

Biblical and Related Notes to Jordan

Introductory notes:

This booklet focuses on the sites in modern Jordan that are linked to the Bible and, in a few cases, to non-biblical events that have biblical relevance. (For brevity, the term "Jordan" means the modern Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan unless specifically modified as in Jordan River, etc., even though modern Jordan did not come into existence as an entity until 1948.) Linking modern and ancient locations can be done based on one or more of several factors including: archeological discoveries, Biblical references that are clear enough to indicate a certain site, inferences from Biblical references, non-Biblical history, logic and knowledge of history, name similarities, and traditions. While this booklet is not intended to be a scholarly study of the sites, the method of linking each site to its Biblical reference will be discussed so that the reader can gain some confidence that the site *is* appropriately linked. The booklet is not an intensive history of the area, however, some history is included as background. The most recognizable name for individuals and places are chosen (except to emphasize a point) even though the name may not have existed until later. For example, Abraham is used throughout even though he was known as Abram early in his life. Likewise, Amman is used even though the city may have been called by another name during the time that the discussion is focused. Note also that names vary in spelling and should be viewed from a Semitic language standpoint of having a root of, usually, 3 consonants with vowels added for intonation, but that the vowels, often changed over time as the way the people said the name changed.

This booklet is divided into two parts – 1) Biblical and Related References to Jordan and 2) Notes and Explanations – both presented as charts. The Biblical references are separated into historical and scriptural periods to give a visual sense of when various events took place or were referred to in the Bible. Of note is the overall impression that is gained by scanning the entire document – Jordan was important throughout all Biblical periods, a fact not well appreciated. Some might recognize the importance of Jordan in Old Testament times but few realize the importance of Jordan in the life of Jesus. Many important events are simply referred to as occurring "east of Jordan" or after having "crossed over Jordan". A careful reading of the New Testament suggests that Jesus spent much time in Jordan. He was baptized there, fasted and was tempted there, preached there, converted many there, and sought refuge there from the turmoil in Galilee and Judea. These scriptures also suggest that the number who followed Jesus beyond the Jordan River (that is, on the east side) may have been greater than the number in Galilee and Judea, but then, the resistance of many to his word might be expected because "a prophet is without honor in his own country". Moreover, the turmoil that existed on the western side with many different factions fighting and arguing against each other, would have polarized the people and, therefore, many who might have accepted his message could have been confused.

The chart on Notes and Explanations gives comments about each of the sites. Some of the comments relate Biblical stories or occurrences associated with the site. Other notes discuss non-Biblical history, and still others discuss the site as it now appears. Some stories extend over many locations (like the exodus). However, when a story is related, it is given only once and that is done at the place of greatest relevance.

On both charts the sites are arranged, generally, from north to south and from west to east. Several good maps are available on the Internet that will help in locating the sites. Note, however, that scholars differ on the locations of many sites and so some individual judgment will be needed. It is best to consult several different maps to get a good perspective.

Just as in ancient times, Jordan is a welcoming place and a land of refuge and peace. Great prophets came to Jordan for safety or sent their families there for protection. Some reconciled with family and enemies in Jordan. Half of the cities designated as refuge cities were in Jordan. Even today, when turmoil boils in all the countries surrounding it, Jordan remains a land of peace. The spirit of this land is calming and soothing. No wonder prophets from Moses to Jesus found safety and refuge in this little country.

Biblical and Related References to Jordan

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
King's Highway		Gen 12:1-5, 14:5-16, 24:1-10, 51-61, 25:6-10, 27:41-45, 28:1-5, 29:1-4, 31:21-25, 32:9-10, 33:16-18, 50:10-13	Num 20:14-21, 21:11-15	Jdg 11:17-18				Gal 1:17	Trajan's road
Other side of Jordan, Over Jordan, East people/Al Ghor/Jordan Rift Valley, Jordan River Valley		Gen 10:26-30, 13:5-12, 25:1-6, 25:12-16	Num 32:5	Jdg 6:3				Mt 4:24-25, Mk 3:7-8, 8:10	
Decapolis								Mt 4:25, Mk 5:20, 7:31-37	
Bashan		Gen 14:5	Num 21:33-35, Deu 3:1-11, 4:43	Jos 13:29-31; 20:8; 21:27	1Kgs 4:13, Psm 22:12, 68:15, 2Kgs 10:33, 13:25	Isa 2:13, Ezk 27:6, 39:18, Jer 50:19, Zch 11:2, Amo 4:1-2			
Sea of Galilee, Sea of Chinnereth/Sea of Tiberias, Lake Gennesaret, Kinneret			Num 34:11	Jos 11: 2, 13:27, 19:35				Mt 4:13-22, 8:23, 14:13-34, Mk 1:14-20, 4:35-36, 5:1-11, 21, 6:31-56, 7:31,	

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob-Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Judges	Kings	Major-Minor Prophets	Hellenistic-Roman	Christian –New Testament	Byzantine and later
								8:10-13, Lk 5:1, Jn 6:1	
Jordan River		Gen 32:10	Num 34:15, 35:1, 9-10	Jos 3:15-17, 4:1-9, 5:1, 22:10, 22:25, Jdg 7:24, 12:5-6	1Kgs 7:46, 2Kgs 2:6-14, 5:1-14	Isa 9:1-25		Mt 3:5-6, 13-17, 19:1, Mk 1:5, 9, 3:7-8, 10:1, Lk 3:3, 21, 4:1, Jn 1:28-34, 10:39-42	
Yarmouk River		Northern boundary of Jordan							
Gadara, Antiochia,/Umm Qays							Damaged in Maccabean wars, rebuilt by Pompey, Decapolis	Mt 8:28-34, Mk 5:1-20, Lk 8:26-39	Decimated by Vespasian, 4 th C church
Abila Dekapoleos, Selucia/Hartha, Ain Quweilbeh							Decapolis		
Ramoth-gilead/Ramtha			Num 35:1-34, Deu 4:41-43	Jos 20:1-8, 21:38	1Kgs 4:13, 20:26-34, 22:1-36, 2Kgs 8:28, 9:1-7, 13:3-7, 1Chr 6:80				
Capitolias/Bayt Ras							Decapolis		
Arabella, Bayt Arbeel/Irbid	3200 BC					Hos 10:14			
Al Yaseelah/Hawara							Trade city		
Gilead		Gen 31:21-25, 47, 37:25	Num 32:1, 40, Deu 3:12-13		Ps 60:7	Jer 8:22, 22:6, 46:11			

Site	Biblical-Historical Period									
	Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
Pella/Tabaqat Fahl	4000 BC				Jdg 8:1-21, 10:17, 11:11, 34	1Kgs 12:25	Hos 12:4	Decapolis		Josephus and Eusebius
Brook Cherith/Wadi al-Yabis						1Kgs 17:3-7			John 3:23	
Jabesh-Gilead/Tell al-Maqbara	2500 BC				Jdg 21:8-15	1Sam 11:1-11, 31:11-13, 2Sam 2:4-7, 21:12, 1Chr 10:11-12				
Abel-meholah/Tell al-maqlub	3200 BC					1Kgs 19:16-21				
Tishbe, Listib/Tell Mar Elias (north)						1Kgs 17:1-6			Lk 4:25-26,	
Ajloun										Crusader period castle
Anjara									Jesus stayed in a cave there	
Zaphon/Crossing or passages of the Jordan, Tell al-Qos					Jos 13:27, Jdg 12:1-6					
Khirbet al Samra								Roman		
Rihab, Beth Rehob				Num 13:21		2Sam 10:6				
Umm al Surab								Martyrs		
Gerasa/Jerash	3000 BC							Decapolis	Mt 4:25, Mk 5:20, 7:31-37, 10:1-31	
Bostra (nearby)/Umm al-Jimal										Important Byzantine ruins
Al Fudain/Mafraq		Gen 10:22-23				1 Chr 1:17				

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob-Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Judges	Kings	Major-Minor Prophets	Hellenistic-Roman	Christian –New Testament	Byzantine and later
Mizpah-gilead		Gen 31:23-52		Jdg 11:29					
Jabbok/Zarqa River		Gen 32:22, 33:17	Num 21:24, Deu 3:16-17	Jdg 8:4-12,					
Mahanaim, Mihna/Tulul ed-Dhab al-Gharbi		Gen 32:1-23		Jos 13:26, 30, 21:38	2Sam 2:8, 29, 17:24-29, 1Kgs 2:7, 1Chr 6:80				
Penuel, Peniel, Behlium/Tulul ed-Dhab al-Sharqi		Gen 32:23-33:4		Jdg 8:1-21,	1Kgs 12:25	Hos 12:4			
Succoth, Sukkot, Shochoh/Tell Deir Alla		Gen 33:17		Jos 13:27, Jdg 8: 5-16	1Sam 17:1, 1Kgs 7:46, 2Chr 4:17				
Adam/Damieh (near to Zerathan/Tell as-Saidiyya)				Jos 3:16	1Kgs 7:46, 2Chr 4:17				
Perea/Jordan River Valley								Mt 19:1, 26, Mk 10:1-31	
Tomb of Gad/Ain al-Jadur, Salt		Gen 35:26							
Qasr Al-Hallabat							Desert castle		
Land of the Children of Ammon, Rabbath-ammon, Philadelphia/Rajmal-Malouf/Amman, Kingdom of Jordan		Gen 19:38	Num 21:24, Deu 2:18-22, 36-37, 3:16-17	Jdg 10:6-10, 11:12-33	1Sam 1-11, 2Sam 10:1-19, 11:1-27, 17:26-29, 1Kgs 11:1-7, 14:21, 31, 2Kgs	Neh 4:6-9, Jer 49:1-6, Ezk 21:28-32, Amo 1:13-14, Zeph 2:8-9	1Maccabees		

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
					24:1-4, 2Chr 26:6-8				
Qasr Amra									Desert castle
Qasr Al-Azraq							Desert castle		Lawrence of Arabia
Qasr Al-Mushatta									Desert castle
Tell Mar Elyas (south), Brook Kerith, Chereth /Wadi Al-kharrar Elijah's Hill, Tell al-Kharrar					1Kgs 17:3-6, 19:1-18, 2Kgs 2:1-18	Mal 3:2-24		Mt 11:13-14, Lk 1:8-17	
Bethany beyond Jordan/al-Maghtas						Jer 49:19		Mt 3:1-17, Mk 1:9-12, Lk 3:1-6, 21-23, Jn 1:19-51, 3:26, 10:40, Act 1:21-22, Gal 3:15-19	2 nd C prayer hall
Bethabara/Israelite crossing				Jos 3:1-17, 4:1-24, 5:1, Jdg 7:24-25	2Kgs 2:8-14	Ezr 1:1-11		Jn 1:28	
Plains of Moab, Abila, Shittim (also called Abel-shittim) and near Beth-peor, Beth-jesimoth/ Abil-ez-Zeit, Al Kafrayn			Num 22:1, 25:1-8, 26:63, 31:16, 33:49, Deu 3:29, 4:3, 34:6-8	Jos 3:1, 22:17	Psm 106:28	Ezk 25:9, Hos 9:10		1Cor10:8	
Beth-nimra, Tel Nimrin/Shuneh Janoubiah (south)			Num 32:34-36	Jos 13:27					Eusebius

Site	Biblical-Historical Period									
	Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
Abel-keramim/Tell al-Umayri, near Naur	3200 BC				Jdg 11:33					
Amorites	2400 BC	Gen 10:16	Num 21:1-35, Deu 1:7, 19-21, 2:24-33, 3:8-11, 4:49, 31:4	Jos 2:10, 9:10, Jdg 11:19-22	1Sm 7:14, 1Kgs 9:20-21	Amo 2:9				
Heshbon/Hesbun			Num 21:24-26	Jos 13:17-26		Isa 15:4, 16:8, Jer 48:2, 34, 45, 49:3, SSol 7:4				Josephus
Mt. Nebo, Mt. Pisgah/Siyagha			Num 32:38, 33:47, Deu 32:49, 34:1-5,			Isa 15:2, Jer 48:1-2	2Mac 2:4-7	2Pet 2:15-16,		
Temptations of Christ/Wadi al-Afreet, Al Mukhayyat			Num 32:38, 33:47					Mt 4:1-5, Mk 1:12-13, Lk 4:1-2		
Medaba/Madaba			Num 21:30	Jos 13:15-23, Ru 1-4	1Chr 19:7	Isa 15:2, Jer 48:33	1Maccabees 9:35-36	Mt 1:5		1 st C BC house, 6 th C map of Middle East, Trajan Road, many mosaics (114AD)
Qasr Al-Kharana										Desert castle
Mephaath/Kastrom Mefa'a, Umm ar Rasas				Jos 13:18, 21:26-37		Jer 48:21				Largest mosaic in Jordan ruins of

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
									city, stylite tower
Sea of the Arabah, Vale of Siddim, Salt Sea/ Dead Sea		Gen 14:3-10	Num 34:12, Deu 3:17	Jos 3:16	2Sam 8:13	Ezk 47:18-21			
Beth-Baal-Meon/Ma'in and Zara			Num 32:38	Jos 13:17-19 (means water god)					
Machaerus/Mukawir								Mt 14:3-11, Mk 1:14, Lk 3:20	
Almon-diblathaim, Diblath			Num 33:46-47						
Dibon Gad/Dhiban	2500 BC		Num 21:4-10, 21-32, 32:1-6, 33:45-46	Jos 13:8-10, 17	2Kgs 3:4-8	Isa 15:1-9, Jer 48:1-3, 18-22			
Aroer/Arzair			Num 21:26, Deu 2:24-36, 3:12, 4:48		2Kgs 10:33	Jer 48:18-19			
Arnon River/Wadi Mujib			Num 21:13-15, 24, 22:36, Deu 2:24-36, 3:8-16, 4:48	Jos 12:1, Jdg 11:13-23	2Kgs 10:32-33	Is 16:1-2, Jer 48:20			
Moab		Gen 19:30-38, 36:35	Ex 15:15, Num 21:11-29, 22:1-41, 23:1-30, 24:1-25, 25:1-3,	Jos 13:32, 24:9, Jdg 3:12-30, 10:6, 11:12-25, 18:11, Ruth 1:1-22,	1Sam 12:9, 14:47, 22:1-5, 2Sam 8:2-12, 23:20,	Isa 11:14, 15:1-9, 16:2-14, 25:10, Jer 9:26, 25:21, 27:3, 40:11, 48:1-47,		Mt 1:5-7	

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
			33:44-50, Deu 1:5, 2:8-29, 23:3, 29:1, 32:49, 34:1-8	2:1-21, 4:3-10	1Kgs 11:1-33, 2Kgs 1:1, 3:4-26, 24:1-2, 1Chr 1:46, 8:8, 11:22, 18:2-11, 2Cr 20:1-23, 24:26, Neh 13:1-23, Psm 60:8, 83:6, 108:9	Ezk 25:8-11, Dan 11:41, Amo 2:1-2, Mic 6:5, Zeph 2:8-9			
Rubat Moab, Areopolis/Rabba									
Kir-moab, Qer Harreseth, Mizpah-moab/Kerak	2500 BC				1Sam 22:3, 2Kgs 3:4-27, 16:9,	Jer 48:31-36, Is 15:1, 16:7-11, 22:6, Amo 1:5, 9:7			
Sodom/Bab edh-Dhra	3000 BC,	Gen 10:19, 13:10-12, 14:2-22, 18:16-26, 19:1-29	Deu 23:17, 29:23, 32:32		1Kgs 14:24, 15:12, 22:46	Isa 1:9-10, 3:9, Jer 23:14, 49:18, 50:40, Lam 4:6, Ez 16:46-56, Zph 2:9		Mt 10:15, 11:23-24, Mk 6:11, Lk 10:12, 17:29, Rom 9:29, 2Pet 2:6, Jude 1:17, Rev 11:8	
Gomorrah/Numeira	3000 BC	Gen 10:19, 13:5-15, 14:2-22, 18:16-33, 19:1-29	Deu 29:23, 32:32			Isa 1:9-10, 3:9, Jer 23:14, 49:18, 50:40, Zph 2:9		Mt 10:15, Mk 6:11, Rom 9:29, 2Pet2:6, Jude 1:7	
Lot's Wife formation		Gen 19:26						Lk 17:28-32	

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob-Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Judges	Kings	Major-Minor Prophets	Hellenistic-Roman	Christian –New Testament	Byzantine and later
Zoar, Bela/Safi		Gen 14:1-8 19:22-26							
Lot's Cave/Khirbet Al Mukhayyat		Gen 19:30-38							
Plain of Jordan, Cities of the Valley		Gen 13:1-13, 14:1-12						Lk 17:28-32, Jude 1:7	
Desert Highway			Num 20:14-22, Deu 2:3-9	Jdg 11:18					Muslim pilgrimage, Hijaz RR, desert forts
Zered Valley/Wadi Hasa			Num 21:11-12, Deu 2:13-14						
Lje-abarim			Num 21:11, 33:44-45						
Edom, Idumea		Gen 25:21-34, 26:34-35, 27:1-46, 28:1-9, 33:1-16, 36:1-43	Num 20:14-21, Deu 2:1-18, 23:7-9	Jdg 11:12-23	1Sam 14:47, 2Kgs 3:9, 8:20-22, 14:7, 1Chr 18:13, Psm 60:8, 108:9, 137:7	Isa 34:5-8, Jer 49:7-22, Hab 3:3	Josephus Any. 13:9	Mk 3:8	
Atad/Abel-Misraim		Gen 50:7-11			Psm 58:9				
Oboth, Ain Uber			Num 21:4-11, 33:43-44						
Bozrah/Busayra		Gen 36:31-33				Is 34:6, 63:1-6			
Punon, Phaino/Faynon	4000 BC		Num 33:41-43					Jn 3:14-15	Eusebius mines
Shobak/Montreal									Crusader castle

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju dges	Kings	Major-Mi nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
Zalmonah/Bir Madhkur			Num 33:41-42						
Mt Hor/Jebel Haroun			Ex 4:14-16, 17:10-16, 24:9-11, 28:1-43, 32:1-35, Num 6:22-26, 20:22-29, 21:4, 33:37-41					Heb 5:4	Jophesus, Eusebius, Tomb of Prophet Aaron
Kadesh-barnea, en Mishpat, Sela/Petra, Umm al-Biryā		Gen 14:6-7, 16:14, 20:1	Num 13:1-26, 14:29-45, 20:1-24, 32:8, 33:36-37, 34:4, Deu 1:19, 46, 2:1-14, 9:23, 32:51	Jos 10:41, 14:6-7, 15:3, Jdg 11:16-17	2Kgs 14:7, 2 Cr 25:11-12, Psm 29:8	Is 16:1, Ez 47:19, 48:28	1Maccabees 5:25		Josephus, Eusebius
Wilderness of Zin			Num 27:14, 33:36, 34:4	Jos 15:3,					
Amalekites		Gen 36:12	Ex 17:8, Num 13:29, 14:25	Jdg 12:15	1Sam 15:2-7, 27:8, 28:16, 1 Chr 4:42-43				Lawrence
Teman/Ma'an					1Kgs 11:17-18	Jb 2:11, Jer 25:23, 49:7, Ez 25:13, Ob 1:8-9, Am 1:12,			
Mt. Seir		Gen 14:6, 32:3, 33:14-16	Deu 2:1-22, 33:2		2Cr 25:14				

Site	Biblical-Historical Period								
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	Before Abram	Abraham, Isaac-Jacob- Joseph	Moses	Joshua-Ju- dges	Kings	Major-Mi- nor Prophets	Hellenistic -Roman	Christian -New Testament	Byzantine and later
Paran/Wadi Araba, Wadi Rum, Mudawarra		Gen 16:3-14, 17:20, 21:9-22, 24:62, 25:11-14	Ex 2:15, Nm 10:12, Deu 1:1, 33:2	Jdg 7:12		Is 11:14, Hab 3:3			Eusebius, Hijaz
Ezion-geber, Berenice, Aila/Aqaba	4000 BC	Edomites	Num 33:35-36, Deu 2:8		1Kgs 9:26, 22:49, 2Kgs 14:22, 2Chr 20:36				
Midianites		Gen 25:1-2, 37:28	Ex 2:15, Num 25:6-15, 31:1-12			Isa 60:6			
Mt Horeb, Mt Sinai			Ex 2:11-21, 3:1-18, 4:1-19, Deu 4:10-15,	Jdg 6:1-40	1Kgs 19:8			Gal 4:25	

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
King's Highway	The King's Highway runs from Syria in the north (with connections on to Mesopotamia), through modern Jordan to Aqaba in the south (with connecting routes to Egypt). In the forested mountains of Gilead in northern Jordan the highway follows canyons and moderate passes between the mountains. In the middle and southern parts of Jordan the land is much drier and the road follows towns that sprang up at wells and streams. All along its distance there are east-west passages that follow

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>canyons and streams affording access to fords across the Jordan River into Canaan and linkages with important trade routes through the desert like the frankincense route to Yemen.</p> <p>When Abraham and Lot left their homeland to find a new land promised to them by God, the logical route from Haran (northern Syria) to Canaan would have been along the King's Highway. The mountains of northern Lebanon would have inhibited a more coastal way and Haran is north of Damascus so the King's Highway could have easily been followed from Damascus south. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Abraham followed the well-known highway far enough south to come to a good east-west passage that would have crossed the Jordan River. Some have suggested that the patriarchs may have departed from the King's Highway near the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee, but others point out that many of the events of their lives and references to places in central Jordan (such as the Jabbok River) suggest a crossing of the Jordan River further south, through the valleys of the mountains of Gilead in Jordan.</p> <p>Some incidents of the use of the King's Highway by Abraham and his family occurred, for example, when Mesopotamian kings raided areas from northern to southern borders of Jordan and then retreated back into Syria along the King's Highway, taking Lot with them. When Abraham heard about it, he took his soldiers/servants and pursued the Syrian kings and fought with them near Damascus. Then Abraham returned, probably along the same pathway. Later, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac and the servant went to Mesopotamia (Syria) and there found Rebecca who returned with him. The servant would likely have followed the King's Highway as Isaac was living in Lai-Roi, an area in the southern part of Jordan at the time. Abraham lived in the east country (Jordan) when he died but his sons took him to Hebron where they buried Abraham next to his wife Sarah. Jacob fled from the anger of Esau and went to the land of the east (Jordan) and then up to Haran where he met and fell in love with Rachel. Jacob worked for his father-in-law many years and eventually left to return to Canaan. He travelled the King's Highway and, along the road in the mountains of Gilead, Laban caught up with Jacob. They reconciled and then Jacob continued, after also reconciling with Esau, and stopped at the Jordan River at Succoth, where he lived for a while and then later entered the land of Canaan. Even the burial procession of Jacob from Egypt, led by Joseph and his brothers, followed the highway as is evident from the statements that they stopped along the way at Atad, beyond Jordan, where great mourning occurred before proceeding into the land of Canaan. When Moses was commanded by the Lord to depart from Kadesh and move toward the promised land, Moses asked the king of Edom for the right to move along the King's Highway, but the request was not granted. Moses then went into the desert to the east of Edom where they encountered fiery serpents. Eventually, Moses passed by Edom and came to the eastern boundary of Moab. Again, Moses asked permission to travel along the King's Highway but was still denied. Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament history, we read of battles between Israelites and their neighbors on the east side of the Jordan River, often crossing the river at well-known fords and moving north and south in Jordan, presumably along the King's Highway.</p> <p>Later, when Persians and then Greeks ruled the territory from Mesopotamia to Egypt, trade along the King's Highway continued to be important. When the Romans conquered the territory, they maintained the importance of the road and reinforced several of the roadside cities as military centers. This situation continued into New Testament times and, because of the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans, the King's Highway grew in importance as a route between Galilee and Judea that would be taken to avoid entering the land of the Samaritans. Hence, when Jesus travelled from Galilee to Jerusalem, he may have traveled along the King's Highway (with the one exception of when he went through Samaria and encountered the woman at the well of Jacob), although he could also have walked along the Jordan valley on some of the trips. When Paul journeyed from Damascus to Arabia, he would have walked along the King's road.</p> <p>After the time of Jesus the Romans continued to use the King's Highway (called in Latin the <i>Via Regia</i>) and even improved and expanded it and gave it a new name, <i>Via Nova Traiana</i>, to facilitate Roman trade and military movement through</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>Jordan. The road continued to be important through the Byzantine period and also the Muslim period when it became part of the pilgrims' route from Damascus and Baghdad to Mecca. The crusaders understood its importance and built key castles to protect it. Then, when the Ottomans became rulers of the territory, they realized that a railroad would improve trade and communication in Jordan and built the Hijaz Railroad, generally paralleling the route of the King's Highway (but running several miles to the east where the railroad bed would be laid more easily).</p> <p>Today the King's Highway is still a major north-south route in Jordan. The northern part, that is, north of Amman is the principal road. South of Amman the King's Highway goes through many small cities and has been superseded as the major freeway by the Desert Highway; but much traffic still runs on the ancient road.</p>
<p>Other side of Jordan, Over Jordan, East people /Al Ghor, Jordan Rift Valley, Jordan River Valley</p>	<p>After the flood of Noah his children separated into different parts of the world. The Jordan River valley, otherwise known as Al Ghor and the Jordan Rift, was one area where the descendants of Shem (Semites) located. Even after the Tower of Babel they shared a common ancestral language that was the origin of the Semitic languages – Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Over time the descendants of Abraham gained prominence in the area and most of the people in the area became associated with the Abrahamic tribes. The people moved east and west from the valley to occupy all the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean.</p> <p>Physically the rift valley descends from the foothills of the mountains of Lebanon through the Sea of Galilee, down the Jordan River Valley, to the Dead Sea and then continues to Aqaba where it meets the Red Sea. The valley is several miles wide and is highly fertile for most of its length. Even the land immediately south of the Dead Sea is highly fertile only giving way to desert as the rift approaches Aqaba. Because most of the rift valley is below sea level, a natural greenhouse effect increases the temperature and allows shorter and more frequent growing seasons than in higher elevations. From this perspective it is no wonder that many people choose the valley to plant their crops and raise their livestock.</p>
<p>Decapolis</p>	<p>When the Greeks under Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire in the 4th century BC, the entire eastern Mediterranean area became a vast commercial zone supervised by Greek merchants who established key trading cities from which goods in the surrounding areas could be gathered and transported to markets throughout the known world. In the process these trading cities became islands of Greek culture, eventually spreading the Greek life and language until most people in the entire region adopted many Greek cultural traits and almost everyone spoke Greek as the language of commerce.</p> <p>Ten of these Greek cities were united in a trading group that became known as Decapolis (meaning 10 cities). Most of these cities were in present-day Jordan sitting astride the King's Highway or its connecting east-west routes and, for over two hundred years, dominated trade and culture throughout the area east of the Jordan River. When the Romans conquered the territory in the mid 1st century BC, the trading importance of the 10 cities and the Greek culture spreading from them continued. (Romans adopted much of the Greek culture throughout the empire with only a few changes to accommodate the Roman emphasis on order, discipline, and practicality, even retaining the Greek language in the eastern part of the empire.) This was the situation when Jesus began his ministry in Galilee.</p> <p>The Galilee and its sister territories on the west side of the Jordan River, Samaria and Judea, had also been dominated by the Greeks and the Romans as were the areas east of the Jordan River (Perea). However, in the Galilee and Judea a group of Jews, the Pharisees, had arisen to combat the assimilation of Greek and Roman culture by the Jews. An even more belligerent group, the Zealots, struggled to achieve independence from Roman rule. Another group of Jewish leaders, the Sadducees, did not resist the Greek culture and were therefore enemies of the Pharisees and Zealots. Hence, Galilee and Judea were in turmoil as these groups vied with each other and with their Roman rulers to gain prominence and power. The Bible mentions that Jesus occasionally left Galilee and its warring factions to preach in Decapolis, the general area east of the Jordan River dominated by the 10 cities of</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>Greek orientation. Many people were converted among the Jews living in the Greek cities and Jesus often found more acceptance east of the Jordan than in his own province.</p> <p>Josephus and Pliny the Younger both mention the Decapolis and allude to the power and importance of these cities during the Roman empire period in the 1st and early 2nd centuries AD. Christianity flourished in the Decapolis and when Christianity became the state religion of Rome in the 4th century, some of the Decapolis cities became key Christian centers. Many Byzantine ruins from this period are evident in the cities.</p>
Bashan	<p>Bashan was an ancient kingdom in northern Jordan, extending north into Syria, with Ashteroth Karnaim as its capital city. Mount Bashan is a mountain in southern Syria that is in the territory of ancient Bashan. Because the King's Highway ran through Bashan, it was involved in the battle of the Kings of Abraham's day and would have been important in the commerce and travel throughout the period of the patriarchs.</p> <p>As Moses led the children of Israel northward at the end of their 40 years in the wilderness, Moses conquered the Amorites, thus giving safe passage for the Israelites to the area near the Jordan River crossing, only a few miles north of the Dead Sea. Then Moses took a group of warriors from each tribe and moved northward, completing the conquest of the Amorites and then conquering King Og of Bashan and all his territory. An interesting note about King Og is that he was of the group of giants that ruled in the Middle East. Og's iron bed (showing a high technology in the age of bronze) measured nine cubits long and 4 cubits wide (approximately 13 feet by 6 feet).</p> <p>The inheritance of the tribe of Manasseh included the land of Bashan. However, many maps of the tribal inheritances show that Manasseh only extended to the Yarmouk River, the traditional northern boundary of Jordan and did not include the territory as far north as Mount Hermon as the Bible suggests. This may have indicated that the territory of the Tribe of Manasseh was pushed southward over time as northern peoples continued to press against the land claimed by the Israelites.</p> <p>When Joshua appointed cities of refuge, Golan in the area of Bashan, was one of the cities. Bashan continued to figure as an important area throughout the period of the kings of Israel, especially as conquerors or oppressors from the north (Syria, Babylon) entered Israel via the King's Highway as it passed through Bashan.</p> <p>As a highly forested and fertile area, Bashan furnished wood (oaks, generally) and beef for a variety of purposes in the kingdoms of the Israelites. Noted for its beauty, Bashan became a general title for the territory in the far north of Jordan and was not specifically identified. In modern times the area has been known as the Golan Heights, an important territory in the struggle between modern Israel and Syria.</p>
Sea of Galilee, Sea of Chinnereth/Sea of Tiberias, Lake Gennesaret, Kinneret	<p>The Sea of Galilee has been known by a variety of names throughout the Old and New Testament periods and into the modern era and it has figured prominently in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. The few citations in the Old Testament mostly concern the sea or lake (it is called both) as a locator for a boundary or a city. In the New Testament, however, it is a focus of the life of Jesus and his disciples. During his ministry he lived on the shore of the sea and many of his disciples earned their living from the sea. Jesus travelled across the sea on several occasions, using it as a transport to Jordan where he often taught and sought solitude. Some of the most impressive events in the life of Jesus, such as walking on the water and calming the storm, occurred on the sea. In modern times the sea has been a boundary between Israel and Jordan; but today the entire coastline lies within the territory administered by Israel.</p>
Jordan River	<p>Today we think of the Jordan River as dividing one land from another, but in ancient times that was not always the case. The united kingdom of the Israelites spanned the river and so did the tribe of Manasseh and other non-Israelite kingdoms from time to time. Nevertheless, it was a natural boundary and, in the case of Moses, was not to be crossed. For Joshua and Elijah it was crossed with the help of the power of God.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>The Jordan River always seemed to have a special significance. It was the barrier to the promised land for the wandering Israelites and was the water of healing for Naaman the Syrian and Elisha the prophet. It was the water in which John baptized people from Jerusalem, Judea and Jordan, including, of course, Jesus.</p>
Yarmouk River	<p>Although not mentioned specifically in the Bible, the Yarmouk River is important as the largest tributary of the Jordan River and the natural boundary between Jordan and Syria. Many maps of the land allocated to the Tribes of Israel show the Yarmouk as the northern limit of the tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan River. In modern times the bridge over the Yarmouk was an important target for Lawrence of Arabia in WWI. The city of Deraa, another important location in WWI, lies just north of the Yarmouk.</p>
Gadara, Antiochia/Umm Qays	<p>Located in the extreme northwest edge of Jordan, Gadara was one of the Decapolis cities that was important in the times of the Greeks. Its hilltop location gave it great military importance as well as the commercial importance common to all the Decapolis cities. It was damaged in the Maccabean wars, when the Jews revolted against Seleucid (Greek) rule and then moved to take possession of many Greek cities on both the west and east sides of the river. The city was rebuilt and fortified by Pompey, the Roman general, and continued in importance through the New Testament period.</p> <p>Later, during the Jewish revolt of the first century AD, Vespasian decimated the city's population as part of his suppression of the revolt. However, the key military and commercial location of the city allowed it to recover and continue as an important center on the eastern side of the Jordan River. From the 4th C it was the seat of a Christian bishopric and then, in the 7th C it fell to the Muslims in the battle of Yarmouk. Then in the mid-8th C it was destroyed by an earthquake and abandoned.</p> <p>On one occasion, as reported in Mark 5, Luke 8 and Matthew 8, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee to preach and to find respite from the troubles on the western side. He went to the area of Gadara (spellings change among the writers) and there encountered one or two men (accounts differ) who were possessed of devils. They pled with Jesus to cast out the evil spirits. Jesus agreed but then, upon request of the evil spirits, sent the spirits into a herd of swine who then ran into the sea and were drown. Today the area of Gadara is called Umm Qays.</p> <p>The site of ancient Gadara has impressive ruins of the city and several clues indicating where the miracle reported in the New Testament may have occurred. Today, the ruins are quite a distance from the Sea of Galilee agreeing with some of the details of the scriptural account but also suggesting that the miracle occurred far outside the city (in the general region of Gadara). However, there are tombs and other indications that the city or region is appropriate for the biblical story.</p> <p>The ruins are quite extensive and in many places are well preserved. As is typical of Greek and Roman cities, there is a forum (called an agora in Greek) and a main road that is built in standard Roman style with a sewer and other indications of good engineering. Houses and shops line the streets and a small museum has some statues, busts and other artifacts from the ancient period.</p> <p>The view of the Sea of Galilee and surrounding territory is spectacular. The city of Tiberius can be clearly seen (although at a considerable distance) and also several Israeli farms. The Golan Heights are immediately to the north of the Gadara region and can also be easily seen (but not entered). Today, Israel occupies the Golan Heights and the former Jordanian coastline around the Sea of Galilee.</p>
Abila Dekapoleos, Selucia/Hartha, Ain Quqweilbeh	<p>This site, located northeast of modern Irbid, dates from the Bronze Age and became one of the Decapolis cities or, in some counts, a feeder city that was not actually one of the 10 official center cities but was linked to them. It was, however, very important in the Greco-Roman period as attested to by the numerous ruins (aqueducts, public buildings, tombs, gates) found here.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
Ramoth-gilead/Ramtha	<p>As part of the partition of the promised land by Moses and Joshua into sections for the 12 tribes, some cities were set-aside as refuges for people who killed someone inadvertently (manslaughter). The Mosaic Law allowed the family of a person who is killed by another to seek vengeance upon the killer. However, if the death was accidental, the killer could flee to one of the cities of refuge and receive protection from the city against the vengeance seeker. (The slayer had to wait outside the city and explain the situation to the city fathers before being granted asylum.) Six cities, three on the west side of the Jordan River and three on the east side, were designated as refuge cities. Ramoth-gilead, located within the territory of the Tribe of Gad, was one of these. The other cities on the east side of the Jordan were located in the tribal areas of Reuben and Manasseh.</p> <p>The concept of familial vengeance or retribution is still practiced in many Middle Eastern countries, especially for crimes other than murder. For example, if a sheep is killed, the owner of the sheep can require payment of the sheep by the killer and may also be entitled to physically beat the killer. Even if a person is killed in an auto accident, the family of the deceased has the right to require payment from the person responsible for the accident. In Jordan these family retribution decisions are usually reviewed by a civil court to ensure that the decision is reasonable.</p> <p>Ramoth-gilead is located near the northern boundary of Jordan and is a main crossing point into Syria. Therefore, throughout the period of the kings, it was often involved in wars between the Israelites and the Syrians/Arameans. One battle involved the kings of Judah and Israel (northern kingdom) jointly attacking the Arameans, but the king of Judah died in the battle and the next morning all the troops returned to their own countries, leaving Ramtha in the hands of the Arameans. In another incident the prophet Elisha sent a servant to Ramoth-gilead to find the captain of the army and anointed him king over Israel, in defiance of King Ahab.</p>
Capitolias/Bayt Ras	<p>This walled city, built by the Romans in the first century AD was one of the Decapolis cities. It is located a few miles north of the modern city of Irbid and has become part of greater Irbid. It remained an important city through the early Byzantine period. The bishop of the city was one of those who attended the famous Nicean Council in the 4th century.</p>
Arabella, Bayt Arbeel /Irbid	<p>This site was established in the Bronze Age and remained important into the modern period. Irbid is the third largest city in Jordan. Anciently Arabella was a major wine-producing area until the Muslim period when it was changed into a major producer of olive oil.</p> <p>Today, as in the past, Irbid suffers from water shortage. The Romans solved the problem by bringing water into the city through underground tunnels. Sadly, the tunnels have been neglected and the water problem remains.</p>
Al Yaseelah/Hawara	<p>While not one of the Decapolis cities, the site lies at the crossroads of some connector routes and is, therefore, at a strategic location. Evidence of commercial work, such as a wine press and extensive storage locations, suggests that this site was used as a processing location for the produce from the surrounding villages.</p>
Gilead	<p>Gilead is a heavily wooded, mountainous region in northern Jordan. When Jacob left Padan-Aram with his wives, goods and animals, his father-in-law Laban was angry and pursued Jacob along the King's Highway, eventually catching up with him in the mountains of Gilead. In the story of Joseph when he was cast into a hole and then sold to a group of Ishmaelites, it mentions that they came from Gilead, suggesting that these mountains were on the trade route (King's Highway).</p> <p>These mountains were heavily wooded and were assigned principally to the tribe of Gad but with some portions going to Reuben and Manasseh. Gilead is divided by the Jabbok River (today called the Zarqa River). Gilead, bounded on the north by Bashan and on the south by Ammon and Moab, continued to be important throughout the period of Joshua, the judges, and the kings as an area often contested between the Israelites and their neighbors east of the Jordan River. David fled to this area in his dispute with Jonathon.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>The balm of Gilead refers to a resinous material derived from the trees in the Gilead forests, an Old Testament allusion that is then turned to refer to Jesus and his saving grace.</p>
Pella/Tabaqat Fahl	<p>Pella lies on the eastern flank of the Jordan River valley in the foothills where a <i>wadi</i> and springs give sufficient water to supply a settlement. Hence, from Neolithic times people have occupied the site of Pella making it one of the world's oldest habitations. It is mentioned in 19th century BC Egyptian writings and would, of course, be encountered as any army moved along the eastern side of the Jordan Valley. A Canaanite temple has been uncovered amidst the ruins suggesting that the city was very large for the period. No wonder that Pella became one of the Decapolis cities when the Greeks conquered the territory. The name, Pella, probably was given by the Greeks in honor of the birthplace of Alexander in Macedonia.</p> <p>No specific record is given of Jesus visiting Pella when on his trips to Decapolis, but logic suggests that many converts lived in the city because, according to both Josephus and Eusebius, Christians fled there in 66 AD to escape the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and, of course, they would be drawn to a city where other Christians were already living. The Christian refugees may have actually fled to the region of Pella and, in fact, could have hidden in the area around the city rather than actually in the city itself. Because Pella is on the front of the Gilead mountains, it is possible that the flight to this location was predicted in Mark 13:14.</p> <p>The city continued its importance in the Byzantine era, as demonstrated by the churches dating from that period. A nearby battle between the Muslims and the Byzantine Christians led to the control of the city by Muslims. An earthquake in the mid-8th century destroyed the city and it was mostly abandoned at that time.</p>
Brook Cherith/Wadi Yabis	<p>Elijah confronted King Ahab by calling upon the Lord to cause a drought in the land. In anger, Ahab threatened to kill Elijah and, therefore, Elijah fled to the Brook Cherith, across Jordan. There Elijah was fed by ravens until the brook dried up and God commanded Elijah to move to another location. Most scholars believe that this <i>wadi</i>, located in Elijah's home district, Gilead, and not far from where Elijah was born, is Cherith. Some scholars, however, believe that Brook Cherith is further south in the Jordan Valley, near the location of Christ's baptism.</p> <p>The New Testament indicates (John 3:23) that John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim and these sites are directly across the Jordan River from Wadi Yabis. Therefore, John was baptizing here. This place may also have been a refuge for Jesus and may have been the actual location where the Christians hid after they left Jerusalem at the time of the Roman destruction.</p> <p>The modern peace agreement between Jordan and Israel states that Israel has certain water rights between the Yarmouk River and Cherith/Wadi al-Yabis, thus recognizing the importance of this site.</p>
Jabesh-Gilead/Tell al-Maqbara	<p>Jabesh-Gilead is a city in the area of Gilead that dates from the early Bronze Age as determined from archeological evidence at the site. The city seems to have had close ties with the tribe of Benjamin as evidenced by their refusal to join with the other Israelite tribes in a war against Benjamin over a murder of a concubine committed by the Benjamites. When the tribes that were unified against Benjamin met, following their annihilation of the Benjamites, the absence of Jabesh-Gilead from the unified meeting of the other tribes was specifically noted. Therefore, in retribution for not uniting with their brother tribes, the adult men and women of Jabesh-Gilead were slain. Later the unified tribes felt bad about having one tribe, Benjamin, not able to grow because so many of them had been killed in the war. Therefore, the young daughters of Jabesh-Gilead were given to the Benjamites who survived, thus providing the means whereby the tribe of Benjamin could once again become part of the Israelite confederation.</p> <p>Years later the Ammonites came upon the people of Jabesh-Gilead and threatened them with destruction. When the people of Jabesh pleaded for mercy, the Ammonites agreed, provided that the people of Jabesh covenanted to serve the Ammonites and also agree to have their right eye plucked out. The people of Jabesh asked for a week to make a decision. During</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>the week the people of Jabesh sent word of their predicament to King Saul who became angry at the Ammonites for their cruelty. (It is interesting here to note that Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin and was, therefore, a possible descendent of the young women of Jabesh who were given to the men of the tribe of Benjamin.) Saul enlisted an army and went to the aid of Jabesh. When the Ammonites tried to attack, Saul's army defeated them.</p> <p>Saul ruled as king for many years but was eventually defeated and killed by the Philistines. When the Philistines were combing the battleground looking for their dead and for plunder, they discovered the body of Saul and they cut off his head and circulated it throughout the land of the Philistines as a trophy. They hung Saul's body on a wall as a reminder to the Israelites of the Philistine victory. When the people of Jabesh heard of it, they went to the town and took down Saul's body, returned to Jabesh where they solemnly burnt the body and buried the bones (ashes) with honor. Shortly thereafter, when David was anointed king, he heard of the respect shown to Saul's body and praised the people of Jabesh. Later, David removed the buried remains of Saul and reburied them in the land of Benjamin.</p> <p>Some archeologists believe that the location of Jabesh-Gilead is not at Tell al-Maqbara, but is at Tell Abu Kharaz, a short distance further along the Wadi Yabis. (Note that Yabis preserves the name Jabesh.) Eusebius, a historian of the 4th century, places Jabesh-Gilead a few miles south of Pella.</p>
Abel-meholah/Tell al-maqlub	<p>This Bronze Age city near the northern Jordan River is the birthplace of Shaphat, the father of Elisha. When Elijah the prophet was commanded to flee the wrath of Ahab, Elijah went to the wilderness of Judea and then to Mount Hor and then to a cave. In the cave he was instructed to go to the home of Elisha where he would call him to be a follower. Elisha was plowing in Abel-meholah when Elijah encountered him.</p>
Tishbe, Listib/Tell Mar Elias (north)	<p>Elijah the Tishbite was from Gilead, probably from the town of Tishbe (also called Listib). Today a Byzantine church on a hill called Tell Mar Elias (the hill of the prophet Elijah) overlooks the little village that was once Tishbe. The village is located in a lovely valley in the midst of the Gilead forest.</p>
Ajloun, Rabad	<p>The mountainous area surrounding Ajloun is heavily forested, thus inhibiting the use of the area for agriculture and, therefore, decreasing the population in the area. It was reported that the forests in the vicinity were so dense that a person could walk from Ajloun (approximately in the center of Gilead) to Umm Qais without ever stepping into the direct sunlight. Nevertheless, many Roman ruins and other Roman artifacts such as coins, attest to the use of the area from ancient times.</p> <p>Although not mentioned in the Bible nor directly related to biblical times, the castle built on the mountain overlooking the city of Ajloun is important both as a historical and a religious site. The castle was built by the Muslims (nephew of Saladin) as a bulwark against the crusaders in the 12th century. Interestingly, the style of the castle was largely borrowed from those built by the crusaders in the previous century and therefore did not reflect the previous Muslim style. (However, the Muslims adopted the French style from that period onward). The castle featured a dry moat, drawbridge, catapult stones, arrow slot windows, winding staircases, cisterns, a fortified keep, and numerous battlements. The castle sits atop a mountain and has a commanding view of the surrounding valley and of the Jordan River valley in the distance. It was part of a signaling network allowing communications from Jerusalem to Baghdad.</p>
Anjara	<p>Located not far from Ajloun is the small town of Anjara. Local tradition says that Jesus and Mary stayed in a cave in this location on one of their trips between Jerusalem and Galilee. While not confirmable scripturally, an ancient olive press confirms the antiquity of the site.</p>
Zaphon/Crossing or passages of the Jordan, Tell al-Qos	<p>This city of Gilead is in the Jordan River Valley near a convenient place to ford the river. It was named as one of the cities defining the territory of the Israelites.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>In the story of Jephthah who was chosen as the general over the Gileadite armies against the Ammonites, Zaphon (mis-translated as "northern" in on Bible verse) is the location where the elders of Israel met to choose their captain. Although an outsider, Jephthah was chosen and had great success in his battles against the Ammonites. He captured all the Ammonite territory that, at the time, stretched from Gilead to the deserts of southern Jordan. In gratitude to God, Jephthah vowed that whatever greeted him upon his return home would be sacrificed to the Lord, thinking, of course, that it would be an animal. When his daughter met him, he was devastated, but felt compelled to honor his pledge. His daughter was given as a servant of the Lord (probably as a virgin priestess). Later the Ephraimites, who claimed that Japhthah did not ask for their support against the Ammonites and probably wanted a share of the booty, came to battle against the Gileadites. Japhthah said that he did call upon the Ephraimites for help but they would not respond. In the ensuing war the Gileadites under Japhthah were routed. The surviving Ephraimites tried to flee across the river and were challenged by the Gileadites to say "Shibboleth", a word difficult for the Ephraimites to pronounce. Those who mispronounced it were identified as Ephraimites and were killed.</p>
Khirbet al Samra	<p>Situated in the desert north of Zarqa, these extensive ruins beg the question of why a major city of the Roman period would be located in the desert. It was located on the <i>Via Nova Traiana</i> (still visible in the area), but that does not explain how the city was founded or why it grew. The many reservoirs in the vicinity attest to the large population and the Romans' capability in securing water. The many Byzantine churches in the area suggest that the city was still prosperous in Byzantine times. The ruined mosaics in the churches attest to the effects of the destruction of faces on mosaics during the iconoclast period in the 8th and 9th centuries.</p>
Rihab, Beth Rehob	<p>Rihab is a city in northern Jordan that is mentioned in the story of the spies that Moses sent out. When Moses sent the spies to discover the promised land, he was located in the Wilderness of Paran (Kadesh) in the southern part of Jordan and near the Wilderness of Zin. Therefore, when Moses said to explore from the Wilderness of Zin to Rihab, with the comment that Rihab is on the way toward Hamath, which is in Syria, he was saying that the spies should explore all the length of the King's Highway from southern to northern Jordan since the King's Highway would have been the way to Hamath. We can assume that this means these spies explored essentially all of Jordan. Note that later verses indicate other spies were sent to Hebron and travelled north, thus exploring all of present-day Israel and Palestine. Hence, the spies explored all the land that Moses and then Joshua conquered on both sides of the Jordan River. Moses may have known of Rihab from his days in Egypt. Records from Tuthmose III in the 15th century BC name Rihab as one of the cities conquered by Tuthmose. It is later mentioned as a city that paid tribute to Egypt until it rebelled during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotop IV in the 14th century BC.</p> <p>When the king of Ammon fought against King David, the Ammonites hired 20,000 men of the Syrians (Aramaens) and Beth Rehob to fight as mercenaries against the Israelites. During the battle, David's general, Joab, was able to defeat the Aramaen army but was not able to capture the city and, therefore, he returned to Jerusalem.</p> <p>Archeologists exploring the ruins of a church in Rihab that is dated from the 3rd century AD, found a cave beneath the church that contained Christian inscriptions. The placement of the cave beneath a church suggests that the cave may have been a hiding place during the time of Roman persecution of the Christians and that the church was built over the cave as a way to commemorate these early Christians. Therefore, the cave has been suggested as the oldest Christian gathering place. There is also a tunnel connected to a cistern, thus providing water for the cave dwellers.</p>
Umm al Surab	<p>A modest city in the desert would be unimportant to most people (except for scholars) but for the interesting engravings that were found in a Byzantine church in the ruins. The inscription states, "Lord, protect Umairas and Corous, the children of Albianous who built this church in memory of Saints Sergius and Bakhous on the 25th of the month of Cubbaous' (in the local dating system, equivalent to 489 AD). Clearly a man, Albianous, built the church to ask for protection for his children. He also</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>wanted to honor two saints, Sergius and Bakhous, who were officers in the Roman army during the time of the Diocletian reign in the early 4th century. The co-emperor, Maximianus, visited Syria and, as was the custom during this time of Roman religious unification, asked that all army personnel offer sacrifices to the Roman gods. Two officers, Sergius and Bakhous, were absent from the group sacrifice and when they were brought before the co-emperor, they admitted to missing the sacrifice because they were Christians. They were stripped of their army ranks and publically humiliated. The next day they were killed. The church, built in the next century, honored these two men.</p>
<p>Gerasa/Jerash</p>	<p>Gerasa, located near the King's Highway at a crossing point for an east-west passage to the Jordan River Valley and not far from major iron ore deposits, has been a major trading center since the early Bronze Age. It is near the center of Gilead and, therefore, was important throughout the period of the judges and kings when Gilead was the site of many battles. When Jordan came under the domination of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Greeks, it would have been a key possession in their conquests. The Greeks, in particular, used Gerasa as a major city for both trade and military control, making it part of the Decapolis. As was customary for the Romans, they took the culture and experience of others and used them, perhaps increasing the engineering and efficiency of what they took over. From the conquest of the Romans in the second century BC to the destruction of an earthquake in mid-8th century, Gerasa thrived. These assertions are attested to by the expansive and well-preserved ruins that we see today in Jerash. Greek and Roman ruins dot the entire Mediterranean basin, but none are more extensive or as well preserved as those at Jerash. It deserves to be one of Jordan's principal tourist centers.</p> <p>When approaching Jerash from the south (coming from Amman), the lovely valley in which Jerash resides lies parallel to the main north-south highway of Jordan, just a mile or two to the west. The complex of ruins lies adjacent to the main road through the valley on the west side and the modern city of Jerash is across the road on the east side. This simple separation seems to set off and protect the ruins. A close inspection of the modern town, however, reveals many ruins tucked in between modern houses, affirming that ancient Gerasa was a city of major size.</p> <p>A modest tourist bazaar leads from the parking areas to the ticket booth. After passing the ticket booth, the Arch of Hadrian signals the entry into the ruins area. In 126 AD when Hadrian was emperor of Rome, he visited Gerasa as part of his tour of the newly acquired territory of Arabia and he inaugurated the new Roman highway, roughly paralleling the King's Highway, which was built by his predecessor Trajan (<i>Via Nova Traiana</i>). The arch was built in Hadrian's honor. It is massive and splendid, equal to the arches of Titus and Constantine in Rome and of the same style (which was later copied by Napoleon when he built the <i>Arc de Triomphe</i> in Paris).</p> <p>Just beyond the arch is a long, oval hippodrome in which chariot races were (and are) held. Along the inside and outside walls of the hippodrome were small shops that must have catered to the spectators. Continuing northward brings the visitor to another entry arch and a short way further stands the magnificent forum with dozens of columns still defining the unusual oval perimeter. After a turn to the left and a short climb the temple of Zeus can be entered. Its hilltop location affords a wonderful panoramic view of the city. Just to the side of the temple is a marvelous amphitheater. The acoustics allow a speaker in the center of the orchestra to be readily heard by those in the top row of seats. The extensive stage is used for the annual Jerash Festival. A close inspection of the seats reveals seat numbers (in Greek letters) and places where a safety rail restrained the front row spectators.</p> <p>Descending the hill and continuing north along the edge of the ruins area takes the visitor past several Byzantine churches. Local tradition is that mass could be said only once a day in each church and, therefore, several churches were built to allow mass at multiple hours. The temple of Artemis lies along this westerly side of the ruins area and, like the temple of Zeus, sits atop a hill and gives a commanding view of the northern part of the ruins. An interesting feature of the temple of Artemis is</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>the column that moves in the wind. By inserting a thin piece of metal, like a knife blade, into the crack between the drums of a particular column in the temple, the rocking motion of the column can be perceived by motion of the metal piece. One wonders why the column has not fallen over the years.</p> <p>Below and east of the temple lies a complex of buildings including a winepress (complete with troughs to underground storage facilities) and a reconstructed rock saw run by a waterwheel. This device illustrates the ingenuity of the Romans and affirms their ability to change rotating motion to horizontal reciprocal motion, a concept previously thought not to have been invented until the 10th century AD. Continuing down the hill to the east brings the visitor to the main north-south street of the city, the Cardo. A cathedral is passed and a huge fountain is encountered on the side of the road along with many shop areas, each defined by massive Corinthian columns. The bed of the Cardo is made of great stone blocks on which some grooves seem to be worn, perhaps by chariot wheels. Occasionally a round stone is seen with a metal handle. These are manhole covers that provide access to the sewer that runs under the street. (Some cracks between the pavement rocks reveal a second layer of rocks below the street, obviously the lining of the sewer.) Continuing along the Cardo to the south will eventually lead back to the forum. Throughout the city are blocks that formerly made up the walls of the many buildings whose foundations clearly show their size and, occasionally, their purpose. Many blocks are carved with inscriptions using either the Greek or Roman alphabets, thus attesting to the dual nature of a Roman city in the eastern half of the empire where the language of commerce was Greek.</p> <p>When Jesus went to the Decapolis, he would have encountered this thriving and commercially active environment. Some have wondered if he would have been comfortable or would have even entered such an obviously pagan environment. However, Jesus was not a Pharisee and clearly was comfortable helping Roman soldiers and other non-Jews who honestly sought him. The peace on the eastern side of the Jordan River was clearly a draw to him when he sought solitude. He counseled the rich people of Jordan (as shown in the encounter with the rich young man that occurred in Jordan) and advised them to forsake their riches for the gospel. What better message could be given.</p>
<p>Bostra (nearby)/Umm al-Jimal (other ruins nearby include Sabha, Subhia, Sama Al Sarhan, Hamama, and Umm al Qutain)</p>	<p>Ancient Bostra dates from the Nabataean and Roman period when it was built to protect the eastern frontier of the empire. In spite of the military nature of the town, it became ever more important as an agricultural center during the Byzantine era. Then, after the Muslim conquest, Bostra diminished in importance as the economy was dealt a blow from an earthquake in the mid-8th century.</p> <p>Of particular interest today is the use of dark basalt as the chief construction material. The natural insulative nature of basalt (readily available in the vicinity) is especially important in this semi-desert climate. By using corbling (overlapping of blocks to give support to higher blocks), structures up to 6 stories were built. Water was collected from miles away and stored cleverly.</p> <p>The other sites noted are in the vicinity of Umm al-Jimal and Mafraq. They were desert cities and most of the ruins date from the Byzantine period.</p>
<p>Al Fudain/Mafraq</p>	<p>The Aramaeans, descended from Aram, son of Shem, were centered in Syria and became a regional power during the 12th century BC but never were strong enough to be called an empire. They were mentioned in the records of the Mesopotamians and the later Assyrians. The Aramaeans dominated Israel during part of the time of the Judges. During this period the Aramaeans built several fortress cities and Al Fundain (which means "the fortress"), modern Mafraq, was one of these cities. The Aramaeans were enemies of Kings Saul and David who eventually succeeded in conquering them. The Aramaeans were absorbed into the Assyrian empire in the 8th century BC and were lost to history from that time forward.</p> <p>The Aramaeans continued to be the majority population in the homeland of modern-day Syria and their language continued as a major language of commerce and education. Even during the Greek and Roman periods, the spoken language of</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>most of the inhabitants of Syria and surrounding areas, including Jordan and Galilee, was Aramaic. Hence, most scholars believe that Jesus spoke Aramaic as his native language. Eventually, Aramaic yielded to Arabic as the language of the Semitic people in the greater Syrian-Jordanian-Palestine area. Today, some Syriac Christians still use the Aramaic language, although mostly for religious purposes.</p>
Mizpah-gilead	<p>After serving his father-in-law, Laban, for 20 years, Jacob left Padan-aram in Syria with his wives and animals but without announcing his departure to Laban. When Laban was informed of Jacob's departure, Laban pursued Jacob and caught up with him in the mountains of Gilead where Jacob had encamped. After some discussion they agreed to reconcile and, as a mark of that agreement, they built a rock watchtower (<i>mizpah</i>). Jacob then named the location Mizpah and said, "For the Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." Because of this statement, people have used the word "mizpah" as the name of charms or symbols that are given, often half to one person and half to the other, to mark their mutual hope that a remembrance will also be kept between them. The scripture also says that the place could be named Galeed, a name derived from the Hebrew "gal" meaning a heap of stones and "edh" meaning a witness. This name may be the origin of the regional name Gilead.</p> <p>Mizpah was one of the places that Jephthah passed through during his campaign against the Ammonites. This confirms the location in a reasonable passageway through the mountains of Gilead.</p>
Jabbok/Zarqa River	<p>While on his journey from Syria to Canaan, Jacob reconciled with Laban near the Jabbok River, a major tributary of the Jordan River that passes through the Gilead hills. Its valley provides a convenient east-west passage from the King's Highway to the Jordan River Valley and would, therefore, be a logical route for Jacob to follow. Several important events took place near the Jabbok.</p> <p>It is possible that Mizpah was along the northern bank of the river since its water would have afforded good pasture for Jacob's animals, but we are not sure as the scriptures don't specifically mention a river near Mizpah. However, both Mahanaim and Penuel, sites important in the story of Jacob with angels and with Esau specifically refer to encampments along the banks of the Jabbok.</p>
Mahanaim, Mihna/Tulul ed-Dhab al-Gharbi	<p>When Jacob had reconciled with Laban, he went a little further on his journey and was met by angels and, upon their appearance, Jacob understood the multitude of God's hosts and could sense the power of God. Jacob realized that his small group of people was not much, but with God's great host of angels, together they were mighty. Jacob therefore named the place Mahanaim meaning two hosts. It was from here that Jacob began the process of reconciliation with his brother Esau. Jacob sent messengers to Edom in the Land of Seir (southern Jordan) where Esau lived. The messengers told Esau that Jacob had many possessions and would share them with Esau to make amends for past problems. When the messengers returned to tell him that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men, Jacob was afraid. Perhaps thinking about the name of the place where he was at, Mahanaim, he realized that if he divided his wives, cattle, possessions into two parts, Esau would likely only destroy one group and the other would be saved. Hence, two hosts were again created in Mahanaim.</p> <p>A city was later built at Mahanaim and it was a marker for the southern boundary of Bashan at the time of Moses. When the tribal lands were awarded, Mahanaim became part of the boundary separating the lands of Manasseh and Gad. Mahanaim was set aside as a sanctuary city.</p> <p>At the time of the death of Saul, Mahanaim was the city where Abner, the commander of Saul's army, installed Saul's son as king of Israel, prior to David emerging as the king over a united nation. Later, when Absalom rebelled against David, it was to Mahanaim that David fled (it was a city loyal to kings) and it was there that he heard of Absalom's death. The place where Absalom died was called the Woods of Ephraim and is part of the Gilead forest. When David was dying and instructing Solomon,</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>his successor, David asked Solomon to be king to those of Gilead who protected him when he fled there to escape the army of Absalom.</p> <p>The hill called Tulul ed-Dhab al-Gharbi is usually associated with Mahanaim.</p>
<p>Penuel, Peniel, Behlium/Tulul ed-Dhab al-Sharqi</p>	<p>When Jacob had divided his family and his possessions in anticipation of an encounter with Esau, Jacob waited alone on the northern bank of the Jabbok River. Jacob showed great humility before the Lord, realizing that he had left his home 20 years before with only his staff and now returns with great riches. He pled with the Lord to spare his family from Esau's wrath. He then separated many of his animals and instructed his servants to cross over the nearby Jabbok River and deliver these gifts to Esau. He then sent his wives and children to the other side of the river and waited, alone on the northern shore. That night he was visited by a man (angel) with whom he wrestled. Jacob prevailed in this match and, when the angel was required to leave with the coming of day, Jacob demanded and receive a blessing and a new name – Israel, one who has power with God. Jacob named the place Penuel.</p> <p>A city was built at Penuel and it became important during the time of the judges. When Gideon was chasing the fleeing Midianites, he stopped at Penuel and asked for assistance (just as he had done earlier at Succoth) and, as with Succoth, the people refused to help Gideon. Then, when returning from the battles with the Midianites, Gideon entered Penuel and broke down the tower of the city and slew the men.</p> <p>During the dispute following the death of Solomon, the ruler of the northern kingdom, Jeroboam, built an idolotrous center at Penuel.</p>
<p>Succoth, Sukkot, Shochoh/Tell Deir 'Alla</p>	<p>On his return from Syria, Jacob reconciled with Laban and then with Esau and then proceeded down the Jabbok River to the Jordan River Valley and there he built a house for himself and booths for his animals. This place was, therefore, named booths (Succoth). Later, when the land was divided between the tribes, Succoth was part of the inheritance of Gad. This confirms that Succoth is on the east side of the Jordan River in Gilead.</p> <p>Succoth also figures in the story of Gideon and the Midianites. During the time of the judges, Israel came under the domination of the Midianites, a tribe from the southern part of Jordan. Then an angel spoke to Gideon, a man of the tribe of Manasseh, calling on him to destroy the images of Baal and defeat the Midianites. Gideon sent messengers to the other tribes and gathered a great number of men who were willing to fight the Midianites. However, there were so many that the Lord thought the people would take the victory unto themselves. Therefore, Gideon was instructed to take the army to a spring and there observe how the men drank. Those who bent down and drank directly from the stream were sent home but those who dipped their hand into the water and lapped from their hand were retained. Then that night Gideon gave each of the 300 remaining warriors a lamp and a clay cover and instructed them to surround the Midianites and, upon his signal, break the cover and blow trumpets thus confusing the enemy. The plan worked perfectly and the Midianites were routed. Gideon and his army followed the retreating Midianites over the River Jordan near the town of Succoth. Gideon asked for help from the inhabitants but was refused. He also passed by Penuel and was refused there also. Finally he destroyed many of the Midianites and captured their leaders, thus ending the war. Gideon then went back to Succoth and beat the elders of the city with briars and thorns to teach them a lesson.</p> <p>Succoth is also remembered as the location where the bronze (brass) basins and other implements for Solomon's temple were cast, evidently because of the type of clay in this region.</p>
<p>Adam/Damieh (near to Zerathan/Tell as-Saidiyya)</p>	<p>When Joshua led the Children of Israel across the Jordan River at Bethabara, near Jericho, the Bible records that the waters stood up in a heap near the city Adam that is near Zerathan. This becomes clear when it is realized that Zerathan is a mountain that narrows the river valley and, therefore, would be a natural place of restriction for waters that are being pushed</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>upstream to allow for the Israelite crossing. The city of Adam was a marker for this event. Note that Damieh contains the same root letters as Adam, possibly an ancient connection.</p> <p>Zarathan is also a marker as is shown in other biblical verses when events along the Jordan River are cited such as the location for the casting of the metal sea (bronzes) and other implements for the temple of Solomon.</p>
Perea/Jordan River Valley	<p>In New Testament times when Herod the Great died, the Romans divided his kingdom into several portions eventually being given to three sons with one son receiving two portions. Perea was one of the areas and it lies on the eastern side of the Jordan River from about the mid-point of Gilead to about the mid-point of the Dead Sea (roughly from the Jabbok River to the Arnon River). Perea did not extend far to the east, probably not much beyond the King's Highway, and, therefore, is strongly associated with the Jordan River Valley. Josephus refers to this area as Perea so the name was likely commonly used.</p> <p>Many events of the New Testament occurred in Perea yet most people are not aware that they occurred on the east side of the Jordan River. Scholars refer to many of the events in Jesus' life that occurred on the "other side of Jordan" as the Perea Ministry. Some of the events do not specifically state where they occurred but logic tells us they happened in Jordan. For example, the wise men who came from the east surely must have traveled through Jordan on their way to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.</p> <p>John the Baptist may have grown up in the Perea wilderness and also preached and baptized there and, very specifically, Jesus went to him at Bethany Beyond Jordan. Many believe that Jesus remained in Perea for the 40 days of fasting in the wilderness.</p> <p>Matthew states that Jesus departed from Galilee and came to the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, that is, to Perea. There many followed him and he healed them there. He answered Pharisees' questions and taught his disciples about marriage. This is also the place where he blessed the little children and reminded his disciples that they needed to become as a little child. There he also taught the rich man that he needed to give up all his goods and follow Christ to gain eternal life. Christ gave the parable of the workers in the field before leaving Perea to go to Jerusalem.</p> <p>We also have record of people from beyond Jordan crossing over to the west side of the river to hear and follow Jesus, some probably from the visits that Jesus took passing on his way to the Decapolis cities, for example. Jesus may have spent considerable time in Perea because of the peace that he found beyond Jordan. In particular, John records that the Jews sought to take him and he went to the place where John baptized, beyond Jordan, and abode there. The people came to him and believed.</p>
Tomb of Gad/Ain al-Jadur, Salt	<p>Local tradition in Ain al-Jadur, near the city of Salt, suggests that a tomb in the village is the tomb of Gad, leader of one of the tribes of Israel. Other ruins in the Salt area include: Khirbet Al-Souq (a major center as judged by the pillars and the size of the cemetery), Khirbet Ayoub (remains of the Roman temple and a Byzantine church erected on top of the temple's ruins), Khirbet Hazeer (remains of a castle, oil press, cemetery, works of art suggesting a population that may date to the Bronze Age), Zay (mentioned by Eusebius and location of a Byzantine church with beautiful mosaics) and Al Jadoor (Roman temple, public baths, graveyards, and many pillars indicating a possible Roman forum).</p>
Qasr Al-Hallabat	<p>Several desert castles, while not biblical, have importance as Byzantine and Umayyad structures. The castle at Qasr Al-Hallabat, in the eastern desert northwest of present day Zarqa was built by the Romans as a fort to guard the <i>Via Nova Traiana</i>, the Roman road built by Trajan in the second century AD. The Roman structure was then demolished to allow construction of an Umayyad complex containing a mosque, water system, and bathhouse.</p>
Land of the Children of Ammon, Rabbath-ammon, Philadelphia/Rajm	<p>The Children of Ammon or Ammonites are the descendants of Benammi, one of the sons of Lot. The brothers, Moab and Benammi, were conceived shortly after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Whereas the Moabites remained in the general area surrounding Sodom, the Ammonites settled in the hills quite a distance northeast of where Sodom was located; the area now known as Amman.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
al-Malouf/Amman, Kingdom of Jordan	<p>The Land of the Ammonites was important in the time of Moses because the Lord specifically warned Moses to turn away from the land of the Children of Ammon. Several reasons for this avoidance of the Ammonites are given including: It is a land given to the descendants of Lot as an inheritance (thus confirming that descendants of tribes other than the Israelites were able to enjoy inheritances from the Lord); There are reported to be giants living in the land; The people are great, many and tall (perhaps the same reference as the giants); and The boarders of the Ammonites were strong. The steep, hilly nature of Amman suggests that it would be a city that is easily defended. Also, rock towers, still in existence around modern Amman, suggest a sophisticated warning system for the city.</p> <p>The Ammonites were idol worshippers and influenced the Israelites' tendencies to depart from the ways of God. The Ammonites were often enemies of the Israelites, especially against the tribes of the eastern side of the Jordan River. In one important war between the Ammonites and the Gileadites, the Gileadites were led by Jephthah who had been shunned by the Gileadites because he was the son of a harlot. However, when the Ammonites massed their army to attack the Gileadites, the elders of Gilead sought him out and pled for his return. He consented and then immediately contacted the Ammonite ruler and asked why the Ammonites were making war. The Ammonite ruler stated that, generations previously, when Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt, some Ammonite territory was taken in the conquest of the eastern bank. Jephthah repudiated this account and stated emphatically, probably citing the written record, that Moses was specifically forbidden by the Lord to attack or in any way interfere with the Ammonites. The Mosaic conquest was strictly against the people of Heshbon and Bashan. Even though Jephthah's account was accurate, the traditions of the Ammonites (or, perhaps their desire for land) denied the story and a war was fought. Jephthah destroyed 20 principal cities of the Ammonites stretching from the Arnon River (which is actually far south of the traditional land of the Ammonites) to the vineyards of the plain. (These boundaries suggest that the Ammonites had conquered other nations and were a major power east of the Jordan River at this time.)</p> <p>Another war between the Ammonites and the Israelites was centered on Jabesh-Gilead in the time of King Saul. The Ammonites threatened Jabesh and when peace terms (surrender) was discussed, the Ammonites demanded total obedience from the people of Jabesh and the forfeiture of one eye from every man. The Jabeshites requested a week to consider these outrageous terms. During that week they contacted King Saul who assembled an army and marched to Jabesh where he defeated the Ammonites and gained the loyalty of the Jabeshites.</p> <p>During the time of King David there was another war between the Ammonites and the Israelites. The problem occurred when the Ammonite king died and his son came to the throne. King David, seeking to continue friendly relationships because of the kindnesses shown by the old king, sent men with messages of consolation to the new king. However, the princes of Ammon convinced the new king that the messengers were really spies and the new king humiliated the messengers by shaving half of their beards and cutting away half of their clothes, exposing their buttocks and sending them away in shame. They returned to David who angrily assembled an army against the Ammonites. To fortify their army, the Ammonites enlisted Syrian mercenaries. When the Israelite general, Joab, saw the Syrians on the battlefield alongside of the Ammonites, Joab divided his army into two portions — the stronger part he confronted the Syrians and the rest against the Ammonites. When the Syrians saw the formidable force against them, the Syrians broke ranks and ran. This discouraged the Ammonites who also retreated quickly into their city. Not too long after their flight, the Syrians regrouped and attacked Israel territory. At this, David took control of the Israelite army himself and directed the Israelite victory over the Syrians. David then returned to Jerusalem and sent Joab to wage a siege against the city of the Ammonites, Rabbah (modern Amman). This is the time when David saw and then slept with Bathsheba. When he discovered that she was pregnant, David recalled her husband, Uriah, from the Ammonite siege and tried to convince him to go to Bathsheba. But Uriah would not do it and, therefore, David sent Uriah back to Amman and gave instructions</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>to Joab to put Uriah at the hottest part of the battle and then withdraw the troops around him, thus exposing Uriah to the attack by the Ammonites. Uriah was killed.</p> <p>The land of the Ammonites again became important in David's life during the uprising caused by his son, Absalom. David learned of Absalom's plot and fled to the eastern side of the Jordan River. While living in Gilead, David's army was supplied by merchants from Ammon.</p> <p>The prophets of Israel (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Zephaniah) sometimes used the Ammonites as a foil to convince the Israelites to repent. Sometimes the prophets cursed the Ammonites. Certainly the relationship between the Ammonites and the Israelites was complex.</p> <p>The Ammonites were both friends and foes during the time of the divided kingdom. Sometimes the Ammonites and Israelites were controlled by the same foreign nation, like the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians. Both were conquered by Alexander and, under the Greeks and the Romans, the Ammonites flourished. Rabbah became one of the Decapolis cities and its name was changed to Philadelphia. At other times the Ammonites and the Israelites were independent enough to act for themselves and, usually, they did not agree. An example was the conspiracy that the Ammonites entered into with other non-Israelites to halt the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah.</p> <p>The Romans were especially interested in making Philadelphia a major center for trade and control. The Romans constructed new roads (the <i>Via Nova Traiana</i> among them) and other major public works such as the amphitheater (seating about 8000) and the temple of Hercules on the hill overlooking the valley where the main city was located. All that remains of the statue of Hercules are a shoulder and a hand, but from their dimensions the size of the statue can be estimated and it was immense. Stairs descended from the temple mount to the city, terminating in a beautiful gate. Baths and fountains were also part of the Roman contributions to the city.</p> <p>Amman became a major Christian area from the early years of the church. (Jordanian Christians proudly think of themselves as the first Christians, and there is good reason to accept their claim.) However, during the Christian persecution of the Emperor Diocletian about 300 AD, the city became a major location for martyrs and historians mention many of them by name. Later, when Constantine became emperor and allowed Christianity to flourish, Amman again became a major Christian center. Ruins of Byzantine churches and graves can be found in the old city sector and in several outlying suburbs (Jubaiha, Quaisema, Khalda, Hay Al Duraibat, Wadi Al Seir, Khirbet Al Kursi, Suwaifiya, Khuraibet Al Souq, Baqatha), some discovered as recently as 1976 when a man discovered a church as he was digging the foundation for his house.</p> <p>Major earthquakes in the Byzantine period reduced Amman to just a village and it remained quite small until the Ottomans built the Hijaz railroad to facilitate trade and journeys to Mecca for hajj pilgrims. In 1921 the newly installed king of Jordan moved his residence, and the capital city of Transjordan, from Salt to Amman. This move brought government ministries and the accompanying people. Then, beginning in 1948 waves of refugees converged on Jordan, especially Amman, where jobs were available. Today (2014) Amman is a major metropolis of about 6.5 million inhabitants.</p>
Qasr Amra	<p>One of the group of desert castles, Qasr Amra was originally a much larger complex. All that remains now is a hunting and vacation retreat. It is known for the lovely frescos depicting local wildlife, women and the zodiac. Another fresco depicts 6 kings of the period from the Middle East and Europe. A bathhouse shows the leisure that was part of life in the Umayyad period when the retreat was built. This castle is only about an hour drive east of Amman.</p>
Qasr Al-Azraq	<p>This desert castle is quite large and remains largely intact. It is located in the town of Azraq, about 1.5 hours east of Amman near the Azraq game preserve located as part of an oasis and wetlands area. It was previously known as an important</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>stopping place for migratory birds, but many of the birds now pass it by as the wetlands have shrunk dramatically due to water use by other areas in Jordan.</p> <p>Although the site was originally built by the Romans or, perhaps, by the Nabateans, the current structure is mostly from the 13th century. The structure is a square with high, thick walls and towers at the corners that is clearly defensive. The entry door is a single massive granite slab that is mounted so well that it is still easily rotated. Of interest is the Roman game that is carved in the inner courtyard.</p> <p>During the Ottoman period the site was a military outpost and then, during WWI, Lawrence of Arabia used the castle as his headquarters during the campaign to capture Jordan from the Ottoman Turks during the Great Arab Revolt.</p>
Qasr Al-Mushatta	<p>This desert castle is about 30 minutes south of Amman. Major portions of the castle still remain at the original site but the lovely façade has been moved to the Pergamum Museum in Berlin. The ruins in Jordan consist of an outer wall with 25 towers and interior rooms, including a mosque. Residential areas attest to the presence of a royal party as one room is a throne room and others are apartments with sophisticated architecture and air flow methods for cooling. The castle was likely built during the Umayyad period.</p>
Tell Mar Elyas (south), Brook Kerith, Chereth /Wadi Al-kharrar, Elijah's Hill, Tell al-Kharrar	<p>Two locations have been identified by scholars and by tradition as the brook where Elijah was fed by ravens as he retreated from the wrath of King Ahab. One of those locations is in Gilead, not far from Tishbe, the town where Elijah was born. A mountain near that site has traditionally been called "Tell Mar Elyas", the Mountain of the Prophet Elijah.</p> <p>The other location is in the southern part of the Jordan River Valley, a few miles north of the Dead Sea. This location also has both logic and tradition behind it and, just as in Gilead, there is a hill identified as Tell Mar Elyas. The logic for the southern site is that this hill is traditionally where Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire. The admonition of Elijah to Elisha to stay in Jericho and Elisha's refusal to do so supports the location of the hill of Elijah's ascension in the south as Jericho is just across the river from the southern hill. Also, the southern site is very near the place where Joshua crossed the River Jordan leading the Children of Israel and is near the baptism site of Jesus. In all three instances, the person of focus is passing into a higher or more desired state. Hence, great religious significance is attached to the southern site. Therefore, locating the Brook Chereth at the southern site is reasonable, traditional and spiritual.</p> <p>The linkage between Elijah and John the Baptist at this site is also a strong spiritual indication that the southern location has special importance. Some suggest that the cave wherein Elijah dwelt is the same cave that John the Baptist lived in and that the brook that is today known as the Brook of John the Baptist may have been the Brook Chereth. The New Testament links John the Baptist with Elijah and, therefore, further adds to this possibility.</p>
Bethany beyond Jordan/al-Mightas	<p>Several claims have been made identifying the location of the baptism site of Jesus, known scripturally as Bethany Beyond Jordan. However, recent archeological and historical studies have confirmed that the site long suggested by the traditions in Jordan is the correct site and the government of Jordan has created a park to protect the site and regulate the traffic. It is located at the mouth of the Wadi al-Kharrar where the stream (called Brook Kerith) flows from the Spring of John the Baptist and empties into the Jordan River. The <i>wadi</i> (gully or canyon) slopes gently from east to west and is about 40 feet lower than the surrounding plain of the Jordan River valley and varies in width from about 40 feet to over 400 feet. Overall the <i>wadi</i> is about 4500 yards long and is filled with tamarisk trees so dense that that the area has been called the "Jungle of the Jordan." A bare hill rises in the middle of the <i>wadi</i>, surrounded at its base by the tamarisk, and located about 1500 yards east of the river. This hill is called Tell Mar Elyas (described above). Driving west along the access road of the park, one sees just the top of the hill and the tops of the tamarisk trees until the road turns northward and drops into the wadi itself. Here is a place for buses to park and where the trail through the tamarisk begins. The winding trail follows the streamlet, sloping westward toward the river.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>After walking along the narrow path through the tamarisk for about 1000 yards, the visitor encounters a dry riverbed running north and south and, along its eastern side, a clearing and a pool of water. Inside the pool area are four foundation pillars and, leading down to the pool from a nearby raised slope are steps that lead to the ruins of two churches. The dry riverbed was the original bed of the Jordan River that was left dry when an earthquake diverted the main flow path of the river about 150 yards to the west where it currently flows. The pool is the place where the streamlet entered the river in ancient times and is the exact spot where the baptism of Jesus occurred. The entry of the streamlet provided this quiescent pool that was much better for baptisms than would the main flow of a large and fast-moving river as was the Jordan in Christ's time. The churches built on or near the pool date from the early Christian period, a prayer hall there may be from the 2nd century, and commemorates the location. Records of pilgrims from these early times verify that this is the place that ancient Christians came to worship and remember the baptism of Christ. Hermit caves in the nearby hill (Tell Mar Elyas) also testify that this was the location of the baptism.</p> <p>Returning to the pathway through the tamarisk, the visitor travels about 500 yards and encounters the present-day Jordan River. An Orthodox church stands about 30 feet from the water's edge and a wooden pavilion covers steps down to the water. There are provisions for changing clothes and many people come to this site to perform baptisms. The Jordan River at this point is a lazy, silt-laden stream about 20 feet wide and only 6 feet deep. An Israeli pavilion is directly opposite the Jordanian site and many people can be seen on that side also viewing the site and performing baptism. However, the actual site is about 500 yards to the east at the pool with the ancient churches.</p> <p>The scriptural account of Christ's baptism fits well with the location just described. The Gospel of John describes John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness beyond Jordan (that is, on the east side) and Jesus coming there to be baptized of him. The other gospels do not specify that the baptism occurred beyond Jordan but their accounts are consistent with John's. Note also that John the Baptist is asked whether he is Elyas, perhaps a reference to the location of the baptism being also where Elyas (Elijah) ascended to heaven and, therefore, easily brought to mind.</p> <p>Many pilgrims gave accounts of visiting the baptism site. Some mentioned that it was in Jordan (or beyond Jordan) and also mentioned the various churches that have been erected at the baptism site.</p>
Bethabara/Israelite crossing	<p>Very near the baptism site is the place where Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River. The crossing is opposite Jericho. The 5th century mosaic map of the Holy Land (located in the city of Madaba, Jordan) puts the crossing site at the same location as Bethany Beyond Jordan and the Bible also refers to the baptism site as Bethabara. Hence, the same site was used for crossing to a promised land (Israelites) and crossing into the kingdom of God (Jesus).</p> <p>Another crossing occurred east of Jericho – the crossing of Elijah and Elisha. Tradition and the location of Tell Mar Elyas (see above) suggest that this crossing was also at Bethabara.</p> <p>When the Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great, following the Babylonian captivity, they crossed at the same place as they did under Joshua, again reflecting the concept of entering the promised land.</p>
Plains of Moab, Abila, Shittim (also called Abel-shittim) and near Beth-peor, Beth-jesimoth/	<p>When Moses and the Children of Israel had defeated the Amorites at Heshbon (see below), they moved westward into the Jordan River valley and camped on the eastern side of the valley in an area of flat, fertile land (called the Plains of Moab) at a place called Shittim. The location is known approximately as the present-day village of Al Kafra (near Abil-ez-Zeit) and lies on the plain opposite the city of Jericho. It was in this location that Moses ordained Joshua and turned control of the people over to him. Moses left here to ascend Mount Nebo and it is in the Plains of Moab that the people mourned for Moses 30 days.</p> <p>This place was already occupied or was near a village of the Moabites called Baal-peor or Beth-peor. The men of Israel mingled with the women of Moab and began to worship the Moabite gods. The anger of the Lord was manifested to Moses and he</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
Abil-ez-Zeit, Al Kafrayn	ordered that all the men who were fraternizing with the people of Baal-peor be killed. Since the worship involved sexual sin, the event is mentioned by Paul in the New Testament as a reminder to the early Christians.
Beth-nimra, Tel Nimrin/Shuneh Janoubiah	These are cities mentioned in describing the territory of the tribe of Gad and lying in the plain of the Jordan River. South Shuneh is the modern Dead Sea resorts. Byzantine church ruins were found in the area with beautiful mosaics and some clay pieces that allow the church to be dated to the 6 th to 8 th centuries.
Abel-keramim/Tell al-Umayri, near Naur	This iron age site was heavily fortified and is located near the boundary of the Ammonites in the mountains to the east of the Jordan River valley. Modern excavations show evidence of household shrines, typical of the religion of the Ammonites.
Amorites	<p>This iron-age tribal kingdom of people descended from Canaan was located north of Moab and to the west of the Ammonites. It extended north along the Jordan River valley until it met the kingdom of Bashan in southern Syria (who may have also been Amorites). At times, the Amorites also had control of territory on the west side of the Jordan River, and possibly further north into Mesopotamia, but at the time of Moses, the kingdom seems to have been only east of the river and south of Syria.</p> <p>In the last year of the exodus, Moses was told to move the Israelites northward through the desert on the east of the lands of Edom and Moab. When the Israelites reached the southern boundary of the Children of Ammon (modern-day Amman), Moses was instructed to turn to the west and proceed toward the Jordan River. Moses sent a message to Sihon, king of the Amorites who lived in the path the Lord told Moses to take, asking permission to pass through his kingdom. Sihon refused the request and Moses was told to engage the Amorites in battle. The Israelites were successful and marched through Amorite territory to Shittim, in the Jordan valley.</p> <p>After establishing a camp in Shittim, Moses took 1000 men from each tribe northward and consolidated the conquest of the Amorites and, further, fought against King Og of Bashan (another king of the Amorite group) and conquered him. Moses and the army then returned to Shittim.</p> <p>In the days of the united kingdom, Solomon subjected all the remaining Amorites to slavery, thus ending their existence as a separate people.</p>
Heshbon, Asboos/Hesbun	<p>The capital of King Sihon of the Amorites was Heshbon, located on a large hill southwest of Amman about 10 miles. The battle in which the Israelites conquered the Amorites was fought close to this city and the Israelites took possession of Hesbon and the villages around it. It became, therefore, a symbol for the conquest of Israel over the tribes that opposed them.</p> <p>When the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, conquered the cities of Jordan on his way to Jerusalem, Heshbon was not spared. The city was overrun and the population killed and scattered. This defeat of Heshbon was lamented by the prophet Isaiah as he compared the destruction of Heshbon to the destruction that would await Jerusalem.</p> <p>Josephus mentions that Heshbon was an important city during the time of the Maccabees and King Herod built a fort there. It continued to be important during the Roman and Byzantine periods and continued as a military site into the well into the Muslim period. The early church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, called it Heshbon Asboos and noted that it was a "great city". The bishop of Heshbon was one of those who attended the Council of Nicea in the 4th century.</p> <p>Amidst the Roman and pre-Roman ruins are Byzantine churches and Muslim forts. Clearly Heshbon was important throughout many civilizations of the Middle East. Modern excavations at the site have identified 10 different civilization layers. The large hill that represents the central location of the city has been well marked with informative plaques describing the buildings on the site and speculating on the life of the people who lived there. In the St. Stephen's church mosaic in Umm ar Rasas (see below), Heshbon is called Asponta.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
Mt. Nebo, Mount Pisgah/Siyagha	<p>Mount Nebo is well known as the place where Moses looked into the promised land. Viewed from the Plains of Moab, where the Israelites were encamped, Nebo is a peak that overlooks the Dead Sea and the Jordan River valley. Viewed from the east side, however, Nebo is seen as a moderate prominence on the Moab Plateau, not much higher than the surrounding land. These contrasting views are best understood by considering that the Jordan River valley, housing the Dead Sea, is near the lowest point on the surface of the earth and, therefore, any escarpment overlooking it seems very high. Indeed, the road from Nebo to the floor of the valley is extremely steep and winding.</p> <p>Nebo was also important as a holy mountain in the times of Jeremiah. As reported in 2 Maccabees, Jeremiah was warned of the impending capture of Jerusalem and took the ark of the covenant to the eastern side of the river 'till he came to the mountain where he went up and saw the inheritance of God. Jeremiah then found a cave wherein he hid the ark and the other holy items he rescued from the temple.</p> <p>A monastery was built on the site of Mt. Nebo in Byzantine times and, although it was repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes in 551, 1016 and 1033, it was rebuilt each time. In 1932 the church at the site became the property of Franciscan monks.</p> <p>The modern site has an overlook at the western edge and a church behind it. Also at the site is a museum and several monuments to visits made by religious dignitaries. Immediately behind the lookout is a sculpture consisting of a metal staff (representing the rod of Moses) around which serpents are entwined and then extending outward at the top to form a cross. This is a symbol of Moses and the fiery serpents (related to Christ) and has become emblematic of Mt. Nebo.</p>
Temptations of Christ/Wadi al-Afreet, Al Mukhayyat	<p>To the immediate south of Mt. Nebo is a very desolate valley that locals call the Wadi al-Afreet or Valley of the Devil. The scriptures relate that after his baptism, Jesus went immediately into the wilderness and there he fasted for 40 days. He was then tempted by the devil. Local tradition suggests that this valley is the place of fasting and temptation. The reasoning is appropriate because of the proximity of the valley to the baptism site (only a few miles away) and the barrenness of the area.</p> <p>A town at the top of the valley is called Al Mukhayyat and could be the ancient city of Nebo that is referred to in the Bible. The ancient city seems to have been prosperous as gauged by the number of churches, wine and oil presses and other buildings in the area. The mosaics in several of the churches are quite noteworthy.</p>
Medaba/Madaba	<p>Madaba is a medium-sized city about 20 miles southwest of Amman. It is mentioned several times in the Old Testament and usually is associated with the land of Moab. After the allocation of the conquered land to the 12 tribes, Madaba was in the area assigned to Reuben. During the time of King David, the area around Madaba became part of the expanded Kingdom of the Ammonites and a great battle was fought at Madaba between David's army and the Ammonites. Interestingly, the account of the war indicates that the armies were in the "field", a normal description of any place of battle, but since Madaba is a relatively flat plateau that is noted for its rich farmland, "field" could also be descriptive of the agricultural place where the battle was fought.</p> <p>As the gateway to Nebo, Madaba is often associated with Nebo and with other towns in northern Moab. Some have speculated that it might be the home of Ruth, but there is no ancient evidence of this. However, Madaba continued to be important in the Maccabean period and then into Roman times. Ruins in Madaba show remnants of the <i>Via Nova Traiana</i>, the Roman road built in the 2nd century AD. A fine 1st century Roman house has been unearthed near the road. The house has a lovely mosaic floor, a common feature of Roman houses of that time. Among the mosaics in the area of ancient Madaba is a famous depiction of a tree of life. This tree has fruit hanging below its branches in contrast to a similar tree of life mosaic found in ancient Jericho ruins that has animals (some killing each other) below the tree. These depictions are readily seen at the souvenir shops on the road to Nebo and in downtown Madaba.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>The history of Madaba is unique. Madaba continued to be important into the Byzantine era as evidenced by the many churches in the area. Most of the churches featured beautiful mosaic floors, a custom continued from the Roman homes in the area. One especially well known mosaic is a map of the Holy Land showing many of the cities and other geographical features. The Jordan River is at the center of the map and both Bethabara and Bethany Beyond Jordan are identified. At that site a fish in the Jordan River, swimming south, encounters another fish swimming north from the Dead Sea, thus indicating that the Dead Sea does not support fish life. Jerusalem is clearly seen in the map and many of the biblical sites in Jordan can be identified.</p> <p>To the surprise of visitors, the church housing the map mosaic and most of the other churches in the city were built in the 19th century. Why are the churches not ancient? The answer is because Madaba was largely abandoned in the 8th century when an earthquake destroyed much of the city. Only scattered farmers and shepherds remained for about 1000 years. Then, in the mid-19th century, the Christian patriarch in Jerusalem wrote to the governmental overlord of the area (it was part of the Ottoman Empire) and said that two Christian tribes in the town of Kerak (south of Madaba about 50 miles) were at war and the patriarch asked if one of the tribes could be given a place of refuge so that both tribes could be preserved. The Ottoman authority agreed to allow one tribe to move to Madaba and, therefore, the city was re-inhabited. When the people began digging in the rubble, they found the mosaics (many of them, like the map, had been severely damaged) but still churches were built over these works of art and they are available now for visitors to see. Madaba is known as a city of mosaics.</p>
Qasr Al-Kharana	<p>This desert castle is relatively close to Amman and is an enjoyable half-day trip south from the capital. It was probably not used as a caravanserai as there is not a nearby water source, nor was it used as a military fort since the windows don't fit the model for arrow-slits. However, the architecture follows the Syrian style of the Umayyad period and the windows provide a nice cooling system (using the Venturi effect).</p>
Mephaath/Kastrom Mefa'a, Umm ar Rasas	<p>Mephaath was an ancient city of Moab mentioned along with others cities within the inheritance of Reuben. It was designated as a Levite city. The similarity in names, general location, and historical traditions link this city to Kastrom Mefa'a (better known as Umm ar Rasas), designated as a World Heritage Site because of the magnificent ruins that are found there.</p> <p>The ruins at Umm ar Rasas are extensive and unique in many ways, but have only been marginally explored with little excavation beneath the obvious surface buildings. There is evidence of Roman, Byzantine and Muslim occupation. The Byzantine is especially important because of the mosaic floors of several churches. One has lovely lion figures and is currently unprotected so the site management has covered the floor with plastic and then spread sand on top. Those wishing to see the lions must know where to look, uncover the mosaics, and then recover them when finished.</p> <p>Another especially impressive mosaic is in the ruins of St. Stephen's church, built in the 8th century. It is the largest mosaic in Jordan and is justly housed inside a covered pavilion. The mosaic, showing animal and human figures, has a border depicting cities (with their names) on the eastern and western sides of the Jordan River— Hesbon (Esbounta), Madaba, Amman (Philadelphia), Kerak (Charak Mosba), Belemounta (Ma'in) on the east and Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus and Caesaria among those for the west. Six mosaic masters signed the work, suggesting the importance of this site when it was built.</p> <p>Many of the human faces and some animal faces on the mosaics have been obliterated. This is clearly the work of the iconoclasts of the 9th century. During that time the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople became troubled by the commandment to not worship any graven images. In his opinion, the icons of the Orthodox Church and the Statues of the Catholic Church were violations of this commandment. He then ordered that the icons and statues be destroyed and that the faces of humans and some animals on the mosaics be destroyed. Many priests and lay members throughout the empire accepted his order and a rampage of destruction occurred. However, the pope in Rome did not agree and effectively stopped any destruction in the area under his control (essentially Europe). Angry letters were exchanged between the emperor and the pope. The emperor reminded the pope</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>that, since the days of Constantine, the emperor was the ultimate head of the church and had the power to appoint (later, to approve) the person to be the pope. The pope pointed out that the emperor was many miles away from Rome and did not know or understand the special circumstances of the European church. Since the emperor had no means to enforce his mandate, the pope was able to ignore the command to destroy the figures. Then, to further weaken the control of the Byzantine emperor over the Catholic Church, the pope invited a European monarch who had demonstrated great loyalty to the Roman pontiff, to become a new Roman Emperor, thus effectively cutting off any residual power that the Byzantine emperor might have in Western Europe. The king chosen for this honor was Charlemagne, king of the Franks. Because the pope crowned him, the title given to Charlemagne was Holy Roman Emperor. The coronation date was Christmas Day, 800 AD. This step was a major factor in the separation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, although formal separation would not occur for another 200 years.</p> <p>Within a mile of the ruins at Umm ar Rasas stands a tower with some ruins around its base. The ruins have been identified as a church and living quarters for pilgrims. The tower is one of the type called Stylite Towers or towers where someone dwells. In the early Christian church ascetic monks would occasionally seek to demonstrate their piety and to seek further grace by subjecting themselves to physical hardship. One type of hardship that became popular was to live for extensive periods on the top of a tower. Sometimes the monk on the tower would also perform difficult physical feats such as standing for long periods (one did so for 53 years) or standing on one foot or lying only on one side. Pilgrims would come to the site as a method of believing that they could gain some of the good will generated by the stylite monk. The tower was used as the identifying landmark for Umm ar Rasas in the mosaic in the nearby St. Stephen's church in the ruins of the Umm ar Rasas city.</p>
Sea of the Arabah, Vale of Siddim, Salt Sea/ Dead Sea	<p>The Dead Sea is a large body of water that forms much of the western border of south-central Jordan. It extends northward to a point just south of Mount Nebo and extends southward to the ancient city of Zoar. The Madaba Plateau overlooks the Dead Sea along the northern part of its eastern shoreline making ancient passage very difficult because of the height of the cliffs that descend directly into the water. The cliffs along the southern shoreline are receded from the shore and, therefore, a fertile and highly productive agricultural area exists that extends for several miles to the south until it meets a sandy desert. This area owes some of its high agricultural output to the natural greenhouse effect caused by the high temperatures and dense air. The southern end of the Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth.</p> <p>Because there is no outlet for the water, evaporation leaves a high salt residue and the water becomes very salty. No animal life exists in the Dead Sea and this is depicted humorously in the famous mosaic map in St. George's church in Madaba where it shows fish in the Jordan River swimming south only to meet fish swimming north, away from the Dead Sea.</p>
Beth-Baal-Meon, Blimota/Ma'in and Zara	<p>This location is a city of the Madaba plateau that was part of the inheritance of Reuben but has a special significance because it is associated with a water god. Such association is logical because Ma'in was built around a hot water spring. It is one of the cities identified in the mosaic in St. Stephen's church in Umm ar Rasas and in that mosaic the city is called Blimota.</p> <p>Today it is a spa resort where people go to enjoy the warm water and the pleasant surroundings with usually warm weather. The site overlooks the Dead Sea. A nice museum (The Museum of the Dead Sea) has been built only a few miles from Ma'in. This museum is located on a panoramic spot and is a pleasant place to relax, learn of the Dead Sea, and have lunch at the restaurant.</p>
Machaerus/Mukawir	<p>The scriptures relate that while John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness (on the east side of the Jordan River) he angered Herodias, the wife of King Herod, because he condemned their marriage as illegal. (Herodias was the widow of King Herod's brother and Jewish law forbade such a marriage). The king would have killed John immediately but he feared the wrath of the people. Therefore, he incarcerated John in a mountaintop palace called Machaerus. Later, King Herod went to Machaerus to celebrate his birthday. Herod's stepdaughter, Salome, danced for him and, because of the skill of her dance, he promised to grant</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>her wish, even to half his kingdom. At the urging of her mother, Herodias, and probably because John the Baptist was on her mind (he being jailed in the same fortress location), Herodias suggested that Salome ask for the head of John on a charger (platter). King Herod was loathe to kill John, but he felt that his promise must be kept. Therefore, John was beheaded and the head was presented to Salome as she wished.</p> <p>There are several of these pleasure palaces-fortresses throughout the Holy Land that were built or enlarged by King Herod's father, Herod the Great. A very famous one is Masada, on the west shore of the Dead Sea, nearly opposite the place where John was beheaded. Since John was preaching on the east side of the river, it would have been logical and convenient for him to be taken to the pleasure palace on the east side – Machaerus.</p> <p>Machaerus is about 30 miles south of Amman between the King's Highway and the Dead Sea near a small village named Mukawir. The palace is atop a large, isolated plateau overlooking and not far from the shore of the Dead Sea. The top of the plateau is reached by walking along a steep gravel pathway that winds along the western face of the plateau. The ruins on top have not been improved but are impressive nonetheless. The cistern is large, the rooms indicate that many people could be accommodated, and the overall impression is one of solemnity, probably because of the events that occurred there.</p> <p>During the time of the Jewish revolt in 66-70 AD, zealots fled to many of these pleasure palaces. The Roman army pursued them and laid siege to each palace-fortress. At Masada, on the western side of the Dead Sea, the Romans built a dirt ramp leading up to the summit and thereby gained access to the top, only to discover that the zealots had committed suicide. At Machaerus the Romans built a similar ramp but the zealots surrendered. The rebels were allowed to leave but their fortress was torn down. Hence, the poor state of preservation of the current site.</p>
Almon-diblathaim, Diblath	<p>This is a stopping place during the last year of the exodus. It must lie near to and probably north of Dhiban since it follows Dhiban as a camping site during the northward trek of the Israelites through Jordan.</p>
Dibon Gad/Dhiban	<p>This very old city (early Bronze Age) sits between two canyons (<i>wadis</i>) on the King's Highway and, therefore, is a natural site for a trading center. The antiquity of the site is confirmed with archeological evidence and, perhaps, through Egyptian records where a town named TPN or TBN (Semitic language root consonants) is recorded. Of particular interest to scholars is the Mesha Stele, a stone monument with an inscription telling how the god of Moab, where Dhiban is located, was angry with his people and allowed them to be subjugated to the Israelites but then returned to the people and allowed them to cast off the Israelite yoke. The stele was erected by King Mesha of the Moabites who reigned about 840 BC and it further describes some of the projects that King Mesha accomplished. including his complex system of wells and a large pool to guarantee the water supply of the city. Biblical scholars are delighted with the stele because it is the longest Iron Age inscription ever found in the region, gives insights into the Moabite language, and confirms a Biblical event described in 2 Kings 3:4-8. The stele is the earliest non-Biblical reference to the Hebrew God, Jehovah, and also references the Kingdom of David. Sadly the stele was broken in a dispute between local tribes over ownership. However, a paper mache duplicate was made and most of the original broken pieces have been recovered. The duplicate and the broken pieces are in the Louvre.</p> <p>Dhiban was a stopping point on the Israelite trek during the last exodus year, was part of the assignment to Reuben, and remained a modest trading city throughout the Persian and Greek periods later gaining in population and significance under Nabatean and, later, Roman rule.</p>
Aroer/Arzair	<p>This city, on the edge of the plateau looking into the ravine of the Arnon River, was the southernmost town of the Israelite inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan River. It was part of the ancient kingdom of Moab but, at the time of Moses, seems to have been part of the Amorite kingdom of King Sihon. Later it was part of the kingdom that reverted to King Mesha and,</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	as is clear from writings about Moab during the time of King David and later as described by Jeremiah, it was securely part of the Moabite territory.
Arnon River/Wadi Mujib	<p>The Arnon River flows through a deep gorge, today known as Wadi Mujib, and is a major river flowing into the Dead Sea. It was a natural boundary and, during the time of the exodus, the Arnon River was the border between the lands of the Moabites and the Amorites. It became the southern boundary of the land given to Reuben although the Moabites seemed to have possession of several towns north of the Arnon River throughout the Old Testament period.</p> <p>Wadi Mujib is an important regional wildlife preserve. It is especially well known for the many bird varieties sighted therein.</p>
Moab	<p>The ancient Kingdom of Moab lies along much of the eastern shore of the Dead Sea and extends eastward for a considerable distance into the desert east of the King's Highway. For much of the biblical period, the capital of Moab was Dibon but other cities have occasionally been the capital.</p> <p>Moab is named after one of the sons of Lot who was conceived after the destruction of Sodom. Therefore, the people of Moab trace their ancestry back to Lot and to Abraham's family. When Moses moved northward in the last year of the exodus, he asked the king of Moab to grant the Israelites passage and the king refused, thus forcing the Israelites to travel through the eastern desert. After conquering the Amorites and the people of Bashan, the Israelites camped in the Plains of Moab near the place where Joshua would eventually cross the Jordan River. This encampment made the king of Moab very nervous and he sought to have a curse placed on the Israelites so that God would take the Moabite's side in any warfare. The king sent word to Balaam, a prophet, to come and perform the cursing. However, in the night the Lord spoke to Balaam and told him to refuse to curse the Israelites, so the messengers returned to the Moabite king. The king was still fearful and sent princes to Balaam to plead for him to curse Israel, promising Balaam great rewards. Balaam then went with the princes toward Moab but on the way an angel of the Lord blocked the pathway. The angel was seen only by Balaam's ass that turned immediately into the field to avoid the angel. Balaam beat the ass, forcing it to return to the path. Two other times the angel blocked the path at narrow places and the ass moved aside, on one occasion crushing Balaam's foot. Balaam continued to beat the ass until, mercifully, the Lord allowed the ass to speak and the situation was revealed to Balaam. After arriving at the Moabite capital, the king asked Balaam again to curse Israel. Numerous sacrifices were offered on several occasions but instead of cursing Israel, Balaam was told to bless them, and he did. Eventually, the king of the Moabites understood that Balaam would only follow the word of the Lord and Balaam returned to his home.</p> <p>Presumably the Israelites would have been true in their worship, but even as they waited at Shittim, many took up with Moabite women and entered into worship ceremonies to the Moabite god. These men were destroyed. The lure of Moabite gods and their worship ceremonies was a constant temptation to the Israelites. The interactions of the Israelites with these near neighbors were difficult throughout the period of Joshua and the Judges. Wars were raged and both sides had opportunities for victory. These wars give the story of Naomi and Ruth even more meaning. Because of a famine in Israel, Naomi's family, husband and two sons, went to Moab where the sons married Moabite women. Eventually the husband and sons died, leaving Naomi and the two daughters-in-law to survive on their own. Naomi decided to return to her home in Bethlehem and suggested that the daughters-in-law return to their homes. One did but the other, Ruth, refused to leave Naomi. Therefore, the two women went to Bethlehem where, eventually, Ruth married a leading man in the city and bore children, one of whom was the grandfather of King David and forefather of Jesus.</p>
Rubat Moab, Areopolis/Rabba	Even in a land of great Christian devotion from the early days of the Christian church, some places seem to have resisted the conversion to Christianity and Rubat Moab (Rabba) in central Moab was one of these. A 4 th century historian relates that the

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>Roman emperor, Theodosius I, who ruled in the 4th century, issued an edict against the people of Rabba because they fought Christianity. (Theodosius was attempting to make Christianity the official and exclusive religion of the Roman Empire.) Then, a century later, the city seems to have accepted Christianity and many large churches were built, the ruins of which are still easily identified.</p>
<p>Kir-moab, Qer Harreseth, Mizpah-moab/Kerak</p>	<p>Because it sits astride the King's Highway and contains a massive hill with three steep sides, thus forming a natural defensive position, the town of Kerak has long been a fortress city. This ancient Moabite city is mentioned as a place where an Assyrian king sent captives to be held. The city became part of the Nabatean empire and then fell to the Romans as part of their conquest of the southern Jordanian deserts. Kerak remained an important city during the early Muslim period and then became the capital of the Crusader kingdom east of the Jordan River. The crusaders built the castle that dominates the city today. This castle withstood a year-long siege but eventually fell to Saladin's brother who then became the ruler of Kerak and its region. It remained important as a fortress guarding the pilgrimage route to Mecca.</p> <p>Biblical references to Kerak (Kir-moab or Oer Harreseth or Mizpah-moab) generally list it as a key city in Moab. Of particular interest is King David's request of the king of Moab to allow David's parents to flee there during the internal wars in Israel as David consolidated his kingdom.</p>
<p>Sodom/Bab edh-Dhra</p>	<p>Sodom is one of the most famous of ancient cities and one of the oldest. Genesis identifies Sodom as a Canaanite city along with its sister city, Gomorrah and other cities in the Jordan plain. When Abraham's and Lot's servants argued because their flocks were mixing together, Abraham gave Lot a choice of places to live and Lot choose the well-watered and fertile plain surrounding Sodom. However, the prosperity of Sodom was a magnet for kings from the north and when these kings conquered Sodom, Lot was taken captive. Abraham heard of this tragedy and quickly responded by organizing an army, chasing the kings of the north, conquering them, and returning Lot to Sodom.</p> <p>Probably the most famous event concerning Sodom was its destruction. The story begins with holy men visiting Abraham and telling him that they were going to visit Sodom and, because of its wickedness, the city would be destroyed. Abraham successfully pled that Lot and his family be spared from the destruction. When the holy men entered Sodom, they were invited to eat and stay with Lot. During that evening several men from the city came to Lot's house and demanded that the holy men be sent out so that the men of Sodom could know them sexually. Lot would not yield the men but the men of Sodom persisted and pressed forward to force the situation. The holy men pulled Lot inside the house and then caused that the men outside the door become blind. The holy men then told Lot to gather all his family together and leave the city, without even looking back. Lot's sons-in-law refused to go. Lot's wife looked back and turned to a pillar of salt. However, Lot and his daughters escaped the destruction that came by fire from heaven. From that time onward Sodom and Gomorrah became symbols of evil and the destruction of the wicked. Other sins of Sodom cited (in Ezekiel) are pride, idleness, and ignoring of the needy amidst a life of plenty.</p> <p>The modern site of Bab edh-Dhra is accepted by many biblical scholars as the place where ancient Sodom was located. The tell at this site has bitumen and petroleum, along with sulfur and natural gas deposits suggesting that the ancient destruction could have been a description of the explosion that might have resulted from gas leaking out of an underground cavern that was ignited.</p>
<p>Gomorrah/Numeira</p>	<p>Gomorrah is a sister city to Sodom and suffered the same fate at the same time. The archeological site near the town of Numeira is accepted by many scholars are the site of Gomorrah.</p>
<p>Lot's Wife formation</p>	<p>At least two rock formations along the eastern shoreline of the Dead Sea have been called "Lot's Wife" because they have a resemblance to standing woman.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
Zoar, Bela/Safi	<p>Zoar, modern Safi, is a city at the southernmost tip of the Dead Sea. It is a fertile agricultural area with intensive farming on the plain extending south of the Dead Sea. This is the principal commercial city in the area.</p> <p>During the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot was told by the holy men to flee to the town of Zoar, which he did. Evidently Zoar was near enough to see the destruction (in fact, Abraham could see it from his location on the hills west of the Dead Sea) but was not so near that it was destroyed. However, within a short time Lot and his daughters sought protection in a cave above the city of Zoar.</p>
Lot's Cave/Khirbet Al Mukhayyat, Ain Abata	<p>Lot and his daughters went up into a cave in the mountains that formed the eastern border of Zoar. There they dwelt and it was there that the daughters became pregnant with sons who became the founders of the Moabites and the Ammonites. A Byzantine church was built next to the cave and, although in ruins, its existence lends some credibility to the choice of the cave's location as authentic.</p> <p>A nice museum (Museum at the Lowest Point on Earth) has been built on a small plateau below Lot's cave. It is a pleasant place to rest and gain some information about the Dead Sea and its history.</p> <p>A monastery built to remember Lot was built on the top of a nearby mountain and is called Ain Abata. Excavations have found water troughs and storage facilities and, of course, several churches that were used by the monks and pilgrims.</p>
Plain of Jordan, Cities of the Valley	<p>The cities of the Plain of Jordan comprise Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, Admah and Zeboim. These cities were all wealthy and prosperous, thus attracting Lot as a place to live. They were all captured during the war of the 5 kings when Abraham went after Lot and rescued him. Modern-day cities in this area are agricultural but there are mining operations and major projects extracting bromine and potash from the Dead Sea.</p>
Desert Highway	<p>When Moses led the children northward during the final year of the exodus, he asked to travel through Edom and was denied permission. He also asked to pass through Moab and was also denied. Therefore, although the path was not straight, the scriptures indicate that at least some of the route that the Israelites took was on the eastern side of Moab in the desert. Today it is called the Desert Highway.</p> <p>The road continued to be used, at least in part, through the Muslim period when it became a major road for pilgrims to Mecca. The Ottomans built the Hijaz Railroad to parallel this road and today it is the main highway between Amman and Aqaba.</p>
Zered Valley/Wadi Hasa	<p>This valley leads from the Moabite mountains into the southern end of the Dead Sea and has been the traditional boundary between Moab and Edom. Zoar sits where the valley widens into the Jordan Plain and the river running in the valley empties into the Dead Sea (at its southern end).</p>
Lje-abarim	<p>This exodus stopping point lies along the Zered Valley, the border of Moab. The site is on the eastern (sun-rising) side of Moab. The next stopping point to the north was Dibon.</p>
Edom, Idumea	<p>Edom was a kingdom situated south of Moab and extending from the Zered Valley south to the Gulf of Aqaba. Because Edom was largely south of the Dead Sea, the western boundary extended across the Jordan Valley Rift to the hills of Judea. The indeterminate eastern boundary was within the southern Jordanian desert and was determined by interactions with desert tribes. This area, known for its copper mines, was settled in the early Bronze Age. The numerous trade routes crossing the area such as the King's Highway and the frankincense route from southern Arabia, were a major source of wealth to the Edomites. The origin of the name is with Esau, the oldest son of Isaac and twin brother of Jacob. After selling his birthright for pottage and then having his blessing usurped by Jacob, Esau received a lesser blessing and then moved to the area known as Edom where his people replaced (or assimilated) a group known as the Horites. Esau took wives from among the Hittites (another tribe having Indo-European roots) who knew the secret of iron smelting and, therefore, may have come to Edom for the mines. Esau later took to wife one of the daughters of Ishmael, his uncle.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>When Jacob was returning from Syria with his wives and flocks, Esau heard of the return and travelled north (probably along the King's Highway) to meet Jacob. There was fear in Jacob's heart because the last time Jacob and Esau were together, Esau threatened to kill Jacob. Therefore, Jacob divided his wives and flocks and set aside a gift of many flocks for Esau. However, when Esau saw Jacob, Esau ran and embraced him, bestowing love and forgiveness upon Jacob. Esau initially refused the gift but Jacob pressed it upon him saying that if it was not for retribution, it was for love. Esau then accepted the gift and returned to Seir (the major mountain in Edom and a marker for the area).</p> <p>When Moses and the Israelites had spent 39 years in the desert, they were commanded to leave their resting place and travel north. Moses asked permission of the King of Edom to pass along the King's Highway, through Edomite land. Even though Moses promised that the Israelites would not disturb the land or drink the water, the Edomite king refused passage. Therefore, the children of Israel were forced to take a round-about route to the east of Edom, buying with money meat and water from the Edomites, but specifically commanded not to meddle with them, for their land was given to the children of Esau as an inheritance from the Lord.</p> <p>Moses stipulated that the Israelites were to be cautious about the Edomites and the Egyptians, taking them into their congregations only after 3 generations. This stipulation probably kept the groups separate for many generations. During the times of the united Israelite kingdom, Edom was made a servant state but, later when the Israelites had weakened, Edom again became independent, only to come under the control of the Nabateans. During the Nabatean period Edom came to be a dominant area of the Middle East, controlling trade along the major routes and resisting invasions by the Persians and Greeks.</p> <p>During the Maccabean revolt, part of Edom, now called Idumea, fell to the Maccabeans and there was a forced conversion of the inhabitants to the Jewish faith. Although the Pharisees rejected the inclusion of the Idumeans into the Jewish community, there was intermarriage and, eventually, the house of Herod, who were Idumeans, became the rulers of both Idumea and Judea. The rise of the Herodians occurred because of their friendship with the Romans and, when the Romans conquered the Nabateans and the Jews, Herod was installed as king. During the Diaspora of the Jews, the term "Edom" became associated with "Rome", probably because of this connection through Herod and his descendants.</p>
Atad, Abel-Misraim	<p>After Jacob's death, which occurred in Egypt, he was embalmed in the Egyptian style and then, according to his wishes, he was transported by his children to his final burial site in Hebron. Genesis reports that when the immense company of people accompanying the body came to the threshing floor of Atad, beyond the Jordan River, that is, on the eastern side of the river, a great mourning was held for seven days. After the mourning Jacob's body was carried across the Jordan and buried in the tomb of his fathers.</p> <p>While the location of Atad is not known, its placement in the southern part of Jordan at a place where a branch off the King's Highway would allow crossing into Hebron, satisfies the requirement of it being east of Jordan and also allows the large burial party to travel well known trading routes.</p>
Oboth, Ain Uber	<p>This stopping place in the last year of the exodus is noteworthy because it is the place immediately following the experience with the fiery serpents. Because Moses was forced to avoid Edom, he led the Israelites into the eastern desert and the people complained because of the difficulty of the passage (probably very hot and windy). There they encountered fiery serpents and many of the people died from the bites. The people repented of their complaining and asked Moses to remove the serpents. Moses inquired of the Lord and was told to make a model of a bronze serpent and place it on a rod. Then, all those who were bitten by the serpents need only look upon the rod and they would be healed. This image was later adopted by the medical profession as a symbol of healing. It has also been adopted as a prototype for Christ and the spiritual healing that he will give to</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	those who have faith to look to him. In memory of the attack of the fiery serpents and the healing of the rod, a sculpture of the serpent and rod, rendered into the form of a cross, has been placed on Mount Nebo so that it is associated with Moses.
Bozrah/Busayra	This was the capital city of the Edomites and has been mentioned as a general term for the people of Edom/Idumea. Amos indicates and some scholars have also suggested that this is the site of Bezer, a city of refuge within the territory assigned to Reuben, although other ruined villages have also been proposed as the site of Bezer.
Punon, Phaino/Faynon	This very old (Bronze Age) city is famous for its copper and iron mines. It continued to be important through the Old and New Testament periods and is mentioned by Eusebius in the 4 th century AD as still an important mining location. Punon was also a stop on the exodus. Some scholars have suggested that Punon was the site of King Solomon's copper mines. The Romans also used some of the 250 mines in the area. During the times of Christian persecution in the reign of Emperor Diocletian (about 300 AD), convicted and often mutilated Christians were sent to the mines of Faynon after their initial punishment. The ruins of the city are located between the Dead Sea Highway and the King's Highway, about 50 miles south of the Dead Sea. There are several Byzantine churches and some water ponds as well as copper pieces and pots, etc.
Shobak/Montreal	This crusader castle was built in the early 12 th century by the king of Jerusalem, hence the name derived from the "royal mount". It was a protection for the southern trade routes and as a way to collect tolls from pilgrims who passed along the roads. Eventually it was ceded to the Lordship of Kerak and replaced in importance by the stronger castle at Kerak. The castle fell to Saladin after a two-year siege. It is located southeast of Kerak about 30 miles.
Zalmonah/Bir Madhkur	Zalmonah in south-central Edom was a stop during the last year of the exodus. The site later became a trading center on the spice route connecting Petra with Gaza. Evidence at Bir Madhkur, the name given in Arabic, shows that the Romans built a fort and bath complex there. Hence, it was an active site into the New Testament period. Several other structures have been discovered, one of them having 6 internal rooms. Outlying farming structures suggest that the population during the Roman and Byzantine periods was quite large. This active location is reflected in the presence of a nearby spring (in the <i>wadi</i>). Today, the site is a center for both archeological and ecological tourism.
Mt Hor/Jebel Haroun	<p>Mount Hor is located on the edge of the Land of Edom and is the scene of the Prophet Aaron's death. The tomb of Aaron is located on the top of the mountain. The tomb was mentioned by Josephus in the 1st century and Eusebius in the 4th century AD and is, therefore, ancient and well known.</p> <p>Aaron became the mouthpiece of Moses when Moses complained that he could not speak well enough to confront pharaoh in the challenge to free the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage. Aaron continued to accompany Moses through the dealings with pharaoh and then later in the wilderness he was a principal helper (such as holding up Moses' arms during the battle with the Amalekites and accompanying Moses with 70 elders onto the mountain to see God). Later, Aaron and his sons were consecrated as a priest class for all Israel. Sadly, Aaron was also involved in making the golden calf that was such an abomination to God.</p> <p>After the children of Israel left their encampment at Kadesh, the Lord commanded that Moses take Aaron and his son, Eleazar, up onto Mount Hor where the priestly robes were removed from Aaron and bestowed on Eleazar. Aaron then died and after a 30-day mourning, the Israelites began their last trek (lasting about a year) before crossing into the promised land.</p>
Kadesh-barnea, en Mishpat, Sela/Petra, Umm al-Birya	Instead of thinking of Kadesh-barnea as a single, specific confined location, it should be thought of as an area, perhaps a few miles in diameter, that is centered about the area of Kadesh but includes surrounding mountains, streams, and other physical features. Hence, Kadesh-barnea, en Mishpat and Sela are all considered to be the same location. This concept is needful because Kadesh-barnea is the place where the Children of Israel camped for 37 of the 40 years they were in the wilderness and such a camp would of necessity been spread over a considerable area. Careful reading of the Bible reveals that it took approximately two

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>years to reach Kadesh and then, after the 37 years encampment, it took about one year from the time the Israelites left Kadesh until they crossed over the Jordan River.</p> <p>Scholars differ on the location of Kadesh, assuming that there is only one Kadesh. Some place it on the western side of the Jordan Valley Rift, approximately 75 miles south of Hebron and point to the scriptures that define it as part of the inheritance of Judah. However, this location has major problems, not the least of which is the question of why the Israelites, after their encampment at Kadesh, would cross to the east side of the Jordan Valley Rift and proceed north and then recross the valley (at the River) to enter the promised land when they were already on the western side and could have just moved north. Also, the events of the last year of the exodus and the locations associated with those events are clearly on the east side of the Jordan River Rift. Therefore, with strong logic and confirmation by succeeding events, the location of Kadesh in the Negev Desert shown on many Bible maps can be rejected. In fairness, however, there may have been two locations known as Kadesh, thus explaining some of the citations that seem to suggest a westside location.</p> <p>A much more logical location for Kadesh, at least the place where Moses and the Israelites encamped, is on the eastern side of the Jordan River Rift near the city of Petra. Tradition strongly favors this location (called locally the Valley of Moses), the mountain where Aaron is buried is only a few miles away, the Spring of Moses is nearby, and Petra affords a location that was easily defensible and, therefore, would have been safe for the Israelites. Also, as opposed to the Negev site, it would have been out of the boundaries of ancient Egypt and, therefore, not easily reached by an Egyptian army that might have chosen to attack after several years had elapsed. As mentioned previously, the subsequent locations are all on the eastern side of the rift and, therefore, strongly support the Petra location as authentic. Pre-Mosaic citations of Kadesh, such as the attacks of the five kings, also support a location on the eastern side of the rift. Also, we are told that it is eleven days journey from Mt. Horeb via Mt. Seir to Kadesh-barnea; a timing that fits well with the eastern location.</p> <p>Kadesh was the place from which the spies left to evaluate the promised land. It was also the place where Miriam died and where the rock gave forth the water.</p>
Wilderness of Zin	<p>Kadesh-barnea is in the wilderness of Zin, a general term that is applied to the greater region where the Israelites camped. Note that some confusion has occurred in the two Biblical different accounts of the stopping places of the exodus. One of the accounts has many more locations than the other. It has been suggested that when the translator/copier got to the Wilderness of Sin (one of the locations) somehow this person lost attention and skipped to the Wilderness of Zin (another location), thus eliminating all the sites in-between. (An interesting explanation.)</p>
Amalekites	<p>The Amalekites are a people who dwell in the southern part of the promised land and are descended from Esau. The Israelites fought the Amalekites and were saved from defeat only because Moses held up his arms (or had his arms held up for him) and that caused the Israelites to be victorious. Later, King Saul fought and defeated the Amalekites but brought the anger of Samuel when all the people and their goods were not destroyed. King David also fought against the Amalekites.</p>
Teman/Ma'an	<p>Teman is a town in Edom that is named after the grandson of Esau. It is associated with the modern city of Ma'an, a major transportation and trading center in southern Jordan. It is the place where the King's Highway and the Desert Highway cross as well as a major station in the Hijaz Railroad. During WWI Ma'an was a key site for controlling the destruction of the Hijaz Railroad fought between the Arab army, captained by Lawrence of Arabia, and the Ottoman Turks.</p>
Mt. Seir	<p>Mount Seir is range of mountains and a district in southern Jordan that may also contain a particular mountain called Mount Seir. The area is likely the home of the Horites, the tribe that lived in Edom prior to the arrival of Esau. It is from Mount Seir that Esau traveled to meet with Jacob when they reconciled and it is to Mount Seir that he returned.</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	<p>Mount Seir is near Kadesh-barnea as the Lord says that the Israelites had spent enough time in the region of Seir and that now (beginning the last year of the exodus) they were to move northward, beginning their last journey before crossing the river to the promised land.</p>
<p>Paran/Wadi Araba, Wadi Rum, Mudawarra</p>	<p>The Wilderness of Paran is where Hagar, the second wife (concubine) of Abraham was sent and where she lived with her infant son, Ishmael. The Bible indicates that Paran is east of the Jordan River and, therefore, is likely in southern Jordan. Islamic tradition puts Paran further south, but that is because tradition has Hagar and Ishmael building Mecca. However, the journey to Mecca could have been later in their life and so locating Paran in southern Jordan is logical.</p> <p>Several events in the life of Hagar are worth relating as they give context to the journey to Paran. Because Sarah could not get pregnant, she gave her Egyptian handmaid to Abraham as a concubine and Hagar became pregnant. Sarah became jealous and treated Hagar poorly, causing Hagar to flee to the wilderness. There Hagar met an angel who counseled her to return to Sarah and gave Hagar a blessing for her son, Ishmael. The well at which Hagar met the angel was Beer-Jahai-roi. This site is a well that is between Kadesh and Bered on the way to Shur, likely in the Negev desert south of Beersheba. Hagar returned to Abraham and bore her son. However, after Isaac was born, problems again arose between Sarah and Hagar. At this time Sarah insisted that Hagar be sent out of the community and, after consultation with God, Abraham agreed because God indicated that Ishmael would be the father of great nations. When Hagar had eaten all the bread and drunk all the water given her by Abraham, she and the baby were on the verge of death. Muslims believe that Hagar searched for water by running between two hills. On the seventh trip, she returned to see that Ishmael had struck the ground with his heel and a spring emerged. This event is celebrated in the Hajj. The Wilderness of Paran, perhaps a very large area, was where Hagar and Ishmael lived.</p> <p>Many of the desert tribes trace their origin to Ishmael and, likely, the Nabateans who controlled the area from the 7th century to the time of the Romans, trace their name and origin to the sons of Ishmael.</p> <p>The likely extent of Paran extends from Jordan south into Saudi Arabia. This covers parts of Wadi Araba (the main valley south of the Dead Sea) and Wadi Rum (the valley southeast of Ma'an towards Saudi Arabia). A Bible reference suggests that Paran was on the highway between Midian and Edom and Egypt. The modern city of Mudawarra lies in the general area. It was an important battle site in WWI between the Arab army, with TE Lawrence, and the Ottomans.</p>
<p>Ezion-geber, Berenice, Aila/Aqaba</p>	<p>This was the ancient seaport at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba in the vicinity of modern-day Aqaba and Eilat. The city was one of the places Moses camped after leaving Egypt and was also the port of entry for many of the goods for King Solomon. The port was used throughout the period of the kings as the principal trading location for Judah and Africa and Egypt.</p> <p>Aqaba, the Jordanian port at the top of the Gulf of Aqaba, was an important port from the early Bronze Age. It could be used as a way to transport from Arabia to Egypt without going across the northern desert. The Edomites and later the conquering Jews used the port throughout the Iron Age and it was then captured by the Nabateans who controlled trade in the area for centuries. The Ptolemaic Greeks called the area Berenice and it was Aila to the Romans. The <i>Via Nova Traiana</i>, which paralleled much of the King's Highway, began in Aqaba and ran northward to Syria. Ruins in the city near the sea date from the 3rd century and have led some archeologists to believe that it was an early, perhaps the first, prayer center for Christians.</p> <p>During WWI Aqaba became the major thrust target for the Arab Legion in the early part of their campaign against the Ottoman Turks. With the successful capture of Aqaba by travelling overland through the desert, the Arabs proved themselves to be a legitimate fighting force and therefore, received additional support from the British who were their economic and equipment backers.</p>
<p>Midianites</p>	<p>When Moses fled Egypt after killing the Egyptian taskmaster, he went to the Land of the Midianites. There he met Zipporah who was the daughter of Jethro, a Midianite priest. Most Bible maps place the land of the Midianites south of Aqaba</p>

Site	Notes and Explanations
Ancient Name/ Modern Name	
	along the Jordanian/Saudi Arabian coast and inland, perhaps as far as Wadi Rum and the mountains of northern Saudi Arabia. It was, therefore, on the eastern side of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea.
Mt Horeb, Mt Sinai	<p>The place where Moses saw the burning bush was Mount Horeb and it was within the land of the Midianites. It was during the tending of sheep of his Midianite father-in-law that Moses encountered the burning bush. Logically, Moses would have returned to the same mountain, in an area that he knew well, to receive further instructions from the Lord when he led the Israelites out of Egypt. Therefore, it is unlikely that the mountain in the Sinai desert is the real Mt Horeb. The location in Sinai was chosen by Constantine's mother on her journey to the Holy Land in the 4th century. Other references in the Bible are consistent with the location of the holy mountain in southern Jordan or northern Arabia. Even the reference in the New Testament to Agar (which is the name given to the princes of the Edomites) attests to the Jordanian/Arabia location.</p>