East were discovered at Megiddo. This one is an openwork portrayal of the Egyptian god Bes, protector of pregnant women. Note that his tongue is grossly exaggerated, typical of Bes figurines. He wears the feather, or palm, headdress, has a beard and long hair and

sports wings. He wears an Egyptian kilt with a sash that hangs to the ground. Dated by the excavators to 1350-1150 B.C.E., this piece is equipped with tenons at right to attach it to a piece of furniture or a standard.

For another representation of Bes, as found at Dor, see Slide 38.

GA30: Megiddo, Horned Altars

Several horned incense altars were found at Megiddo. Some were discolored on top by fire used to burn incense. It has been suggested that these small altars were used as house altars, but two similar incense altars were found on the steps of the Holy of Holies of the Israelite sanctuary at ancient Arad, confirming their use in public worship. The excavators dated these to stratum IVA (924-732 B.C.E.), which is Ahab's city. Finding these altars greatly illuminated what a "horned altar" was, as in Exodus 27:2: "And you shall make horns for it [the altar] on its four corners …

GA31: Megiddo, Water Tunnel

The water system at Megiddo is one of the most impressive in ancient Israel. The first excavators dated it to the Late Bronze period (1400-1200 B.C.E.), but Yigael Yadin, excavating on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, showed that the water system's earliest use was during the ninth century B.C.E., perhaps by King Ahab. In order to reach the spring water from within the city walls, the ancient engineers cut a 75-foot shaft equipped with a spiral staircase, and then, from the base of the shaft, cut a horizontal tunnel 210 feet long to reach the spring water. This shaft and tunnel system provided a secure water supply to the city during times of siege.

GA32: Megiddo, Silo

This municipal grain storage pit, or silo, found in stratum III was dated by the excavators to 780-650 B.C.E. It measures 21 feet deep and about 34 feet across at the top, giving it a capacity of nearly 12,800 bushels of grain. At opposite sides of the interior were two winding staircases, presumably one for going down and a second for climbing up and out. The excavators found traces of grain and chaff in the chinks of the stones, which tells us it was not plastered when it was in use. It was likely roofed when in use, perhaps by a dome of mudbrick.

GA33: Megiddo, Canaanite Outdoor Altar

This great outdoor altar was first built and used at Megiddo during the Early Bronze Age II, or 2850-2650 B.C.E. The city then was surrounded by a mudbrick wall some 25 feet thick. This altar was the main structure in a great open-air shrine. It still stands 5 feet high. Steps lead up to the top on the east, which helps us understand a biblical injunction against the Israelites walking upon their altar (Exodus 20:26). The excavators found pottery and bones surrounding the altar, confirming its use in the local Canaanite cult. In later periods the altar was still in use and was provided with huge temples (walls of which are visible around the altar) that were used until the transition to the Middle Bronze II A period, about 2000 B.C.E.

GA34: Dor, Aerial View

This view looks north along the Mediterranean coastal plain that lies south of Mt. Carmel. The mound of Dor (with excavation sites visible) stands on the north of its

shallow, natural bay in the bottom half of the slide. We identify ancient Dor with the site of Khirbet el-Burj (Ruin of the Castle) on the Mediterranean coast about nine miles north of Caesarea. Dor is first mentioned in an Egyptian inscription of Ramesses II in the 13th century B.C.E., but excavations show that the Egyptians actually founded Dor earlier, in the 15th or 14th century B.C.E. In the Bible the king of Dor joined a coalition of Canaanite kings under Jabin, king of Hazor, in the unsuccessful war against Joshua (Joshua 11:1-2). The Israelites defeated the king of Dor (Joshua 12:23). Dor belonged to the cities of Manasseh in the territory of Asher, but the Asherites did not conquer it (Judges 1:27). According to the Egyptian tale of Wen-Amun, about 1100 B.C.E., Dor fell into the hands of the Tjeker, one of the Sea Peoples who invaded Egypt with the Peleset (Philistines). Later, when it was an Israelite city, Solomon made Dor the fourth district of his kingdom (1 Kings 4:11). The Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III destroyed the city in 732 B.C.E. with the general destruction of Israel, according to 2 Kings 15:29. But the history of Dor continued, for its name in Assyrian was used for the name of the Assyrian province west of Megiddo. Under the Persians in the sixth century B.C.E., Dor became an autonomous Sidonian colony. In the Hellenistic Period (from 332 B.C.E.) it was a Ptolemaic fortress and commercial port. The Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.) gained Dor in 103 B.C.E. by negotiation with Ptolemy Lathyrus, king of Cyprus, who subdued Dor. It became self-governing again with the coming of the Romans in 63 B.C.E.

GA35: Dor, Persian Period Figurines

Dor’s importance in the Persian period (538-332 B.C.E.) as a commercial center tends to be borne out by the find at Dor of these figurines of pregnant women. They wear Egyptian wigs and often hold one hand on their stomachs. Probably Phoenicians lived at Dor and produced these figurines, for they resemble those found at Phoenician sites in Lebanon, Cyprus and Israel in the Persian period. Scholars usually interpret figurines such as these as votive offerings to goddesses or as petitions for aid. Some similar figurines from a fourth-century B.C.E. shipwreck at Shave Zion, on the northern coast of Israel, bore the symbol of the Phoenician goddess Tanit.

GA36: Dor, Sculpture of Head

Most of the art known from Dor is Hellenistic or later in date, but it all seems to reflect a long tradition of high quality art at Dor. Here, a finely modeled head reveals both the hair style and the artistic conventions of the Hellenistic period.

GA37: Dor, Hellenistic Street

Excavations at Dor since 1980 on behalf of the Hebrew University under the direction of Ephraim Stern have revealed extensive remains of the Byzantine city (in the sixth century C.E.), and beneath that the remains of the second-century B.C.E. Hellenistic city, shown in this view. The walled city was apparently built under King Ptolemy II Philadelpheus (285-246 B.C.E.) in a Hippodamian, or checkerboard, pattern of city blocks separated by broad, well-paved streets, as in this slide. Shops open into the street on both sides, and houses and apartments stood above and behind the shops. The city was well-drained and equipped with an advanced sewage system and an aqueduct. A drain is visible cutting across the street at a low angle in the middle ground.

GA38: Dor, Head of Bes

This bone pendant is a typical depiction of Bes, the Egyptian god who protects pregnant women. It was expertly carved with feathered headdress, beard, prominent nose and extended tongue. This figure of Bes was the central ornament of a necklace that may well have adorned a young pregnant woman in Iron Age Dor.

For a Bes figurine found at Megiddo, see Slide 29.

GA39: Dan, High Place

Dan is identified with Tell Qadi at the foot of Mt. Hermon in the far north. Dan was known as Laish in the Canaanite period. It received its later name of Dan from the tribe that conquered it (Judges 18:29). Excavations show that Laish was already a prosperous Canaanite city by the end of Early Bronze II (2650 B.C.E.). The name Laish appears in the Egyptian execration texts (curses) and in the Mari documents of the 18th century B.C.E. A huge rampart surrounded the city in the Middle Bronze II B period (1750-1550 B.C.E.). A rich tomb of the 14th century B.C.E. with Mycenaean wares establishes the importance of the city in this period. Pharaoh Thutmosis III listed the city among his conquests in 1468 B.C.E. Towards the end of the 12th century B.C.E., the tribe of Dan occupied the city. In spite of the large, reused ramparts, the city was devastated in an intense conflagration in the middle of the 11th century by unknown attackers. Even so, Dan became an important religious and administrative center from the time of Jeroboam I (921-910 B.C.E.), who set up a golden calf at Dan (1 Kings 12:28-30; 2 Chronicles 11:15).

One of the most arresting architectural features ever unearthed in ancient Israel is this High Place, possibly associated with Jeroboam and certainly with Ahab. This was unearthed by the excavations of Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem under the direction of Avraham Biran. The High Place, measuring 62 by 62 feet, is surrounded by an earthen-floor courtyard and a high wall. Steps are visible that lead south and up to the top of the High Place. Associated finds included incense stands, faience figurines and large jugs with snake decorations. The High Place is not far from the spring of Dan, which wells up within the ancient city walls and is one of the two principal sources of the Jordan River.

GA40: Dan, Model of Middle Bronze Gate

A huge arched gate of mudbrick provided entrance and egress from the city through the huge Middle Bronze II ramparts. This model shows the twin towers looming over anyone approaching the city. Between the towers a true arch, dating to the mid-18th century B.C.E., changed our understanding of when the true arch was introduced in human history. Heretofore historians have cited later Near Eastern structures as the earliest use.

GA41: Dan, Steps Leading to Middle Bronze Gate

These low steps led directly to the Middle Bronze II mudbrick gate, shown here from the inside. Such a grand entrance, through which caravans approached the markets of Laish, as it was known in the Canaanite period, befitted this important city. Dating to the mid-18th century B.C.E., it is the only intact Middle Bronze Age gate known in the entire Near East. Two mudbrick towers flank a three-course archway (center, top), now sealed. One tower (upper right) is seen in this view jutting out 5 1/2 feet from the

archway. The entire gateway--the archway and the towers--is 50 feet wide and preserved to a height of about 20 feet. That this structure is so well preserved is thanks to its having been buried as part of an earthen rampart that later surrounded the entire city. The opening under the archway was also filled with earth, keeping it from collapsing during the nearly 4,000 years since it was built.

GA42: The Dancer from Dan

This clay plaque, found in 1985 in a 14th- to 13th-century B.C.E. stratum at Dan, depicts a most unusual scene. The lute player is apparently actually dancing. Usually such scenes, as in Egyptian wall paintings of the Late Bronze period, show the lute players and the dancers separately. The lute resembles those from other known portrayals in Syria and Egypt. The lute player's dress is north Syrian or Canaanite, and he may be wearing a mask. It calls to mind the story of King David, dressed in fine linen, dancing and making merry before the Ark of the Covenant as it was carried to "the city of David" (1 Chronicles 15:29).

For a Late Bronze period mask from Hazor, see Slide 24.

GA43: Inscription Identifying Dan

This bilingual inscription, with the top three lines in Greek and the last line in Aramaic, refers to someone named Zoilos who made a vow "To the God who is in Dan." The Greek word for Dan appears in the middle of the second line as DAN. The Aramaic line is probably a translation of the Greek. Certain archaic features in the Greek show that the inscription was cut about the third century B.C.E. It was probably associated with the reuse of the High Place in the early Hellenistic period (from 332 B.C.E.), when a plastered basin was added to the enclosure around the High Place; a new stone wall was also added. Dan continued to be occupied in the Roman and Byzantine periods.

GA44: Dan, Paved Street

A gate complex at Dan was built in the Israelite period (ninth century B.C.E.). It had an inner and outer gate, a stone-paved square and massive city walls. Here we look westward toward the platform at the west end of the open courtyard (see Slide 45); perhaps this was the city's "open courtyard" as mentioned in Judges 19:15 or the "square of the gate of the city" as in 2 Chronicles 32:6. This open courtyard measures about 60 feet by 30 feet. A road leads westward from here, around and to the left of the platform to a right turn up the tell, called a "royal processional route" by the excavator, Avraham Biran.

GA45: Dan, Platform at City Gate

Next to the east wall of the south guard room of the inner city gate of the Israelite period stood this structure. It stands on the west side of a paved courtyard. The view is looking west. We see a raised platform, or *bamah*, of cut limestone at lower right; perhaps it supported the throne of a king or other official. Four decorated, basalt bases for columns provided support for a canopy to protect the king or official from the sun. One such base can be seen to the left of the platform. Behind and to the right of the platform (that is, to the north) is a low bench that runs some 15 feet to the city wall. The bench may have been used by the elders of the community.

GA46: Dan, Scepter Head

An unexpected find from the 1987 excavations at Tel Dan under the direction of Avraham Biran, this scepter top came from beneath an altar in the “altar room” of the Israelite High Place. It is dated to the ninth century B.C.E. The scepter head is about 3 3/4 inches high and 1 1/2 inches in diameter. At the top are four badly corroded bronze heads, possibly lion heads. The bronze petals in the center partially obscure a silver-covered central section. Near this find were three incense shovels of iron and a jar full of the ashes of animal bones and the remains of incense. The excavator thinks this may be the top of a priest’s, or possibly a king’s, scepter.

V. Early Roman and Herodian Periods (63 B.C.E.-70 C.E.)
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA47: Banyas (Ancient Paneas)

Ancient Paneas stood at the foot of Mt. Hermon in the far north of ancient Israel. In the Roman period, this city was also known as Caesarea Philippi. Its most ancient name, Panion, reveals the worship of Pan here. An enormous cave, just west of these rock-cut niches, was evidently the focus of Pan worship in antiquity. The spring gushing forth here, one of the sources of the Jordan River, added to the sanctity of the site in antiquity. Josephus mentions a “beautiful cave” at Caesarea Philippi (*Antiquities* 14.363-364). The niches shown in the slide, cut into the bedrock just east of the cave, may have held statues to Pan. One of the Greek inscriptions on the right is dated to 87 C.E. and mentions Echo, the mountain nymph, and the god Pan. Herod the Great’s son Herod Philip inherited this city from his father and named it Caesarea in honor of Augustus Caesar. It is called Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from other cities named Caesarea, including Caesarea Maritima on the coast of Israel. According to Matthew 16:13 and Mark 8:27, Jesus visited Caesarea Philippi or its environs with his disciples.

GA48: Cliffs of Arbel

The cliffs of Arbel, overlooking the western shone of the Sea of Galilee, mark the south side of a steep valley known in Arabic as the Wadi Hammam, or the “valley of the pigeons,” after the many pigeons that nest there. In the Plain of Arbel, at the foot of the cliffs, a battle was fought in 160 B.C.E. between the Hasmoneans and Bacchides (1 Maccabees 9:2). In the caves in these cliffs, Herod the Great destroyed the remnants of the revolt against his rule, rebels who hid in the caves of the Arbel. According to Josephus, Herod had huge boxes built, which were lowered down the face of the cliffs by ropes. Soldiers in the boxes dragged the last rebels out to their deaths by means of long iron hooks, which they thrust back into the caves (*Antiquities* 14.445).

GA49: Gamla, General View

Gamla in the Golan Heights (Gaulanitis at the time of Jesus and the apostles) stood on a high ridge in the middle of a steep valley that ran down to the southwest to the Kinneret, or Sea of Galilee. In this view, to the west, the south ridge of the valley, the Nahal Dalioth (see Slide 12), blocks the view to the sea (background, upper right). At

right center one can see the east part of the city wall with its towers, which runs up the hill from the left to the ridge and then back down again to its turn to the west. At lower right the tents of the excavators are visible.

For a better view of the east part of the city wall, see Slide 50.

GA50: Gamla, Closer View

In the summer of 67 C.E., Roman troops under the command of Vespasian, the future emperor, overran the soldiers under the command of Josephus at Jotapata, just north of Sepphoris in Lower Galilee. Vespasian captured Josephus, and Josephus delivered his famous prophecy to Vespasian that predicted Vespasian's ascent to the emperor's throne. The Jewish revolutionaries in this, the First Jewish Revolt against Rome, withdrew to the Golan Heights, where they gathered at Gamla. Here on this ridge--shaped like a camel's back, which accounts for its name (Josephus, *War* 4.lff.)--fierce fighting ensued between the Jewish defenders and the Romans, but Gamla eventually fell. Behind the wall to the left, the excavation of a synagogue is in progress.

GA51: Gamla, Synagogue

One of the major surprises from the excavations at Gamla was this building, identified as a synagogue by its excavator. It is splendidly decorated, with geometric motifs on the column capitals and other architectural elements of the buildings. The interior space, measuring about 63 1/2 feet long by 50 1/2 feet wide, is provided with two low benches along three walls and four benches along the back wall. Columns stand in rows parallel to all four outer walls. Two heart-shaped columns can be seen in the rear corners. Three entrances open to the southwest, or the front, and another entrance, located in the right-rear corner of the interior, leads outside and down by steps to the street. The synagogue was built against the city wall and was in use during the reign of Herod the Great; it only went out of use as a synagogue with the siege of Gamla in 67 C.E. in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome.

To compare with the contemporaneous synagogue at Masada, see NT176: Masada, Synagogue.

GA52: Gamla, Two Lamps and a Bowl

These artifacts demonstrate the relative wealth and prosperity of ancient Gamla. This type of lamp is well known from other first-century C.E. contexts. In other words, Gamla was not isolated from the trade networks of the day.

GA53: Gamla, Bronze Fibulae

A fibula is a sort of Roman safety pin. Fibulae were used by both men and women to pin together clothing at the left shoulder. These are simply made and undecorated, suitable for daily life but not necessarily for a social occasion.

GA54: Gamla, Arrowheads

A mute reminder of the First Jewish Revolt against Rome, these bronze and iron arrowheads were found scattered on house floors in the 1984 excavations. Most are triangular or square in cross section, one is flat and roughly leaf-shaped (at right). The larger units on the measurement stick are one centimeter long.

GA55: Gamla, Ballista Stones

These ballistae were the stone cannonballs of Roman warfare. As one can see, many of them were found grouped together. They are to be found everywhere on the site and are living testimony to the severity of the Roman siege, which depended for its success partially on sending a hail of missiles and projectiles of various kinds into the besieged city.

GA56: Gamla, Scale Armor

A silver-plated piece of ancient armor found at Gamla. The piece is hinged at the left and provided with holes for thin leather or linen cords to tie it to the cuirass, or leather chest-piece. For protection, several dozen of these scales fit over each other, like shingles on a roof. Each large unit on the measurement stick is one centimeter.

GA57: Gamla, Lead Weights, Rings, Pendants

Items of everyday life that survived the Roman siege. The bronze finger rings and other objects are not elegant. They were intended for ordinary living. The pendants are of lead.

VI. Roman Period (70-324 C.E.)
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA58: Hippos/Susita

The Greek city of Hippos was known as Susita in Aramaic. Both names mean horse. It is situated 1,500 feet above the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee on a butte called today Kalat el-Husn, which forms a natural fortification. The name Hippos comes from the shape of that formation, which is said to have reminded the ancients of a horse. The city's coins bore the figure of a horse or a pegasus, a winged horse.

Hippos was founded in the Hellenistic period. It was eventually conquered by Alexander Jannaeus of Israel (103-76 B.C.E.). When Rome came to power, Hippos was made a free city and joined the Decapolis, a league of ten Roman cities. Hippos came under the authority of Herod the Great and was deeply involved in the First Jewish Revolt on the side of Rome.

GA59: Hippos/Susita, Main Street

A colonnaded main street, shown here, ran the length of Hippos. The sidewalk just to the right of the columns is made of cut marble (*opus sectile*). On either side of the main street stood houses and public buildings, and this situation pertained right through the Byzantine period, when at least four churches stood in Hippos, one of them a magnificent cathedral. Hippos had its own city wall with round towers, two city gates and a *nymphaeum*, or public fountain building. An earthquake destroyed Hippos in 747 C.E. The city's remains lie just as they did in the wake of those tremors.

GA60: Hippos/Susita Rocks with Holes

Hippos was built of local stone, a black basalt or volcanic rock, as this view shows. These remains were a part of the city's aqueduct system. The holes in the stones

allowed air bubbles to escape from the rushing water. Near this site are the ruins of a public bath and a large city reservoir.

GA61: Kedesh, Roman Temple

Kedesh was a well-known Canaanite city which belonged to the tribe of Naphtali. It is near the traditional border with ancient Syria (modern Lebanon). The city appeared in the lists of conquests by Thutmosis III in 1468 B.C.E. and in the el-Amarna letters of the 14th century B.C.E. Kedesh was conquered by Joshua (Joshua 12:22), was given to the Levites and was a city of refuge (Joshua 21:32). In 734-732 B.C.E., the city fell before the siege of Tiglath-pileser III, who deported its inhabitants (2 Kings 15:29).

By the Roman period, Kedesh had shrunk to a small village, then known as Cadasa, in the territory of the city of Tyre. This view of the Roman temple at Cadasa, excavated since 1981 under the direction of Israel Roll of Tel Aviv University, testifies to the continued importance of Cadasa as a cult center long after it had lost its status as a city of refuge. A Greek inscription from the temple states that the temple was dedicated in the year 117/118 C.E., during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian.

This view shows the facade as seen from inside the temple. The central portal has collapsed, but one doorpost, about twice the height of a person, still stands. On the bottom of the lintel, not visible in the slide, a handsome eagle is carved. To the right and left of the huge central portal, one can see the upper parts of the two pedestrian entrances. In the foreground lie architectural elements of the building, including a column, a paved floor and a capital.

GA62: First-Century Mosaic Boat

At Capernaum one sees this fragment of a mosaic, found at Magdala, that depicts a fishing boat of the first century C.E. The boat is portrayed with sails, two oars on each side and a steering oar to the right, beneath the high stern. This assumes a crew of five, namely, four oarsmen and the helmsman. Such a scene helps archaeologists to understand the rigging and construction of the first-century boat found in the Kinneret (see Slide 63).

GA63: Boat from Sea of Galilee

This boat was found buried up to its gunwales in the mud on the western edge of the Sea of Galilee near Magdala. It now resides in a special tank in the Yigal Allon Museum at Kibbutz Ginnosar, undergoing chemical treatment to preserve the wood to permit it to be displayed. The boat was dated by pottery inside it to the first half of the first century C.E., perhaps about mid-century. It may have sunk in an ordinary fishing accident, or it may have gone under in the naval engagement in 67 C.E. described by Josephus (*War* 3.10.9), associated with the First Jewish Revolt against Rome. This is the first boat ever found from the first century C.E. Its planks were pegged together edge to edge with mortise and tenon, rather than relying on inner struts as in modern boat building. Four disciples of Jesus, namely, Peter, Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, were fishermen on the lake early in the first century C.E. (Matthew 4:18-22).

GA64: Beth Shearim, Catacombs

Beth Shearim lies on the southern slopes of the low mountains of southwestern Lower

Galilee. It is near the western end of the Plain of Jezreel. The town dates to the Roman and Byzantine periods (first century B.C.E. to the seventh century C.E.) and occupies about ten acres. It is famous as the burial city of Rabbi Judah the Prince, redactor of the Mishnah in about 200 C.E. (the Mishnah is the compilation of Jewish law based on the Torah). Josephus mentions the town as Besara, the center of the estates of Queen Berenice, daughter of Herod Agrippa I, sister of Herod Agrippa II and granddaughter of Herod the Great. During the second century C.E., Beth Shearim was the seat of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish community's ruling council. The rabbis of the town are mentioned many times in the Talmud, the great compendium of Jewish lore and law, which includes the Mishnah as one of its two principal components.

Beth Shearim was also famous for its huge cemetery, in which pious Jews from many cities of the Roman empire and eastward of it wished to be buried. A synagogue and olive press have been excavated at Beth Shearim. This general view shows the elaborate, triple facades of catacombs 14 and 20 (at left and right). The catacombs of Beth Shearim are among the richest examples of Jewish art in Israel. High above the entrances are benches cut into the bedrock for funerary monuments erected above the catacombs.

Beth Shearim was excavated in 1936 by the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society under the direction of Benjamin Mazar. In 1953 excavations were resumed by the Israel Exploration Society and the Hebrew University under the direction of Nachman Avigad. Benjamin Mazar directed the excavations in 1956 and 1959.

GA65: Beth Shearim Catacomb Courtyard

The catacombs at Beth Shearim generally have courtyards or corridors from which entrances open into the burial halls. Catacomb 13, shown here, was comprised of 12 halls cut into the bedrock at four levels. This view of the outdoor courtyard to the south shows doorways into four of the halls. Each hall contains many places for burial and reburial, often with the names of the deceased painted or scratched above the burial place. The inscriptions are most often in Greek, but some are in Hebrew. This is not the most elaborate catacomb, but it gives some idea of the extent of the cuttings in the bedrock. The stone doors turn on hinges and are provided with working keyholes and locks.

GA66: Beth Shearim Menorah Sarcophagus

Catacomb 20 was the largest catacomb at Beth Shearim, with over 130 limestone sarcophagi, or stone coffins, and hundreds of fragments of marble sarcophagi. Large amounts of figurative art borrowed from Roman motifs were found here, such as representations of lions and eagles, hanging wreaths and schematic heads of bulls. Yet, in the same context, this detailed menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum, from one of the sarcophagi shows the importance of Jewish symbols. The menorah in catacomb 20 and the large number of Hebrew inscriptions show, without doubt, that this was a burial place for prominent Jews, among them rabbis of renown. This was the only sarcophagus discovered at Beth Shearim bearing a menorah, although several menorahs were scratched or carved on the catacomb walls.

GA67: Beth Shearim Catacomb 20

A view to the east inside room VIII.1 of catacomb 20 shows the enormous amount of rock cut out by hand to form these chambers. Sarcophagi for the deceased stand right and left and in the background. The holes cut into the sarcophagi, as at right, were chiseled by robbers seeking treasure. The sarcophagus to the right is called the “circle” sarcophagus after its decoration, which consists of incised rosettes whose lines are painted red.

GA68: Beth Shearim Mask Sarcophagus

This mask sarcophagus from catacomb 20 illustrates a motif of Roman art brought into the Jewish context by the families of the deceased. It resembles depictions of Roman gods, but here is treated merely as an artistic motif. The excavator noticed that the head was modeled on Near Eastern heads of Zeus, Serapis or Hadad. Scholars were astonished to find such pagan motifs on Jewish coffins in a catacomb where so many rabbis were buried.

GA69: Beth Shearim “Eagle” Sarcophagus

This sarcophagus from catacomb 20 is the most highly decorated of all, with moldings on the top and bottom and with schematic and simple representations of garlands, bull’s heads and eagles in heraldic style. On both long sides stand two half-crouched lions flanking a bull’s head. In all, this Jewish sarcophagus contains three eagles, four lions, six garlands and seven bull’s heads. The figures have caused considerable speculation among interpreters of ancient Judaism, but they seem to function here simply as artistic decoration.

GA70: Beth Shearim Menorah Catacomb

Hall A of catacomb 3 was entered from a doorway directly opposite the entrance to the open courtyard. We see here a fine example, in relief, of a man in Roman military tunic with a menorah on his head. The stem of the menorah exhibits spiral fluting and has a tripod base. In the wall just above the right branch of the menorah is a recess for a lamp. The burial niche to the right of the man and the menorah is decorated with a shell in high relief. This is a common motif in ancient Jewish art. Many menoroth and other Jewish ritual objects were found at Beth Shearim.

GA71: Tell Beth-Shean Aerial View

Tell el-Husn, identified as biblical Beth-Shean (green mound at center), stands in the east end of the Plain of Jezreel in the valley of Harod, a wadi, or seasonally dry riverbed, that empties into the Jordan. Three hundred and fifty feet below sea level, Beth-Shean stood at an important crossroads in antiquity. Beth-Shean was occupied from the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 B.C.E.), with extensive occupation in the Early Bronze Age (3150-2000 B.C.E.) and the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1750 B.C.E.). In fact, Middle Bronze Beth-Shean is mentioned in the 20th-century B.C.E. Egyptian execration texts, texts of curses against pharaoh’s enemies. Beth-Shean also appears in the el-Amarna letters of the 14th century B.C.E. and in the list of cities conquered by Thutmosis III in 1468 B.C.E. Other 13th-century B.C.E. Egyptian texts also mention Beth-Shean. The city resisted the siege of the invading Israelites according to Joshua 17:11 and Judges 1:27. Eventually Beth-Shean became a Philistine city. According to the Bible, the bodies of King Saul and his sons were fastened to the walls of Beth-Shean by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:10, 12). However, David must have conquered

the city in his expansion northward, for it appears in the Bible as Solomon's fifth administrative district (1 Kings 4:12). Pharaoh Shishak conquered Beth-Shean about 925 B.C.E. Near the end of the Iron Age, or from 815 to 700 B.C.E., the city declined, and only a small village survived. A theater from the Roman period can be seen just beyond and to the right of the top of the mound (see Slides 72 and 75).

GA72: Beth-Shean View of Lower City

During the Hellenistic period (332-63 B.C.E.) the city of Beth-Shean enjoyed a revival and came to be known as Scythopolis, or "City of Scythians," perhaps from a unit of Scythian cavalry in the army of Ptolemy II Philadelpheus (285-246 B.C.E.). During the second century B.C.E., it was also known as Nysa, after the nurse of the god Dionysus, as legend says she was buried here. The city fell into Jewish hands again when conquered by John Hyrcanus, king of Israel from 134-104 B.C.E., but fell to Rome in 63 B.C.E. Josephus mentions Scythopolis as capital of the Decapolis, or league of ten cities (*Antiquities* 14.75).

Public works of the Roman period included a theater that sat 8,000 (visible top right in slide), a colonnaded street, a temple to Dionysus, baths and a hippodrome. From the Byzantine period (324-637 C.E.), remains of a circus, a circular church on top of the tell (the prominent mound in the picture), a monastery and two synagogues have been excavated.

GA73: Beth-Shean Roman Street

The current excavations at Beth-Shean disclose an impressive Roman city that continued in use after the Arab conquest of 637 C.E. A colonnaded street, perhaps the *cardo*, or main street of the city, is seen here extending from the lower right to the upper left of the slide. Private houses, shops and public buildings open into the street behind the calumniation, which provides for a roof over the sidewalks, as in most main streets of Roman and Byzantine cities. Such a colonnaded street is presupposed in one of the parables of Jesus, though it is called a thoroughfare in the RSV (Matthew 22:9).

GA74: Beth-Shean, Steps

Steps lead upward from the colonnaded street (seen in Slide 73) to a temple or other public building of ancient Scythopolis. The population of Scythopolis was mainly pagan Roman but also included a substantial number of Jews. Coins of the city depict a temple to Zeus and a temple to a city-goddess; other gods on coins of the city include Dionysus himself (who grew up in the city), Nike (Victory), Nysa as a city-goddess and an anonymous river god. The official name of the city on its coins throughout the Roman period was "Nysa which is also called Scythopolis." After the Arab conquest, the city was known as Beisan after its original Semitic name.

GA75: Beth-Shean, Roman Theater

The theater of Beth-Shean originally seated about 8,000 spectators. The stage, to the right of the long trench that runs from upper left to lower right in this view, measures 270 feet long, while the distance from the stage to the back of the outer wall opposite the stage is about 190 feet. Immediately behind the stage is the *scaenae frons* (with partially standing columns), which served as a backdrop for performances. Beyond it (to the right) is a street. Originally the building was lavishly decorated with marble--relief

carving, statues and Greek inscriptions--many of which can still be seen. The theater was erected during the second century C.E. It fell into decay during the third century, but was renovated again during the sixth century, probably under the emperor Justin I (518-527 C.E.). During this period the substructure of the stage was rebuilt so that water ballets or water games could be introduced.

The theater was excavated by Shimon Appelbaum from 1959 to 1961 and by Avraham Negev in 1962 under the auspices of the Israel National Parks Authority and the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.

GA76: Beth-Shean, Pillared Street

This colonnaded street is likely the *cardo* of Scythopolis/Beth-Shean. Columns on either side of the street supported one edge of a roof whose other edge rested on the walls of shops and houses, creating two covered walkways. The central street had no cover, as that was not deemed necessary. In the Byzantine and Arab periods, a wall was built using the standing columns as integral parts of its masonry. That is, the broad Roman street gave way to a much narrower street in later periods.

GA77: Beth-Shean, Mosaic Portrait

This mosaic depicting a woman is from a public building of the ancient city. She wears a turreted headdress and bears a cornucopia, which suggests that we are to recognize her as a city-goddess. In parts of the Roman empire, this image would sometimes be identified with Roma, goddess of Rome, or Tyche (Fortune), goddess of fortune. Since unnamed city-goddesses appear on coins of Beth-Shean, any one of them could be Nysa represented as a city-goddess. (Nysa was the nurse to the god Dionysus; Beth-Shean was also called Nysa because legend said she was buried here.)

VII. Byzantine Period (324-640 C.E.)
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA78: Hammath Gader General View

Hammath Gader lies east of the Jordan River in the Plain of Gader on the right bank of the Yarmuk River. The name means “the hot springs of Gader.” This was an important Jewish town in the Roman, Byzantine and Arab periods. Extensive ruins of a Roman bath have been excavated here. Other architectural finds include a Roman temple, a theater and a synagogue. This view of Hammath Gader shows the elaborate rebuilt bath, excavated by Yizhar Hirschfeld and Giora Solar on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums, the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University and the Israel Exploration Society, beginning in 1979. At lower right one sees the arched entryway to an area called the Hall of Pillars by the excavators. It was a bathing hall with a pool, which lay beyond the entryway. This hall was probably vaulted; its construction dates from about the third century C.E. At bottom center is the middle hall of this complex. This hall also contained a large pool and was also originally vaulted. To the far left stands the Hall of Niches, measuring about 56 feet by 90 feet. This hall may have been built as early as the first or second century C.E. It once contained a bathing pool about 30 feet by 75 feet and was surrounded by niches in the walls for smaller

bathing areas. In the upper portion of the slide one can see the Oval Hall, the main bathing area of the complex in the third century C.E. Hammat-Gader may be the town of Emmata mentioned by the Christian author Eusebius in the fourth century (*Onomasticon* 22:26).

GA79: Hammath Gader Hot Springs

The hot springs of Hammath Gader were well known in antiquity and were credited with medicinal properties.

GA80: Hammath Tiberias Synagogue

During the Roman and Byzantine periods the rabbis identified the Roman city of Hammath, which lies within the city limits of modern Tiberias on its south side, with biblical Hammath of the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua 19:35). This identification is not certain, but ancient Jewish sources knew of the city of Hammath that eventually united with Tiberias during the first or second century C.E. Since the name refers to the hot springs, it is easy to identify the site by the hot springs that still come to the surface only a few tens of yards from this ruin.

Several synagogues and other buildings were built on this site over the centuries. In the upper right of this view, one can see the walls, floors and apse of the latest (fifth to eighth centuries C.E.) synagogue. To the extreme right is this synagogue's courtyard. This synagogue was built over the remains of what is known as the Synagogue of Severos, after its major donor. The Synagogue of Severos dates to about 325-396 C.E. A portion of it, about 5 feet below the later synagogue, is visible at left and center in this slide. It contains stunning mosaics (seen in detail on Slides 81-85). The Synagogue of Severos is itself a remodeling of a synagogue built in the latter half of the third century C.E. Beneath that synagogue stood a first-century C.E. gymnasium or other public building (not visible in this view). The gymnasium may also have been used as a synagogue.

Through the trees in the background, we see the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee and the steep hills above its eastern shore.

GA81: Hammath Tiberias Synagogue Mosaic

The most arresting feature of the synagogue is this elaborate mosaic in three panels from the fourth-century C.E. phase, called the Synagogue of Severos, after its major donor. The mosaic embodies some of the finest Jewish art in Israel. At the bottom, near the ancient entrance, a set of Greek inscriptions honors the donors of the mosaic. To the right and left of the donors' names stand two lions. The large middle panel has at its corners four female figures representing the seasons of the year (see Slide 83). In the round medallion set into the square panel one sees a full zodiac with all 12 signs (see Slide 82). A later wall has bisected the panel. The zodiac is to be read counterclockwise with its first panel (center left) at the very top. In the center of the zodiac, a fine representation of Helios, or Sol Invictus (the Unconquerable Sun), with rays streaming from his head, drives his chariot directly at the observer (see Slide 84 for a close-up view). The top panel depicts the Torah shrine, two menoroth and other holy objects (see Slide 85).

For other depictions of Helios, see Slides 120 and 131.

GA82: Hammath Tiberias Mosaic, Zodiac

One of the most surprising features of the Hammath Tiberias synagogue is this prominent representation of the zodiac. The figures are familiar from other zodiacs in the ancient world. The names of the figures are in Hebrew. Reading counterclockwise, at bottom one sees written “lion,” “virgin” and “scales.” These correspond to our Leo, Virgo and Libra. Scorpio can be seen to the right, disappearing into the later wall which bisects the panel. Zodiacs are known from other synagogues of the period. Some modern interpreters see them as ancient calenders rather than astrological symbols.

GA83: Hammath Tiberias Mosaic Personification of Spring

Personifications of each of the four seasons of the year occupy the corners of the square floor panel in which the circle of the zodiac appears (see Slide 81). Each season is depicted as a young woman, with the name of the season in Hebrew beside her. Here, Spring holds a blue glass bowl bearing fruit or other products. In this case, instead of the Hebrew word for spring, the Hebrew inscription reads “Nisan,” the month of Passover, which occurs in the spring.

GA84: Hammath Tiberias Mosaic, Helios

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.

GA85: Hammath Tiberias Torah Shrine

The focus of interest, last to be encountered as the worshipper walks across the mosaic floor toward the standing Torah shrine on the south wall, is the panel depicting the holy objects. A Torah shrine stands in the center with closed paneled doors concealing its scrolls of the Law. The ark curtain is tied so as to reveal its doors. The shrine has two columns in front and a shell motif on the pediment above the doors. Finely detailed menoroth stand left and right of the Torah shrine with flames at the tip of each branch. In the area below each menorah are a *lulav* (palm branch bound with myrtle and willow), an *etrog* (citron)--ritual objects important in the festival of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles)--a shofar (ram’s horn) and an incense shovel.

GA86: Capernaum, Aerial View

Capernaum, or Kfar Nahum (the Village of Nahum) in Hebrew, was a large town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is frequently mentioned in the New Testament in association with the life of Jesus. Jesus moved to Capernaum from Nazareth (Matthew 4:13). At Capernaum Jesus called his first disciples, Simon Peter, his brother Andrew and James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 4:18-22). Jesus taught in

the synagogue at Capernaum (John 6:24-59). He seems to have lodged in Peter's house, healing and teaching (Mark 1:1-12, 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-44). After Jesus left Capernaum he condemned it, with Chorazin and Bethsaida, for lack of repentance (Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 10:13-15).

Going from middle left to lower right in this aerial view, we see, beside the lake, the ruins of an eight-sided church of the fifth century C.E., a block of ancient houses and a partially reconstructed synagogue of the early Byzantine period (fourth and fifth centuries). A wall at the lower left marks the boundary between the property of the Roman Catholic Franciscan order to the right and of the Greek Orthodox church to the left, which are being excavated separately. This view shows only a small portion of the ancient city.

For another aerial view of Capernaum, NT59: Capernaum, Arial View of Synagogue and Excavations.

GA87: Capernaum, Synagogue Portal

This Byzantine period building (fourth and fifth centuries C.E.) of white limestone is one of the most stunning synagogues in Israel. Through this reconstructed central portal, we see the main worship area toward the back. Originally the building had columns on three sides, like those seen standing intact on the back wall. One of the columns bears a dedicatory inscription in Greek honoring a certain Herod (not the king) for donating the column.

GA88: Capernaum Corinthian Capital

The exterior of the synagogue at Capernaum is probably the most elaborately carved and decorated of any synagogue in the Galilee. This Corinthian capital displays a menorah, skillfully rendered in relief, flanked by a ram's horn, or shofar (right), and an incense shovel (left)--both traditional decorative motifs in synagogue art. This column fragment is surely from the Byzantine synagogue, though it was found out of place.

GA89: Capernaum, Synagogue and Steps

This view of the steps at the southwest side of the synagogue (see Slide 86) shows quite dramatically that the synagogue is built up much higher than the surrounding terrain. This gave the building a commanding appearance, heightened by its white limestone in a town built almost totally of black basalt. Note that the foundation of the building, however, is built of finely cut black basalt. Some scholars believe that this foundation is the remnant of a first-century C.E. synagogue, destroyed by the Jewish community in the fourth century to clear a site for this beautiful and imposing synagogue. The synagogue was investigated and partially excavated by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in 1905. Excavations at Capernaum by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum have continued since 1968 under the direction of Father Stanislao Loffreda and Father Virgilio Corbo.

For a view of the entryways at the rear of this synagogue, see NT60: Capernaum, Synagogue.

GA90: Capernaum, Flour Grinder

Grinders for flour, such as this one, are commonly found at Roman and Byzantine sites. This type of grinder is rotated on a cone-shaped interior piece, propelled by a donkey and two men. Sufficient flour for several families can be produced with such an arrangement. Behind the flour grinder is a wheel and round basinlike stone. Olives were crushed into pulp by rotating the stone wheel on top of stones inside the basin stone. The pulp would then be placed in baskets and squeezed in a press to discharge its oil.

GA91: Capernaum, Synagogue Detail

The decoration and detail on the Capernaum synagogue are truly amazing. This detail shows a flower garland swag beneath a five-petaled flower (center). To the left and above, one sees a wing, evidently from an angel that has been chiseled away by a later iconoclast.

GA92: Capernaum, View of Greek Excavations

East of the Franciscan grounds, beyond the modern wall, is the property of the Greek Orthodox Church being excavated on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums under the direction of Vassilios Tzaferis. Excavation of these trenches has made it plain that Capernaum continued to grow and prosper after the Arab invasion of 637 C.E. Houses from the seventh-century C.E. and later have been found at this site.

GA93: Capernaum, Simon Peter’s House

Known for a century, this octagonal structure only became understood as a result of the excavations of Father Corbo and Father Loffreda begun in 1968. It was built as a church in the fifth century without a congregation and without an altar. It is, therefore, understood as a church built to memorialize Jesus’ ministry in Capernaum. The central octagon rests directly upon the foundations of a first-century C.E. room that was plastered and enlarged in the fourth century. In the plaster walls, Christian travelers scratched their names and prayers to Jesus in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew. This remodeled room may be part of the Church of Count Joseph mentioned by Epiphanius in 347 C.E. These and other historical and archaeological details suggest that travelers of the time believed that they were in the house of Simon Peter (Mark 1:29-34).

GA94: Chorazin, Aerial View

Chorazin was a Jewish town in Upper Galilee, about three miles from Capernaum, identified with Karaze. Chorazin must have had some association with the ministry of Jesus, for it figures in his curse, along with Capernaum and Bethsaida, for failure to repent (Matthew 11:20-24). However, we have almost no other literary references to the site. It has undergone excavation at least four times in this century, most recently by Ze’ev Yeivin on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. Chorazin was a walled town, and today, as in this aerial view, one can see numerous remains. The columned synagogue stands at lower left. The intact central doorway (see Slide 97) was reached by climbing the steps at lower center. The remains of a public building stand beyond the synagogue (below the large tree). The large rectangular area at right contains two domestic complexes, with a cobblestone courtyard between them (the courtyard is in the very center of the slide). All were constructed of the black basalt of the region. Archaeological excavation has revealed occupation from the first century C.E. to the 12th or 13th century C.E.

GA95: Chorazin, Stone Carving

The beautifully decorated exterior of the synagogue at Chorazin was eclipsed in the Galilee only by the exquisite synagogue at Capernaum. This detail shows two men on either side of an enormous bunch of grapes (center). Either they are squeezing grapes or this is an allusion to Numbers 13:21-24 and the two men are Caleb and Joshua, the scouts who carried the giant cluster of grapes to Moses and Aaron to demonstrate the fruit of the land of Canaan. Other decorations within the synagogue include rich floral designs, a lion attacking a centaur, an animal suckling a cub, a lion devouring another animal and the head of a Medusa. The Chorazin synagogue was built during the late third or early fourth century C.E.

GA96: Chorazin, Medusa Head

This Medusa head decorates an architectural element from the synagogue. Apparently its presence was as a piece of art and did not imply reverence for a pagan symbol. Most of the other human representations were defaced by iconoclasts after the fifth century C.E., but this one survived unscathed.

GA97: Chorazin, Synagogue Portals

Since 1980 the synagogue has been undergoing both excavation and reconstruction. This view shows the partially erected portals, three of them, that gave entry through the major wall facing south toward Jerusalem. In front of the building worshippers walked though a large, open courtyard and advanced up the steps, seen here, to the interior of the synagogue.

GA98: Chorazin, Synagogue Interior

Originally, the interior space of the synagogue was divided by two rows of columns into a central nave flanked by an aisle on either side. Two of these columns, still standing, can be seen in this view. Columns also ran across the back. The interior length is more than 83 feet and the total interior width is more than 58 feet.

GA99: Chorazin, Throne of Moses

Among the finds within the debris heaped in the synagogue was this “Throne of Moses,” carved of black basalt and decorated with an incised rosette on the back support and a four-line Aramaic inscription on the front. The Aramaic reads: “Be remembered for good Yudan the son of Ishmael who made this porch and its staircase. As his reward may he have a share with the righteous.” This chair, as a type, seems to be known in the New Testament as the Seat of Moses (Matthew 23:2).

GA100: Meroth (Marous) Synagogue

Khirbet Marous (Arabic for the Ruin of Marous), or Meroth in Hebrew, is situated in Upper Galilee about 16 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Josephus explained that the village of Meroth marked the northern limits of Galilee, and this site is believed to be that village. Josephus also claims to have fortified this village in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome. Excavations were first carried out in 1982 by the Israel Department of Antiquities under Zvi Ilan and Emmanuel Damati.

The main public building, a magnificent synagogue, stood 74 feet long and 55 feet wide.

Interior space is divided into a nave and two side aisles by two rows of columns. The column bases can still be seen *in situ* in this view. About 100 coins dated from the mid-fourth to the mid-fifth centuries C.E. were found underneath a mosaic floor of the synagogue. Another hoard of 485 coins was found in a western auxiliary room, called the treasury by the excavators. The name is certainly appropriate, as 245 coins in the hoard are gold (the rest are bronze). Most of the coins date to the late Byzantine period (sixth and seventh centuries C.E.), but the earliest dates to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.) and the latest to 1193 C.E. (the Crusader period). The synagogue excavations also revealed intriguing mosaic floors, an inscribed bronze amulet and classrooms for children and adults. Other remains at Khirbet Marous include a fortification system, a moat, cisterns, tombs, underground halls, a wine press, an olive press and two ancient roads.

GA101: Meroth, Mosaic

In 1984 archaeologists Ilan and Damati discovered a portion of a destroyed mosaic floor in the synagogue of Meroth. The mosaic, which dates to about 450 C.E., portrays a young man wearing a long-sleeved tunic with two emblems. A red cape is fastened over his right shoulder. Above him dangles a short sword with Greek-style shoulder strap. A helmet is to his right, and he appears to be sitting on a shield. To his left an inscription in Hebrew reads “Yodan bar Shim’on Mani.” This may be the name of the man who donated the money for the mosaic, or the artist who created it. It has been speculated that this mosaic shows the young David, just after his battle with Goliath.

GA102: Kursi, General View

The site of Kursi on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is identified with the land of Gerasenes, or, in some sources, Gadarenes or Gergesenes, where Jesus exorcised the devils of a demoniac named Legion (Luke 8:26-39; see also Matthew 8:28-34 and Mark 5:1-20). Excavations from 1970 to 1972 by the Israel Department of Antiquities unearthed a monastery at Kursi. It was surrounded by a wall that enclosed about 4 1/2 acres. An impressive road 25 feet wide led to the monastery church, which measured 82 feet by 147 feet. The church, seen in this view, was a basilica with geometric mosaics and medallions containing animals and birds. The apse is under the arch at left. Beneath the chapel (on the far side, at right) lay a crypt for burial of monks who had lived here. The monastery and church date from the late fifth or early sixth century. It was damaged in the brief Persian invasion of 614 C.E. and was finally destroyed and abandoned in the middle of the eighth century, probably as the result of the earthquake of 747. This view to the southeast shows the interior of the church with a workroom in the foreground. The room contains a restored olive press. Olive oil production was a common source of income for monasteries.

There is also a Tell Kursi on the shores of Galilee about 1/4 mile west of the monastery. The tell has not been excavated, but it appears to include an ancient wharf.

GA103: Kursi, Greek Mosaic

A room south of the apse of the church contains a baptismal font and this Greek inscription. The inscription says that the mosaic was made in the time of Theophilos, son of Stephanos the Elder and Hegoumenos. The date corresponds to 585/586 C.E.

GA104: Sepphoris, Site View

Sepphoris was a major Roman city in the center of Lower Galilee, but its founding date is unknown. Its hill lies north-northwest about four miles as the crow flies from modern Nazareth. Josephus mentions that Ptolemy Lathyrus, ruler of Cyprus, besieged the walled city in 103 B.C.E. (*Antiquities* 13.338). Sepphoris became the seat of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, when the Romans entered in 63 B.C.E. Herod the Great captured the city in 40 B.C.E., during the first winter of his three-year war for the throne. His son Herod Antipas inherited the city at his death. Sepphoris revolted against Rome at the death of Herod and was destroyed by the Roman general Varus. Herod Antipas rebuilt Sepphoris as the "ornament of all Galilee" and made it his capital until the founding of Tiberias in 21 C.E. Sepphoris was excavated in 1931 by the University of Michigan under the direction of Leroy Waterman. Beginning in 1983 the University of South Florida has excavated Sepphoris under the direction of James F. Strange. Since 1985 the Hebrew University/Duke University Joint Expedition has also excavated at Sepphoris under the direction of Ehud Netzer, Eric Meyers and Carol Meyers.

In the foreground of this view are the remains of Roman/Byzantine structures unearthed by the Joint Expedition. Beneath the parasol is a stunning mosaic from a *triclinium*, or public dining room, that is undergoing cleaning and photography (see Slides 105-107). The building in the background, known locally as the Citadel, dates originally to the mid-fourth century C.E. and was used as a schoolhouse as recently as 1948.

GA105: Sepphoris Mosaic, Detail

A detail of the west side of the dining room floor mosaic depicts a processional and shows the skill of the ancient mosaic craftsmen. The stone cubes are called tesserae. The colors run all the way through the cubes. The tesserae are set into plaster upon a firm bedding of well-drained gravel or stone. In a solemn processional such as this, participants ride donkeys and dress in fine clothes. One figure (far right) is carrying a vessel of some kind which may contain water or wine. A second figure (far left) appears to be carrying offerings of dried fruit.

GA106: Sepphoris Mosaic Processional

The processional, viewed from the west side of the dining room floor, shows nine figures bearing offerings and one figure on a donkey. This can only be a Dionysiac (or Bacchic) processional. Other parts of the mosaic show Dionysus (his Greek name), or Bacchus as the Roman called him. Dionysus was especially revered in nearby Beth-Shean, a city called Nysa on its coins after the nurse of Dionysus, and he was said to have grown up there. Many cities in the ancient world vied for the honor of being the true home of Dionysus. This mosaic at Sepphoris was surely crafted from a pagan perspective and dramatically emphasizes that a Roman population lived at Sepphoris side by side with the indigenous Jews.

GA107: Sepphoris Mosaic, Portrait

At the north and south ends of the mosaic were women's faces, deftly depicted by an unknown artist. Of the two, only this north panel is preserved. The woman's face is so lifelike that some have thought that the artist used a live model. Eros with his arrow cavorts to the left in this scene. Probably another such figure originally stood to the

right.

GA108: Sepphoris, Bronze Prometheus

This bronze figurine was discovered in a cistern with a second figurine of Hercules. The eagle is busy tearing out Prometheus's liver, which was this hero's daily punishment from the gods for bearing fire to humankind. According to legend, Prometheus was bound to a rock offshore at ancient Joppa or Jaffa, modern Tel Aviv.

GA109: Mt. Meiron and Nahal Amud

Mt. Meiron, or the Jebel Jarmuq, is the highest point in Upper Galilee, rearing up to just short of 4,000 feet above sea level. This mountain is the main topographical feature of Upper Galilee and gives the region its mountainous character. The major river bed (dry except in winter), which runs down to the Sea of Galilee, is the Nahal Amud (at left), or "Valley of the Column," named for the prominent natural rock outcrop that stands in the valley bed.

GA110: Meiron, Synagogue

The ancient village on Mt. Meiron is the hometown of the second-century C.E. rabbi, Simeon bar Yochai, one of the most famous Jewish sages, whose commentaries are part of the Talmud. Meiron appears in the list of Galilean cities to which the 24 priestly "courses," or family divisions assigned Temple duties by lot, fled from Jerusalem at its destruction in 70 C.E. Meiron was investigated and partially excavated by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in 1905. The site was excavated beginning in 1971 on behalf of the American Schools of Oriental Research under the direction of Eric Meyers. The synagogue facade, shown here, has been standing since the founding of the building in the mid-third century C.E. The photo shows the central portal of the three entries into the worship area or prayer hall.

GA111: Nabratein, General View

The ancient Jewish site of Nabratein, known as Kfar Niboraya in Roman period Jewish texts, is located in Upper Galilee north of the modern city of Safed. At least one famous figure--a man named Jacob--was from Kfar Niboraya. He is mentioned in several rabbinic texts for rendering ritual decisions even though he was not a rabbi. Abundant remains of a synagogue at Nabratein were reported as early as 1864 by Ernest Renan. Subsequently, in 1905, the site was investigated by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft. In 1980 and 1981, Eric Meyers directed an excavation at Nabratein on behalf of Duke University. The synagogue, shown here, lies in the center of the site. Three phases in its history have been identified: 135-250 C.E., 250-363 C.E. and a complete repair and reuse as a synagogue from 564 to 600/700 C.E. The columns were put back into their upright positions during the 1980 excavations.

GA112: Nabratein, Synagogue Lintel

The synagogue lintel from Nabratein, now displayed in the courtyard of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, bears a menorah within a wreath in its center. It also has a Hebrew inscription, which could not be read until 1960 when Professor Nachman Avigad of the Hebrew University deciphered it. The inscription identifies a certain Lulianus (Julianus) who brought about the rebuilding of the synagogue. It also bears a

date of “494 years after the destruction of the Temple [in 70 C.E.],” therefore 564 C.E. This date marks the beginning of the third phase in the occupation of the village and use of the synagogue.

GA113: Nabratein, Pediment of Stone Ark

Portrayals of the holy ark, or Torah shrine, in synagogues have been known for years (see, for example, the ark at Hammath Tiberias, Slide 85). However, actual physical remains of arks in ancient synagogues were unknown until the 1980 excavation at Nabratein. This top portion, or pediment, from the ark was discovered in the third-century C.E. synagogue. The excavators believe that an earthquake in 306 severely damaged the building and the ark. As a result, the pediment stone and other elements of the ark were buried in the synagogue floor. Note the typical elements of Jewish art on this pediment, such as the shell, the recumbent lions and the rosettes.

GA114: Baram, General View

On the north side of Mt. Meiron stands the ancient site of Baram, which today is covered by the abandoned village of Birim. The remains of a small fourth-century C.E. synagogue, since destroyed, were discovered here in the 19th century. The front facade and main entrance of a larger synagogue, seen here, have remained standing since the mid-third century C.E., its probable founding date. The right-hand column (beyond the tree leaves), with its architrave on top, has stood since the same date. The other columns, and those in the interior, have been restored. This synagogue was investigated and partially excavated by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in 1905.

GA115: Tabgha, Restoring the Mosaic

Probably one of the most frequently visited places in modern Israel is the site of et-Tabgha, which is a corruption of the Greek name Heptapegon or “seven springs.” The site lies on the northwest shores of the Sea of Galilee about 2 1/2 miles southwest of Capernaum. It is located at the foot of the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes. Tabgha is only two miles north and east of Magdala. It is the traditional site of the feeding of the 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes (Luke 9:10-17). The site of the multiplication was a “lonely place,” and archaeological investigation of this immediate area shows that it was never inhabited. In the fourth century C.E., a church was built here to commemorate the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

In the second half of the fifth century C.E., a larger church was erected. It is this later church, now reconstructed, that contains in its southeast corner the large mosaic shown here under restoration. The odd cylinder with Greek letters on it is a Nilometer, by which one can measure the overflow of the Nile. It became a standard motif in ancient mosaics. Behind the workers in this slide stand reconstructed columns, bases with Greek crosses and Corinthian capitals (visible on top of the last column).

GA116: Tabgha Mosaic Loaves and Fishes

Beneath the altar of the fifth-century C.E. church is a piece of bedrock that was mentioned by the fourth-century Christian pilgrim Egeria as the place where Jesus placed the bread and fish before the blessing. In 1936 an earlier, smaller chapel was found beneath the fifth-century church.

The detail shows the loaves in a basket and two fish alongside the basket. The mosaic was excavated in 1932 by A. E. Mader and A. M. Schneider on behalf of the Goerresgesellschaft.

GA117: Tabgha Mosaic Bird and Asp

The north transept of the fifth-century C.E. church contains wonderful mosaic representations of birds and animals. The detail depicts a heron and an asp in deadly combat. Lotus plants are also identifiable in the background.

GA118: Tabgha Mosaic, Ducks

Another detail from the Tabgha mosaic shows ducks on lotus blossoms.

GA119: Beth Alpha the Binding of Isaac

In 1929 Eliezer L. Sukenik, father of Yigael Yadin, excavated a synagogue at the Jewish settlement of Beth Alpha on the eastern side of the Plain of Jezreel. The name of the ancient village is not known, so the synagogue is known by the name of the modern settlement. The synagogue was an impressive building, 85 feet by 55 feet, built of blocks of black basalt set in mortar. Interior calumniation divided the space of the prayer hall into a nave and two aisles. The prayer hall features an elaborate mosaic executed in a primitive artistic style. The mosaic is dated to the sixth century C.E., the date of the latest renovation of the synagogue and a date suggested by an Aramaic inscription in the floor: "[This mos]aic was laid in the year … of the rule of Justin the King … wheat one hundred … they were willing all the sons of the t[own … the sons] of Rabbi A … [May they be remembered for] good all the s[ons … Ame]n." In the first panel at the entrance one sees what is called in Jewish tradition "the binding of Isaac," taken from the incident in Genesis 22:1-19. The panel tells the whole story. At left two servants stand with a beast of burden. At right the altar blazes up, while Abraham (whose name appears in Hebrew above and to the left of his head) holds the knife in his right hand and Isaac (also labeled in Hebrew) in his left hand. In the center a ram stands tethered to a bush. The Hebrew above its head reads "And behold, a ram" (Genesis 22:13). Above the bush, the hand of the angel of the Lord emerges from a cloud and the command "Do not send forth [your hand]" (Genesis 22:12) appears below the hand.

GA120: Beth Alpha, Zodiac Mosaic

The second panel of the Beth Alpha mosaic is a zodiac like the one at Hammath Tiberias (see Slides 81-84). The 12 signs of the zodiac are named in Hebrew, while the four seasons occupy the four corners of a square panel that borders the circle of the zodiac. The four seasons are winged female figures in simple style whose names also appear in Hebrew. In the center of the zodiac, the sun god Helios drives his chariot, or *quadriga*, directly at the viewer. The crescent of the moon, stars and the faces of the horses all appear in the same simple style.

GA121: Beth Alpha, Torah Shrine

As at Hammath Tiberias (see Slide 85), the southernmost panel of the mosaic at Beth Alpha contains a representation of the ark of the Law, or Torah shrine, flanked by lions and two menoroth (seven-branched candelabra). The decorated and paneled doors of the ark are shut; unlike the Torah shrine at Hammath Tiberias, there is no curtain on the ark itself. An ever-burning light hangs from the peak of the pediment, which is decorated

with a shell in its center and with birds and chalices. Lamps also appear to hang down from horns at both ends of the pediment. The two halves of an open curtain appear to the extreme right and left in the panel. Other ritual objects seen are (directly in front of each lion) bound palm branches (*lulav*) and citron (*etrog*)--associated with the festival of *Sukkot*, or Tabernacles--and ram's horns, or shofroth (at the foot of the lion on the right and above the base of the menorah on the left), and incense shovels (square objects in front of the lion on the right and next to the shofar on the left).

GA122: Qatzrin, View of Synagogue

Qatzrin, or Qisrin, is an ancient Jewish village, about five miles east of the Jordan River, on the Golan Heights (ancient Gaulanitis). Qatzrin is mentioned in the Talmud many times. A salvage excavation was carried out at Qatzrin in 1971 and 1972 by Dan Urman on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities. The synagogue measured 54 feet by 46 feet and featured an ornately carved portal and a double row of columns in the interior, visible in this slide. The building was constructed in the late fourth or early fifth century C.E. and was used as a synagogue until the mid-eighth century, when it was probably destroyed in the earthquake of 747. Subsequent excavations from 1982 to 1984 on behalf of the Department of Antiquities directed by Zvi Ma'oz showed that the site was occupied before 1200 B.C.E. and had been continuously occupied from the Hellenistic period (fourth century B.C.E.) to the mid-eighth century C.E.

VIII. Crusader Period (1099-1291 C.E.)
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

The Crusade movement began in Europe in 1095 as a response to Christian preaching to regain the Holy City from the "infidel" Moslems. Pope Urban II gave his approval, and the First Crusade was launched in 1096. On July 15, 1099, the Crusaders finally reached Jerusalem, their goal, and proceeded to massacre most of the city's Moslem and Jewish population. Eventually the Crusaders from various European kingdoms acknowledged Baldwin of Boulogne as Baldwin I, king of Jerusalem, and generations of consolidation of the conquest began.

Political and military occupation gradually deteriorated under Moslem resistance, so that in 1145 the newly elected Pope Eugenius III issued a formal Crusade Encyclical to launch the Second Crusade. This Crusade fell apart in the siege of Damascus and mainly embarrassed St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who had supported it. For the next 40 years, Crusaders who had settled in the Middle East consolidated their rule from enormous castles built in European style. These settlements made up the "Frankish East" of the 12th century. On July 4, 1187, the Franks, under Guy of Lusignan, Raynald of Chatillon and Gerard of Ridefort, were slaughtered by Saladin's Moslem troops at the infamous battle at the Horns of Hattin (Slide 132). As a result, Jerusalem was lost to Christian forces after 88 years.

Frankish success only came again during the Third Crusade, when, in 1191 and 1192, Richard the Lion-Hearted and Philip II took Acre (biblical Acco), Jaffa (modern-day Tel Aviv), Ascalon (modern-day Ashkelon) and coastal towns of southern Galilee, though Jerusalem eluded them. By 1192 Richard was ill. He struck a treaty with Saladin that

guaranteed Christian access to the holy places. The very next year Saladin died.

In 1198 Pope Innocent III issued a new Crusade Encyclical launching the Fourth Crusade. This infamous campaign resulted in the sack of Greek-held Constantinople by Frankish forces. Later, in 1229, during the Sixth Crusade, Frederick II of Germany signed a treaty with the Moslems led by al-Kamil, a treaty that gained for the Franks a strip of land from the coast to Jerusalem and the cities of Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Only the Temple Mount remained in Moslem hands, and Jerusalem was not to be fortified. This state of affairs remained barely stable until 1244, when the Turks retook Jerusalem. Finally, in 1291, after decades of strife, a huge Mameluke army from Egypt overwhelmed the Frankish defenders of Acre. This sounded the death knell for the Crusader presence in the Holy Land.
[Note: this text is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA123: Belvoir Castle Aerial View

The 12th-century Crusader site of Belvoir was known as Kaukaub el-Hawwa in Arabic, which preserved the Hebrew name of Kokhav ha-Yarden (Star of the Jordan), a Jewish village on the mountain that flourished until the fourth century C.E. It stands about seven miles north-northwest of Beth-Shean. Belvoir withstood Saladin’s attack in 1182-1183.

The castle passed into the custody of the Knights Hospitaller, who withstood a protracted siege, but in 1191 Saladin’s sappers destroyed the eastern tower, which would have stood to the extreme left in this slide. The besieged Hospitallers sued for peace, then made their way to Tyre. Saladin and his forces destroyed the gates and the church and then abandoned the site. The Knights Hospitallers were founded in the 12th century to care for Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Eventually their solicitude branched out from nursing pilgrims in hospitals to active defense of the pilgrim routes and to participation in battle.

Belvoir was excavated in 1966 and 1967 on behalf of Israel’s National Parks Authority under the direction of Meir Ben-Dov.

GA124: Belvoir, Crusader Architecture

Everywhere at Belvoir one sees the signs of Crusader architecture. Here two typical Crusader period pointed, or groined, arches cut from native basalt stand as re-erected. Also evident are massive masonry walls and an elaborate water system that feeds a bath, the ruins of which are beyond the wall to the right.

GA125: Montfort Castle

Montfort is a Teutonic fortress, surrounded by mountains, in the vicinity of Acre. Its name in Arabic is Qalat el-Qurein; in German it is called Starkenburg (meaning strong castle). Early in the 13th century a large part of the district of Acre passed into the hands of the Teutonic Order, the German order of chivalry patterned after the Knights Templars, an order of military monks. With the support of Frederick II, emperor of Germany, the Teutonic Knights purchased land from Frankish feudal lords that included

Montfort. The castle was surrendered to Baybars, sultan of Egypt, in 1271. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art cleared Montfort in 1926.

GA126: Nimrod Castle

The Castle of Nimrod, called Qalat Nimrud in Arabic, sits on a steep hill on the Golan Heights overlooking the Metullah Valley. Scholars are not certain of its original name, but the modern name refers to the biblical Nimrod, son of Cush, “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10:8-9). This site was rich in Arabic inscriptions.

It is not clear when the fort was built, but it figured large in defense of the area both by Crusaders and by Moslem forces. In 1187 a pitched battle occurred here and at nearby Banyas when Saladin, commanding Moslem forces, unsuccessfully attacked Flemish knights in the fortress under the command of Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem.

GA127: Nimrod, Fortifications

In this close-up we see the extent of the fortifications. The main wall with its rounded towers is visible to the right. Behind stands Mt. Hermon covered in snow.

GA128: Acre (Acco) Crusader Refectory

Before the Crusades, Acre was known as Acco and was mentioned by that name in the Egyptian execration texts, the texts cursing pharaoh’s enemies, of the 20th century B.C.E. It also figured in Egyptian inscriptions of the 15th and 14th centuries B.C.E. The flourishing Canaanite city of the 15th to 13th centuries B.C.E. was situated at Tell el-Fukhar (meaning pottery tell; it is known locally as Napoleon’s Hill) about one mile east of modern Acre. Acco is poorly represented in the Bible, perhaps because it was so thoroughly Canaanite. Judges 1:31 says, “Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon.” The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, mentions Acco in Judges in a list of coastal cities of the tribe of Asher. Acco was referred to as a Phoenician city in Assyrian literature of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.E. Alexander the Great took the city without resistance in 333 B.C.E. For 600 years afterwards, Acco minted its own coins.

Acco is famous in chronicles of the Crusades under the name Acre. Baldwin I, the king of Jerusalem, captured the city in 1104 with the aid of the Genoese fleet. Saladin recaptured the city for the Moslems in 1187, but Richard the Lion-Hearted and Philip Augustus, king of France, reclaimed it in 1191, after a two-year blockade and siege. Saladin, Richard and Philip negotiated an agreement to spare the Moslem garrison in exchange for the payment of 200,000 gold diners; then Philip left for France. Richard flew into a rage when negotiations with Saladin broke down. Richard had about 3,000 prisoners massacred in sight of the Moslem army still encamped near Acre.

The slide shows the interior of what is popularly called the crypt but which is evidently the refectory, or dining hall, of the Order of St. John. It was built about 1148, the year Louis VII, leader of the Second Crusade, lived at Acre.

GA129: Acre, Turkish Walls

Much of the architecture at the sea side of Acre is Turkish (1516-1910). During the

Crusader period (1099-1291), the properties just inside the walls were given over to various religious orders, such as the Dominicans, the Carmelites, the Templars and the Hospitallers. Little of what they built can still be seen today, however.

GA130: Acre, Turkish Aqueduct

About one mile north of Acre stands this aqueduct on arches built by the Ottoman governor Suleiman Pasha, who began his rule in 1804. Though it looks Roman, the aqueduct has modern mortar. It is eight miles long and brings water to the city from the springs of Kabri to the north.

GA131: Acco (Acre), Hellenistic Stone Mold of Helios

Though Acco (Acre) is usually associated with the Crusader period, it had been a prominent port since Phoenician times (12th century B.C.E.) and perhaps earlier. A stone mold (left, with its cast plaque at right) for the god Helios is a relic of the Hellenistic period (332-63 B.C.E.), when the city was known as Ptolemais after the Greek kings of Egypt. The Ptolemys, successors to Alexander the Great, claimed Acco for themselves. During the late Hellenistic period (152-63 B.C.E.) the city belonged to the Seleucids, the other successors of Alexander, who ruled Syria. Helios is represented as a young man with curly hair and with the rays of the sun emanating from his head. Many other finds, including a Hellenistic city wall, testify to Acco's size and economic prominence in this epoch.

For other representations of Helios, see Slides 84 and 120.

GA132: Horns of Hattin

This site in the eastern Lower Galilee, called in Arabic Qurun Hattin, is an extinct volcano, seen on the horizon at top center. From the ground the eroded rim of the crater resembles two horns. Recent archaeological research has disclosed a Roman village here near the modern village on the south slopes of the rim. On July 4, 1187, the Crusaders met defeat at the hands of Saladin at the Horns of Hattin.

In the neighborhood stands a Druze shrine to Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses (Exodus 3:1, 4:18, 18:1), who is called Shu'eib in Arabic. This shrine is holy to the Druze of Israel, Syria and Lebanon. They gather here in April on the birthday of Jethro to do him honor. Some Christian pilgrims identified the Horns of Hattin as the site of the Sermon on the Mount, or sometimes the Mount of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5-7).

IX. Churches Commemorating Christian Events
[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA133: Nazareth, Aerial View

The Gospels identify Nazareth, 16 miles west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, as Mary's home and as the village of her annunciation (Luke 1:26). Joseph left Nazareth with Mary for Bethlehem to be counted in the census (Luke 2:4), and it was to Nazareth they returned after the rites of purification in the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:39). Consequently we infer that Nazareth was also Joseph's village. Jesus grew up in

Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Luke 4:16), and, according to Luke, the incident of the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple culminated with a return to Nazareth (Luke 2:51). Jesus left Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry when he was baptized by John the Baptist (Mark 1:9). Jesus returned to Nazareth to teach in the synagogue, but was not well received (Luke 4:16-30). Modern Nazareth, seen here, completely engulfs ancient Nazareth.

GA134: Nazareth, Church of the Annunciation
This view from the south shows the main architectural attraction of Nazareth, the Church of the Annunciation. After the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in 70 C.E., one of the priestly "courses," or family divisions assigned Temple duties by lot, fled to Nazareth. It remained a strongly Jewish village until the fourth century C.E., when the first church was built there under the patronage of the Roman emperor Constantine. The remains of the Roman village, which today is directly beneath the second-story altar of the modern-day Church of the Annunciation (shown here), were excavated by Bellarmino Bagatti on behalf of the Franciscan Biblical Institute beginning in 1955.

GA135: Cana Churches

The site of the miracle of the changing of the water to wine at Cana in the Gospel of John--"the first of his signs" (John 2:1-11)--has been popularly placed at Kfar Kenna since the fifth century C.E. Scholars, however, usually agree that the first-century site of Cana of Galilee is to be found not at Kfar Kenna but at Khirbet Qana about five miles north of Sepphoris.

Beneath the church of the Franciscans, built in 1879 (shown to the left with two red-roofed towers), are remains of a synagogue of the fourth century C.E. with an Aramaic inscription in its mosaic floor. The Greek church to the right was built in 1886.

GA136: Tabgha, Sanctuary of the Primacy

In 1934 the Franciscans built the Sanctuary of the Primacy in Tabgha on the foundation of a fourth-century C.E. chapel. The late fourth-century Christian pilgrim Egeria spoke of a rock on the seashore that pilgrims venerated as the presumed *mensa Christi*, or the rock-cut "table of Christ," where Jesus stood in his third post-resurrection appearance, mentioned in John 21:1-14. Here pilgrims commemorated the miraculous draft of fish (John 21:6), in which the disciples made a very large catch of fish after Jesus instructed them to cast their net, and the Primacy (or leadership) conferred on Peter when Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs … feed my sheep" (John 21:15, 18).

GA137: Tabgha, Sanctuary Interior

The altar of the modern church stands upon bedrock cut with steps in accordance with the description of Egeria in the fourth century C.E. On December 12, 1964, Pope Paul VI blessed the stone for a new Shrine of the Primacy of Peter and personally endowed the planned construction.

GA138: Mt. Tabor, Church of the Transfiguration

Early in Christian tradition Mt. Tabor was identified as the mountain of the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28-36). Although the text does not name the mountain, the tradition placing the transfiguration at Mt. Tabor was known to Origen in the third century C.E. In

the fourth or fifth century a church was built on the mountain, and by the ninth century there were four churches. Mt. Tabor suffered a tumultuous history during the Crusades, as it was on a high point beside a major road. The church to be seen today, the only one still standing, was built above a Byzantine church by the Custodia Terra Sancta of the Franciscans in 1921 and consecrated in 1924. The dome of the apse of the modern church depicts the transfiguration in a mosaic designed by A. Villani. Following the account of Luke, Jesus is clothed in white. Moses stands at left, holding the Tablets of the Law, the prophet Elijah is at right, the apostle Peter is at lower left and the apostles James and John are at lower right. The Latin inscription above Jesus reads, “This is my son, my chosen; listen to him” (Luke 9:35).

X. Animals in the Huleh

[Note: this head is not associated with a slide, but will be accessible from the text-only TOC]

GA139: Nutria

Lake Huleh once lay about ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee. In antiquity the lake must have been 9 to 12 feet deep. Lake Huleh was the smallest of the three lakes in the Jordan Rift, the others being the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. During the Hellenistic period, Lake Huleh was called Lake Semachonitis. It became a swamp in the Middle Ages. By 1955 the Huleh was completely drained. The nutria in the slide is a newcomer to modern Israel, but in biblical times foxes (Judges 15:4), jackals (Psalm 63:10), bears (Proverbs 17:12) and wild boars (Psalm 80:13) were all known in the Galilee. Foxes and wild boars are still to be seen in the replanted forests of Galilee.

GA140: Water Buffalo

The water buffalo was not known in the biblical period in ancient Israel. It appears to have been introduced some time just before the eighth century C.E. However, the wild ox is well attested in the Bible (Numbers 23:22; Psalms 22:21), though it is translated as unicorn in the King James Version.