

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 Thutmose 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, Naphtali, 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 Naphtali, 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 III 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 Artababulus 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 about 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). Capernaum 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 Capernaum 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 Capernaum, 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.