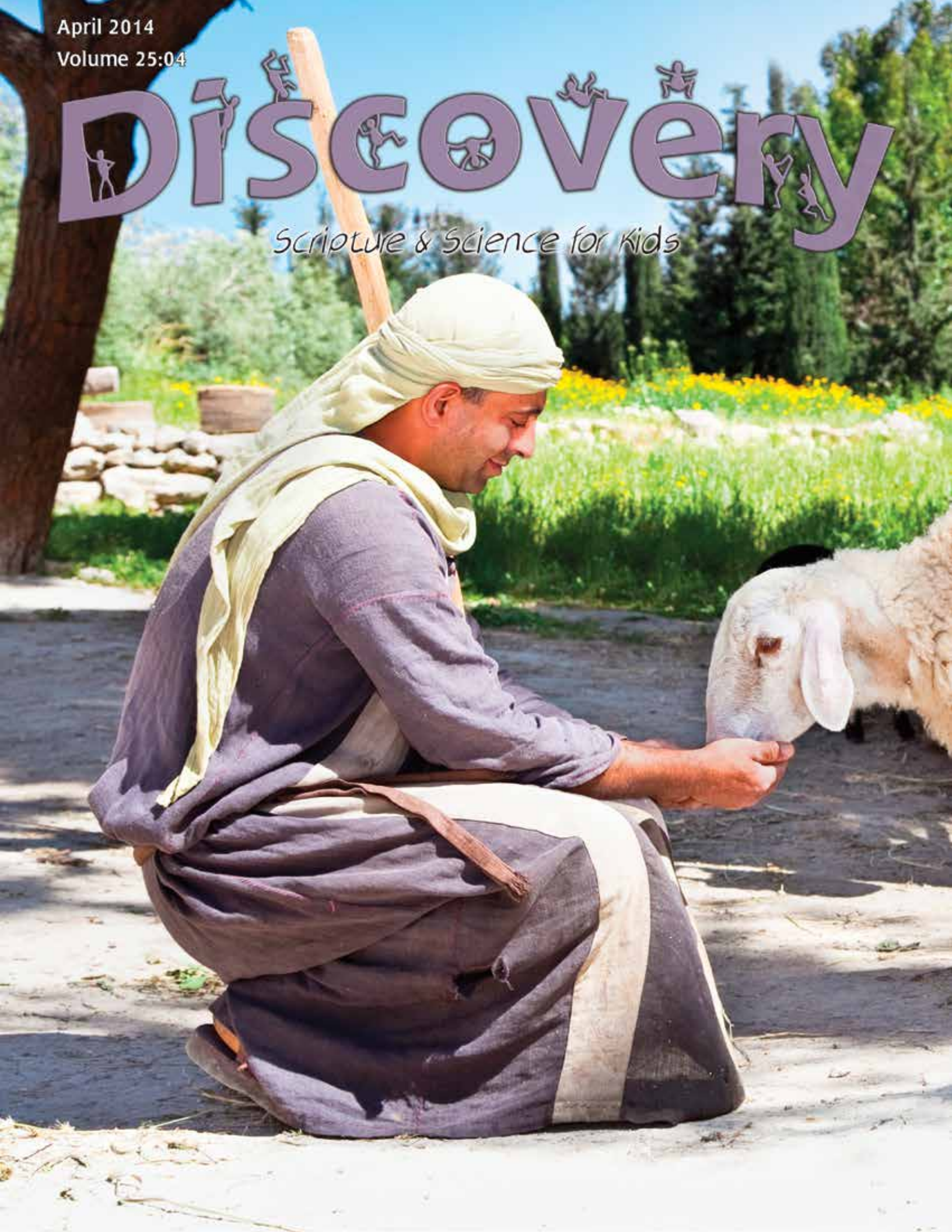


April 2014

Volume 25:04

Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



AFTER THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT AND CONQUERED THE PROMISED LAND, GOD GAVE THE TRIBE OF JUDAH ITS

portion of land. According to Joshua 15, its borders extended southward to Edom, eastward to the Dead Sea, northward to Jerusalem, and westward to the Mediterranean Sea. Eventually, this portion of land took on the name of the tribe that inhabited it—Judah. The Old Testament refers to the “mountains of Judah,” the “wilderness of Judah,” and the “cities of Judah.”

The boundaries of Judah changed throughout history as neighboring nations retreated from, or conquered, portions of Judah. In 587 B.C., the Babylonians conquered Judah, destroying much of its capital city, Jerusalem, including its walls and temple. Many of the inhabitants of Judah were then taken (exiled) to Babylon, while the land of Judah became a Babylonian province (a large area under the rule of the Babylonians).

Several years later, after the Medes and Persians had conquered Babylon, Cyrus (King of Persia) allowed the Jews to return to their homeland to rebuild their Temple. In Ezra 5:8, this territory was called “the province of **Judea**,” and included “Jews” from various tribes. [The New Testament refers to many faithful Jews (such as Anna, Paul, and Barnabas) who were not from the tribe of Judah, but of tribes such as Asher, Benjamin, and Levi. Thus, after Babylonian captivity, the term “Jew” came to refer to **all** of the descendants of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, regardless of which tribe they descended from.]

In the time of Christ, about 500 years after the Jews’ return from Babylon, the region of Judea (which was now under Roman control) extended as far south as Gaza and as far north as Joppa (roughly 50 miles). It also measured about 50 miles from east to west (from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea). Judea was basically south of Samaria and west of the Jordan River. However, Judea’s territory also extended a little into the eastern side of the Jordan. The New Testament calls this area “the region of Judea beyond the Jordan” (Matthew 19:1).

Many may think that Jesus spent a lot of time in Judea since He was born there (in the town of Bethlehem) and died there (in Jerusalem), but He actually spent most of His time in Galilee. In fact, Galilee is mentioned by name many more times in the Gospel accounts than Judea and Samaria combined. Yet, all three regions of Palestine played important roles in the life of Christ, and especially in the early church.

Judea

ERIC LYONS

Samaria

JEFF MILLER

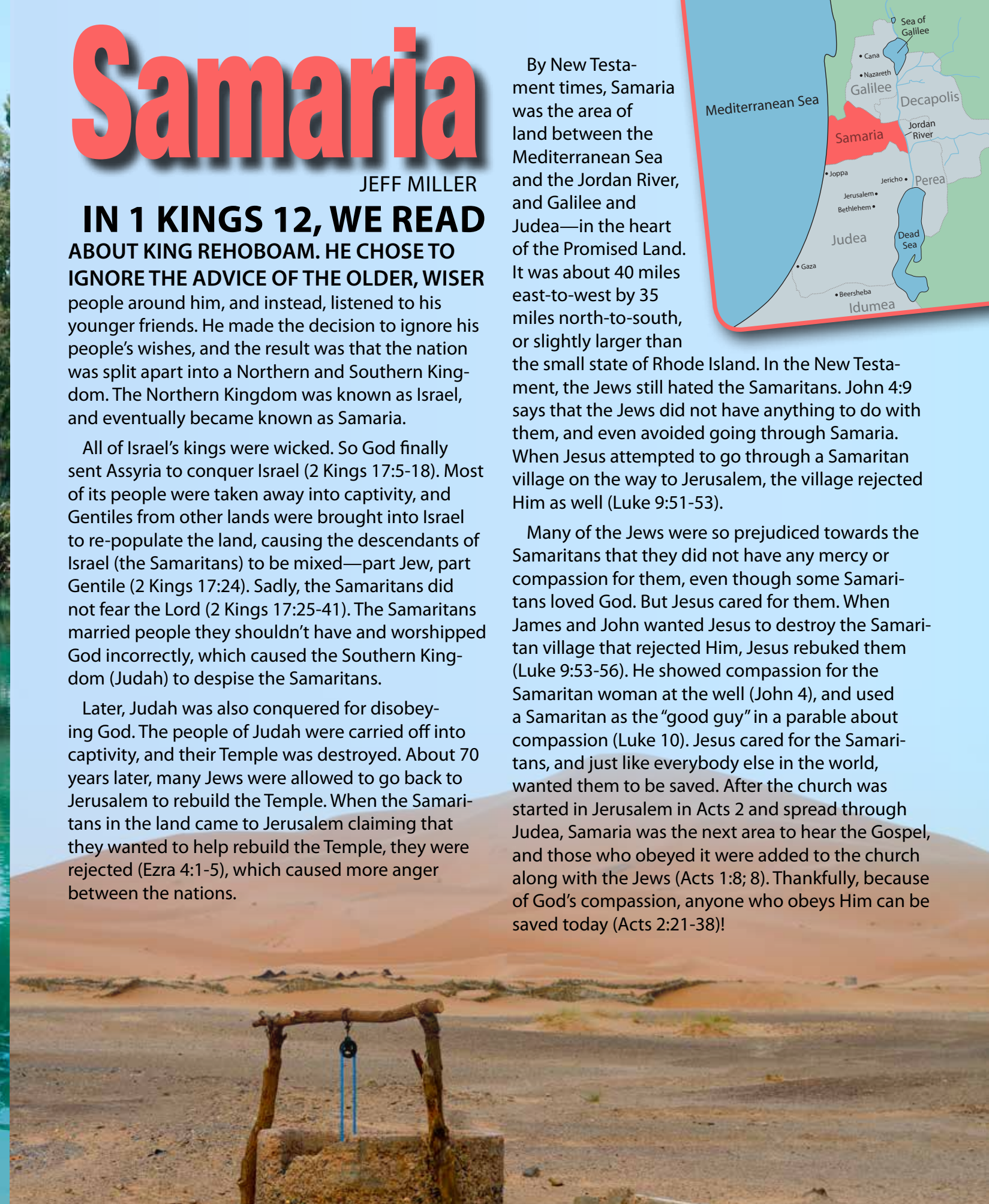
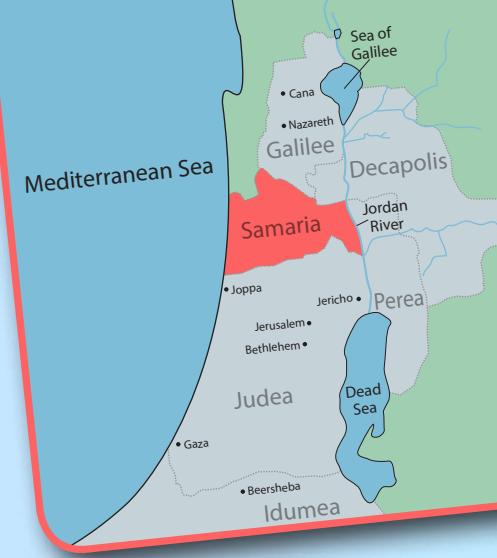
IN 1 KINGS 12, WE READ ABOUT KING REHOBOAM. HE CHOSE TO IGNORE THE ADVICE OF THE OLDER, WISER people around him, and instead, listened to his younger friends. He made the decision to ignore his people’s wishes, and the result was that the nation was split apart into a Northern and Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was known as Israel, and eventually became known as Samaria.

All of Israel’s kings were wicked. So God finally sent Assyria to conquer Israel (2 Kings 17:5-18). Most of its people were taken away into captivity, and Gentiles from other lands were brought into Israel to re-populate the land, causing the descendants of Israel (the Samaritans) to be mixed—part Jew, part Gentile (2 Kings 17:24). Sadly, the Samaritans did not fear the Lord (2 Kings 17:25-41). The Samaritans married people they shouldn’t have and worshipped God incorrectly, which caused the Southern Kingdom (Judah) to despise the Samaritans.

Later, Judah was also conquered for disobeying God. The people of Judah were carried off into captivity, and their Temple was destroyed. About 70 years later, many Jews were allowed to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. When the Samaritans in the land came to Jerusalem claiming that they wanted to help rebuild the Temple, they were rejected (Ezra 4:1-5), which caused more anger between the nations.

By New Testament times, Samaria was the area of land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, and Galilee and Judea—in the heart of the Promised Land. It was about 40 miles east-to-west by 35 miles north-to-south, or slightly larger than the small state of Rhode Island. In the New Testament, the Jews still hated the Samaritans. John 4:9 says that the Jews did not have anything to do with them, and even avoided going through Samaria. When Jesus attempted to go through a Samaritan village on the way to Jerusalem, the village rejected Him as well (Luke 9:51-53).

Many of the Jews were so prejudiced towards the Samaritans that they did not have any mercy or compassion for them, even though some Samaritans loved God. But Jesus cared for them. When James and John wanted Jesus to destroy the Samaritan village that rejected Him, Jesus rebuked them (Luke 9:53-56). He showed compassion for the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), and used a Samaritan as the “good guy” in a parable about compassion (Luke 10). Jesus cared for the Samaritans, and just like everybody else in the world, wanted them to be saved. After the church was started in Jerusalem in Acts 2 and spread through Judea, Samaria was the next area to hear the Gospel, and those who obeyed it were added to the church along with the Jews (Acts 1:8; 8). Thankfully, because of God’s compassion, anyone who obeys Him can be saved today (Acts 2:21-38)!



Galilee

DAVE MILLER

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GALILEE WAS A SMALL AREA IN WHICH 20 TOWNS EXISTED THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN

by Solomon to Hiram king of Tyre as payment for his work in transporting timber from Lebanon to Jerusalem. By the first century, when Jesus came to Earth, the Roman Empire had divided Palestine into three provinces: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee (Acts 9:31). Galilee composed the whole northern section of Palestine, which originally was land contained within the Israelite tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali. It was divided into two sections: "Lower" and "Upper" Galilee. The province was fertile in its forests, groves, fruit trees, vineyards, meadows, and pastures. Also, it had an excellent network of roads that gave it constant contact with the rest of the world.

By Jesus' day, many Jews, especially among the leaders, had contempt for Galilee. When Nicodemus interceded on Jesus' behalf, the Sanhedrin shot back with sarcasm: "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee" (John 7:52). Galileans even had a recognizable accent that differed from those who lived in Jerusalem (Mark 14:70).

Most of Jesus' private life and public acts took place in Galilee. Matthew, Mark, and Luke report to us His activities mostly conducted in this province, while John focuses more on Jesus' work in Judea. Much of His time was spent specifically around the Sea of Galilee. Most of the three years of His ministry were spent along the shore of this lake. Here He presented more than half of His parables and performed most of His miracles. His very first miracle on Earth was performed at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and His last on Earth on the shore of Galilee's sea. It was in Galilee that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and called His first disciples. And it was also in Galilee that Jesus experienced transfiguration.

Christianity proves itself to be true on many fronts. One of the most amazing is the way the Bible reports to us real people and real places in real history where real events took place. Galilee is one of those places.



The Herods — Who? What? and Where?

DURING THE LAST CENTURY B.C., AND THE FIRST CENTURY A.D., THERE WAS A FAMILY THAT BECAME VERY

famous as rulers among the Jews. These people were known as the Herods (the word Herod means "son of the hero"). Unfortunately, they were not good or kind rulers. In fact, many of them were extremely wicked.

Herod the Great was appointed by the Romans to be "king of the Jews," and reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. He is mentioned in Luke 15. The Jews hated Herod, and so in an attempt to make them his friends he helped them rebuild their Temple (a process that took 46 years; John 2:20). But in the end, he turned out to be a vicious monarch. He heard about Jesus' birth, and because he was jealous, ordered that all the Jewish baby boys under two years old living in Bethlehem be killed (Matthew 2:16).

When Herod died, his kingdom was divided among his sons. Archelaus (Matthew 2:22) was given Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Herod Antipas was given Galilee, and Philip was given territory in northeast Palestine (Luke 3:1). Archelaus served as ethnarch from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6 (an ethnarch is a governor). He was a failure as a leader, and lost his position. As a result, Judea was run for a time by Roman prefects (men who were appointed as governors by the Roman emperor).

Herod Antipas served as tetrarch of Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (a tetrarch is one who rules over a fourth of a kingdom). He had a brother named Philip, who was married to a woman named Herodias.

Herod Antipas "stole" Herodias to take her as his own wife. John the Baptizer courageously opposed this sinful act, and as a result Herod Antipas had John beheaded (Matthew 14:1-12). Later, Herod Antipas would interview Jesus shortly before His crucifixion (Luke 23:8-12).

Herod Agrippa I was a grandson of Herod the Great who ultimately became the king of Palestine and ruled from A.D. 37 to A.D. 44. He killed the first apostle (James—Acts 12:1-2), and imprisoned Peter (Acts 12:3-11, 19). But his life came to a grizzly end. On one occasion he gave a speech, and the people hearing it claimed that it was so good he must have been a "god." Herod, the Bible says, "did not give glory to God," and as a result God sent an angel, who caused Herod to be eaten by worms and die (Acts 12:20-23).

Herod Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I, ruled various territories in northern Palestine from A.D. 53 to at least A.D. 93. The apostle Paul had an opportunity to defend Jesus and the Gospel before this king (Acts 26), but Agrippa II rejected the Gospel.

The members of the family of Herod could have followed God and been good rulers. Instead, they chose to do evil. Because of their great wickedness, they not only suffered (and sometimes died), but are remembered in history for the many wrongs they committed. We should be thankful that today we can serve the righteous King Jesus Christ, Who is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15), and Who never sinned (1 Peter 2:22). Let us strive every day to be like our Great King!



ACTIVITY PAGES

TRUE OR FALSE

- ___ The Herods were good, kind rulers.
- ___ Idumea was named after the descendants of Moab.
- ___ "The land beyond the Jordan" is a reference to Samaria.
- ___ Jesus grew up in Judea.
- ___ The woman at the well (in John 4) lived in the region of Samaria.
- ___ By the first century, the Roman Empire had divided Palestine into three provinces: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.
- ___ The Jews and the Samaritans got along very well.
- ___ The region of Perea is on the east side of the Jordan.

MAZE

HELP THE EARLY DISCIPLES FIND THEIR WAY FROM JERUSALEM TO GALILEE.

START

FINISH

SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE

U Q T S G B N G P B E
 G P J H A A I I K I V
 J J K G A M L T L D N F
 U R D T M M A I N U L B
 D B S V M K W R L M C W
 E Z I J E X P W I E D W
 A X R O D Z P E Z A E G
 A L O R I A D O R I D Z
 U B U D T B E O M E T S
 V O M A E G C R D M A W
 R G G N R O A Y J E J T
 F L N O R X P I V M R V
 E U P A A L O Y Y X R R
 R V G A N A L R Y H F Z
 W B R Y E C I V H O K T
 G S X H A X S S K K Q J
 L G J Y N U I X P N S T

- Region in which Jesus was born.

- Means "ten cities."

- Region just north of Judea.

- Official name of the region "beyond the Jordan."

- Region south of Judea.

- Region in which Jesus grew up.

- River to the east of Judea and Samaria. _____
- Sea to the west of Judea and Samaria.

Dear Digger Doug,

What can archaeology help us know about the Bible?

Dear reader,

Suppose the Bible tells us about a king in Judah who dug a large tunnel under the city of Jerusalem. If this really did happen, we might expect to see the tunnel still there, or at least see signs that it was dug at one time. Or suppose the Bible mentions ancient kings who ruled other nations. When we find inscriptions and documents from those nations, we would expect them to have the names of the kings mentioned in the Bible. Since many of the documents or artifacts might have been destroyed, we would not expect to find archaeological evidence to verify everything in the Bible. But we would expect to discover some artifacts that show the Bible to be accurate.

The many artifacts that have been found through the centuries reveal that what the Bible writers penned was always the truth. There has never been a single discovery that disproves anything in the Bible. Aren't you glad that archaeology (meaning the study of physical artifacts from the lives of people in the past) is a friend to Bible believers?





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Lesser-Known Regions of Palestine

ERIC LYONS

JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND GALILEE WERE, BY FAR, THE MOST WELL-KNOWN REGIONS OF PALESTINE. THESE

regions, all of which were on the west side of the Jordan River, are specifically mentioned by name over 100 times in the New Testament. There were, however, lesser-known regions that we need to be aware of in order to better understand the New Testament.

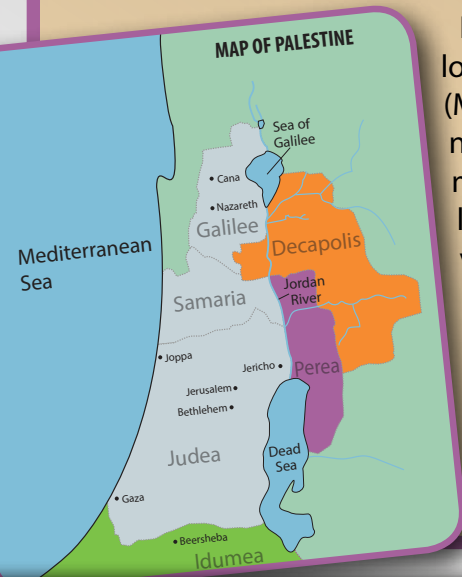
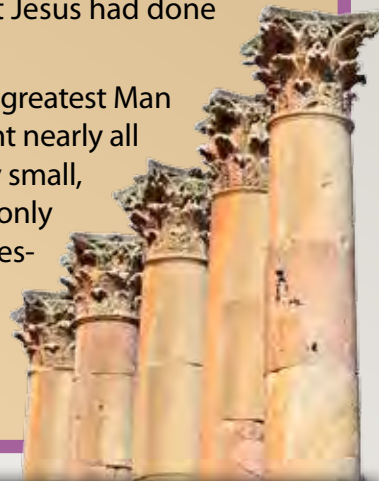
Idumea was the region located south of Judea (Mark 3:5). Although this name may seem unfamiliar, the people who lived there should be very well known to you (if you remember much about the Old Testament). Idumea is simply the Greek name for the land of Edom. Recall that the Edomites

were the descendents of Esau, the son of Isaac and brother of Jacob.

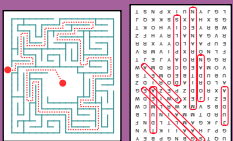
The New Testament writers referred to one important region in the time of Christ on the east side of the Jordan simply as the land "beyond the Jordan" (Matthew 4:25). More officially, first-century historians, such as Josephus, called this land "Perea." It was in this land that John, the forerunner of Christ, lived and baptized. The region of Perea extended east to west from the deserts to the Jordan River, and north to south from about the Yarmuk to the Arnon rivers. Many prejudiced Jews valued the region of Perea as it allowed them to travel between Judea and Galilee without going through the despised region of Samaria.

Another region on the east side of the Jordan was known as Decapolis (meaning "ten cities"). This region is mentioned three times in the New Testament and was located north of Perea. Mark records that a man whom Jesus had healed of demon possession "began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him" (5:20).

Isn't it amazing that Jesus, the greatest Man Who ever set foot on Earth, spent nearly all of His life in only a few, relatively small, regions in Palestine? Yet, within only a few years after His death and resurrection, His story was being spread to hundreds of millions of people around the world.



ANSWERS



SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE: 1. Judea; 2. Decapolis; 3. Samaria; 4. Perea; 5. Idumea; 6. Galilee; 7. Jordan; 8. Mediterranean.
 TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-F; 3-F; 4-F; 5-T; 6-T; 7-F; 8-T.
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