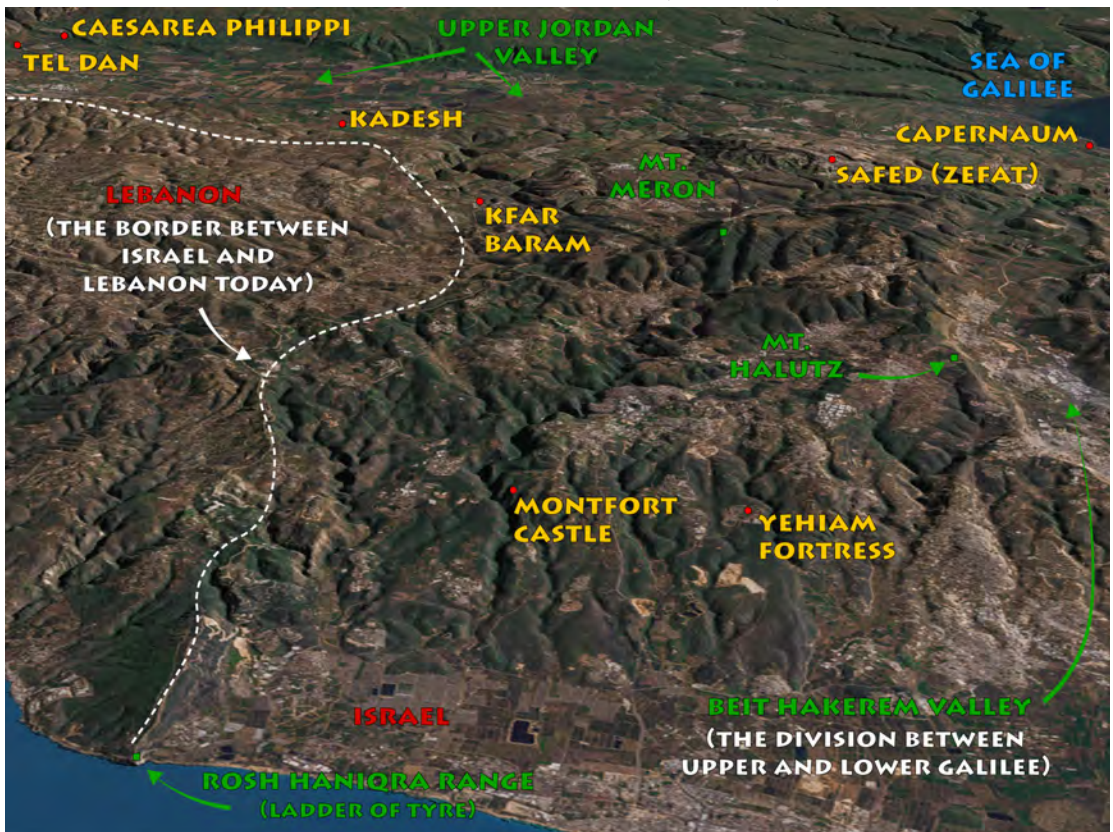


VIEW EAST: UPPER GALILEE, MT. HERMON, THE UPPER JORDAN VALLEY, THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND THE SEA OF GALILEE. LOWER GALILEE BEGINS SOUTH OF THE BEIT HAKEREM VALLEY. **BELOW (VIEW EAST):** DETAIL MAP OF UPPER GALILEE.





VIEW NORTHEAST: THE SOUTHWEST SECTOR OF UPPER GALILEE AS DESCRIBED ON PAGE 52. NOTICE THE DEEP RAVINES ALONGSIDE A FLAT CULTIVATABLE AREA.

5 UPPER GALILEE

The topography of Upper Galilee is complex and beautiful. It has high broken ridges, steep canyons, and a nearly impenetrable mix of trees and other vegetation. The satellite maps on page 46 should give you a feel for the complexities involved. The upper map includes names of sites and places mentioned in the sections below. Comparing their descriptions with the photos and maps in this chapter will help orient you to the area and give you an understanding of Upper Galilee’s topography. The lower map is a detail taken from the upper map. You can see the land better, along with the current border between Israel and Lebanon. There are no photos of the northwest sector of Upper Galilee because it’s in Lebanon, where travel is unsafe (Hezbollah terrorists occupy southern Lebanon today). Maybe after it’s safe to travel in this area again, photos will appear on the website (BibleLandImages.com) that accompanies the *Blessed Pilgrimage* books, volumes 1–4.

We know that Jesus traveled through Upper Galilee at least once (see “Jesus in Upper Galilee” on page 58), although we don’t know the route He took or whether He visited the villages there on other occasions. The Gospels contain the stories that God, in His wisdom, wanted us to know. The Apostle John emphasized this point at the end of his book after testifying that what he had written in his Gospel was true. The declaration made by the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23) is sobering to contemplate:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. (John 21:25)



VIEW WEST: THE MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS OF UPPER GALILEE DIRECTLY NORTH OF THE BEIT HAKEREM VALLEY, WHICH SEPARATES UPPER AND LOWER GALILEE.

BELOW: THE HORSHAT TAL NATIONAL PARK PRESERVES A GROVE OF MT. TABOR OAK TREES, WHICH ONCE COVERED MUCH OF UPPER GALILEE AND THE GOLAN. SEE "UPPER JORDAN VALLEY" IN BLESSED PILGRIMAGE, VOL. 2.





VIEW NORTH: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN EAST OF MT. HALUTZ IN THE SOUTHEAST SECTOR OF UPPER GALILEE. THE TERRAIN MAKES TRAVELING THROUGH UPPER GALILEE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE EXCEPT ALONG A FEW WELL-ESTABLISHED ROUTES.

Matthew told us, “Jesus went about *all* Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matt. 4:23, emphasis added). Mark spoke similarly:

And he said unto them, Let us go into the *next towns* [towns we know nothing about today, including their names], that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

And he preached in their synagogues throughout *all* Galilee, and cast out devils. (Mark 1:38–39, emphasis added)

It’s impossible to conclude what Jesus did *not* do or places He did *not* go to from the Gospel texts. The Gospels are not books of history and geography. The few names they give us provide context for the message. They contain selected stories that testify of Christ’s divinity. “They are the source to which we go to fall in love with the Lord,” wrote Elder McConkie. “And those who love the Lord signify this by keeping his commandments, and those who keep his commandments gain eternal life in his kingdom.”¹

Saying that Jesus never went to Tiberias because the gospel writers didn’t tell us He did is not a good or wise argument. It’s not for us to say what Jesus would *not* have done, as the story about His visit with a “woman of Canaan” teaches (see “Jesus in Upper Galilee” on page 58).

UPPER GALILEE DESCRIPTIONS²

Galilee is divided into Upper and Lower Galilee by the Beit HaKerem Valley, which is east of Acco on the Mediterranean Sea (see maps on page 46). The Jewish historian Josephus described the Galilee divisions in his books on the wars between the Romans and Jews as the Jews fought for their independence in the



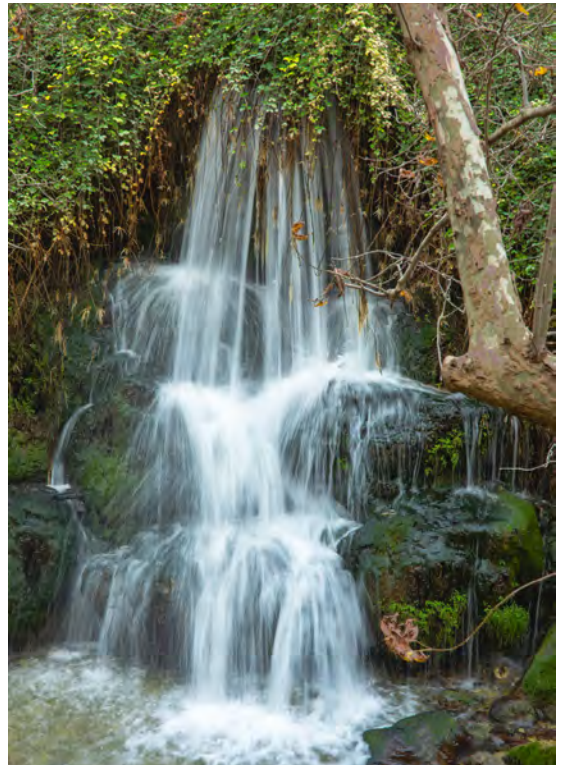
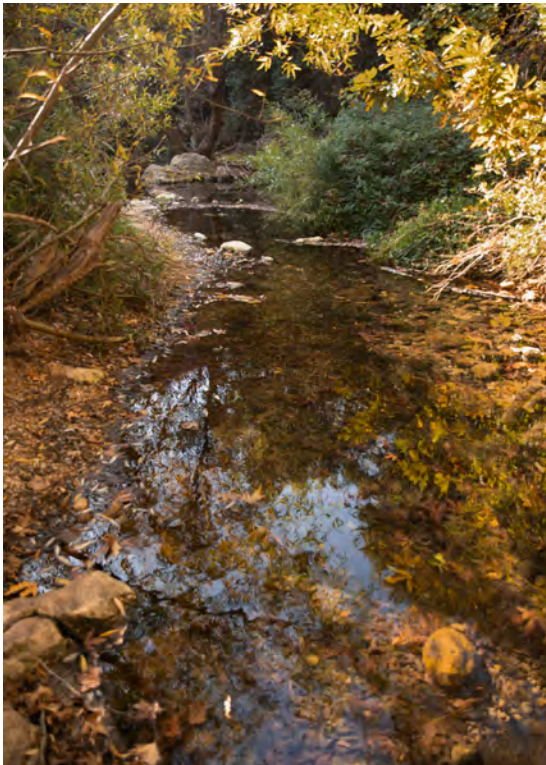
VIEW NORTH: A STAND OF SMALLER OAK TREES. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN ON THE RIDGE SOUTH OF NAHAL KEZIV. THESE TREES ARE NOT THE TABOR OAKS PICTURED ON PAGE 48 (BOTTOM PHOTO).

first-century AD: “Phoenicia and Syria encompass about the Galilees, which are two, and called the Upper Galilee and the Lower.” According to Josephus, Lower Galilee ended at Bersabe, at the eastern end of the Beit HaKerem Valley.³ The Mishnah⁴ describes the two Galilees similarly: “From Kefar Hananiah upwards, the region where sycamores do not grow, is Upper Galilee. From Kefar Hananiah downwards [see map on page 58], where the sycamores do grow, is Lower Galilee.”⁵

Upper Galilee differs from Lower Galilee in altitude, climate, vegetation, and topography. The mountains of Upper Galilee reach almost twice the height of those in Lower Galilee. The days in Upper Galilee are warm, and the nights are cool. The nights can be freezing in winter, and there are a few days of snow every

BELOW (VIEW SOUTHEAST): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM YEHIAM FORTRESS IN THE SOUTHWEST SECTOR OF UPPER GALILEE, EAST OF MODERN NAHARIYA ON THE NORTHERN COAST OF ISRAEL (SEE “YEHIAM FORTRESS” ON PAGE 73).





LEFT: THE FLOOR OF NAHAL KEZIV NOT FAR FROM THE TRAIL THAT WINDS THROUGH THE RESERVE. **RIGHT:** A SPRING POURING INTO NAHAL KEZIV AS YOU CLIMB UP THE EASTERN END.

year. Because of its altitude, Upper Galilee gets more rain than Lower Galilee. Some areas of the region receive 32 to 40 inches (84 to 102 centimeters) of rainfall annually, and it rarely drops below 24 inches (61 centimeters). Compare this to the annual rainfall of Lower Galilee, which is between 20 and 24 inches (51 and 61 centimeters).

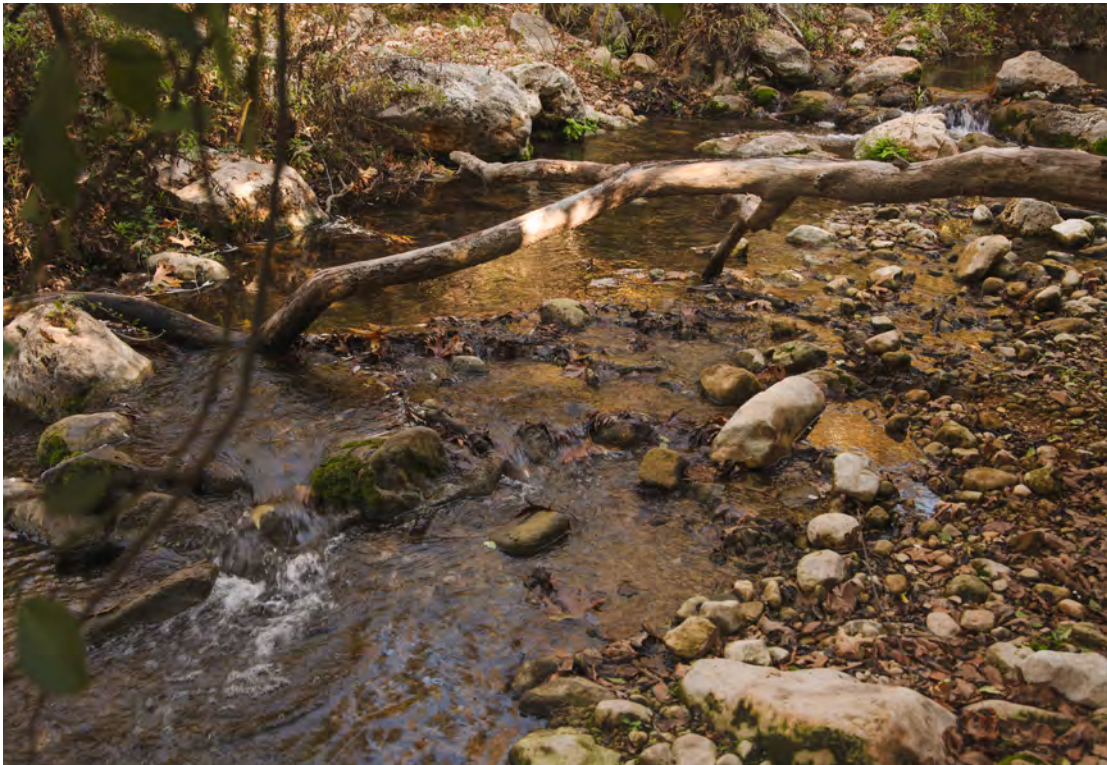
The dense vegetation of Upper Galilee made much of the region impassable. Oak trees covered large tracts of ground. However, the real obstacle to travel was Upper Galilee’s rugged topography, which fragmented the region into isolated hills and valleys—especially in the southwest and northeast, as described below. The dense vegetation, the oak tree forests, and the topography of Upper Galilee made it a region of escape detached from the main events that make up the biblical story.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY EXPLORERS

Edward Robinson (1838) and William Thomson (1857) divided Upper Galilee into four sectors, providing the descriptions below. Their experiences combined with the photos depict the region’s beauty.

NORTHWEST SECTOR

Robinson and Thomson crossed this sector (Lebanon today), following what they described as an ancient highway across Upper Galilee. Thomson described the area as “a wild, rough country, cut up by numberless ravines which descend northward into the [Litani] river gorge, or turn westward and plunge down to the [Mediterranean] sea. Lofty cliffs rise on either side of the ravines, ragged and bare in some places, and in others clothed to their very base, forming deep wadys, through whose tangled labyrinths the traveler must force his way. . . . *Numerous small villages* nestle in hidden nooks and sheltered recesses of the mountains, adding unexpected variety to a ride which I have always delighted to take” (emphasis added). He called it a “splendid region” capable of high cultivation.⁶



VIEW EAST: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE NAHAL KEZIV CANYON ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SLOPING, V-SHAPED RIDGES VISIBLE IN THE TOP PHOTO ON PAGE 53.

Robinson described the northwest sector as a “beautiful country,” adding, “[it] was to us not the less interesting for being well wooded. Here, for the *first time* in Palestine, we saw the hills thickly clothed with trees.” Continuing toward Tyre on the coast, Robinson remarked, “the country continued as before, undulating, cultivated, wooded, and beautiful; a succession of hill and dale, with more distant hills still higher and more thickly wooded. Indeed, from this whole region, considerable quantities of wood for fuel are carried to the coast, for transportation by sea” (emphasis added).⁷ As you will see from nineteenth-century photos of Palestine in other parts of *Blessed Pilgrimage*, what was true of Upper Galilee was not true of the rest of the country, which was largely devoid of trees until Jews, returning to the land, started planting them at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth.

From Robinson’s and Williams’s descriptions of Upper Galilee, we picture a wooded region crossed by numerous valleys and hills. The canyons are narrow closer to the coast and more difficult to travel in the north. The landscape is less complicated toward the middle, where cultivation is possible.

SOUTHWEST SECTOR

Mt. Halutz (3,280 feet / 1,000 meters) dominates this sector, overlooking the Beit HaKerem Valley between Upper and Lower Galilee. To the north is the Peqi’in Valley and Nahal Keziv, which drains the whole of the region, and then the crest of the high Hanita-Rosh Haniqra range (see maps on page 46), forming the border between Israel and Lebanon today. Nahal Keziv is “so deep and precipitous as to be impassable. . . . The whole prospect was that of a mountainous region; a sea of rocky hills and deep precipitous valleys, mostly wooded; but without many villages” (see photo *above* and at the top of page 53). The topography of this region is so rugged that “no great road passes through it in any direction, except along the coast; and hence few travelers have ever penetrated its recesses.”⁸ Modern roads connecting the isolated ridges of southwestern Upper Galilee did not exist until 1965.⁹



VIEW NORTHWEST: NAHAL KEZIV, ABOUT 1.3 MILES (2 KILOMETERS) EAST OF THE CRUSADER CASTLE OF MONTFORT AND 3 MILES (4.8 KILOMETERS) WEST OF THE ISRAELI TOWN OF ABIRIM, LOCATED ON THE RIDGE ABOVE THE CANYON.

BELOW (VIEW WEST): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM THE MONTFORT CASTLE OVERLOOKING THE LOWER END OF NAHAL KEZIV (SEE "MONTFORT CASTLE" ON PAGE 69). THE DENSE VEGETATION AND RAVINES ARE TYPICAL OF UPPER GALILEE.





VIEW WEST: TEL KEDESH (CENTER, GREEN MOUND), AND PART OF THE AREA DESCRIBED BY THOMSON IN THE NORTHEAST SECTOR. FOR MORE ON KEDESH, SEE “KEDESH OF NAPHTALI” ON PAGE 61.

NORTHEAST SECTOR

The Wadi Doubbe divides this sector, flowing north to the Litani River. On the eastern side, nearer the Upper Jordan Valley, the mountains of Naphtali contain broad basins and relatively long mountain ranges that do not break into isolated blocks. Thomson remarked, “How beautiful are these hills of Naphtali, clothed with oak and terebinth trees! . . . Such beauty never wearies the eye but always rejoices the heart.”¹⁰

Traveling through the region to the west leading up from Wadi Doubbe was much more difficult, as also described by Thomson: “Our guide led us into a ravine, shallow at first, but one that deepened every moment until we were completely shut in between lofty walls of gray rock. . . . The path was arched over with a canopy of leafy branches from trees and bushes, forming, with the bed of the brook whose windings we had to follow, an arcade wholly peculiar. We were often obliged to lie flat on the necks of our horses and be pulled through that verdant passage. At the end of two hours we emerged from that labyrinth, and climbed a steep and lofty hill to the village of Huleh.”

Moving south toward the plain around Kedesh of Naphtali (see *above* and the top photo on page 55), Thomson found his way along “a blind path amongst oak and terebinth trees.”¹¹

SOUTHEAST SECTOR

This sector begins with Mt. Meron (3,963 feet / 1,208 meters) and Mt. Kena’an (2,865 feet / 873 meters). Between the two is a fairly level plateau into which Nahal Amud has cut a deep canyon on its way to the Sea of Galilee. The canyon of Nahal Amud is one of the main obstacles to travel through Galilee (see the photo on page 57). The landscape north of Mt. Kena’an is broken into several plateaus by deep wadis that drain toward the Upper Jordan Valley. Robinson described the plateau between Dalton and El-Jish (Gischala) as tilled and surrounded by bushy hills (see the photo on page 56). He descended a wadi from here, the banks of which were “very steep and high, so that we could for a time see nothing of the country.”¹²



VIEW EAST: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN ABOVE TEL KEDESH OVERLOOKING THE CULTIVABLE PLAIN AROUND IT ON THREE SIDES. THE GOLAN HEIGHTS ARE VISIBLE (TOP) WITH THE UPPER JORDAN BELOW THEM (NOT PICTURED).

BELOW (VIEW SOUTHEAST): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN IN THE SOUTHEAST SECTOR OF UPPER GALILEE WHERE IT OVERLOOKS THE UPPER JORDAN VALLEY, SOUTH OF RAMOT NAFTALI, AN ISRAELI MOSHAV NOT FAR FROM THE LEBANESE BORDER.





VIEW NORTHEAST: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM MT. MERON. THE TOWN OF EL-JISH (UPPER RIGHT; ANCIENT GISCHALA OR GUSH HALAV) OVERLOOKS THE PLATEAU WITH MT. HERMON IN THE BACKGROUND (TOP RIGHT).

Climbing to the next plateau around Yiron, Robinson described “a high undulating table-land, arable and every where tilled, with swelling hills in view all around, covered with shrubs, and trees.” Here, the “reapers were gathering an abundant harvest.”¹³

LIFE IN UPPER GALILEE

George Adam Smith wrote, “The controlling feature of Galilee is her relation to [the] great mountains.” Next, he quoted Hosea, “I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon” (Hosea 14:5–6), adding, “Galilee is literally the casting forth of the roots of Lebanon.” Galilee’s springs originate in Lebanon, giving the region its “immense superiority in fruitfulness to both Judaea and Samaria.”¹⁴

TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION

As we’ve seen, Upper Galilee is a maze of canyons and valleys, most of them deep and complex. The most difficult sectors are in the southwest around Nahal Keziv and in the northeast by Wadi Doubbe. People traveled from village to village in these areas on challenging local roads. The broader valleys in the northwest sector are suitable for cultivation. The hills and ridges are not as steep as in the southeast. Tyre was the main objective of the roads through Upper Galilee, which a traveler could cross on foot in two days. Jesus might have passed this way en route to “the coasts of Tyre and Sidon” (see comments on page 58). Nevertheless, the natural port of Damascus was Acco, and the shortest routes to Acco cut across Lower Galilee.

ECONOMY

Upper Galilee encouraged the small farmer, whose property consisted of “a field, a vineyard, and an olive grove.” The lack of cultivable land prevented large-scale agriculture. The best land suitable for cultivation was



VIEW NORTH: NAHAL AMUD RUNS FROM SAFED ALONG THE EASTERN EDGE OF UPPER AND LOWER GALILEE DOWN TO THE SEA OF GALILEE, BORDERING THE THREE DIVISIONS OF GALILEE. FOR PERSPECTIVE, SEE THE PERSON ON THE TRAIL.

scattered in patches throughout Upper Galilee, especially in the northwest (Lebanese Galilee) and northeast in the vicinity of Kedesh of Naphtali (see the photo on page 54).¹⁵

South of Safed, overlooking a tributary of Nahal Amud, was a wine-producing center called Acchabare. Another city, called Gischala, was well known for its production of oil (see photo on page 56). During the First Jewish Revolt against Rome, John of Gischala was able to gather “an immense sum of money together” by sending “great quantities of oil” to Jews in Syria.¹⁶

The Israeli archaeologist and historian Michael Avi-Yonah described Galilean oil: “One special advantage of Galilean oil was its ritual purity from the point of view of Jewish law. It was therefore much in demand by the Jews of Syria and Asia Minor. In the Midrash, the olives of Upper Galilee were on par with wool in Judaea and calves in the Sharon.”¹⁷

SETTLEMENT

From excavations and archaeological surveys of Upper Galilee, only a couple of centers existed before the Israelites came. These centers were Tel Kedesh (see photos on pages 54–55) and Tel Rosh. People intensively settled in Upper Galilee only after the Israelites entered the land. When Aharoni surveyed Upper Galilee in the 1950s, he discovered seventeen sites in the mountains. Of those sites, fifteen were in “the most rugged, isolated and difficult terrain of this region, i.e., south of Nahal Keziv.” The settlements are said to be similar in every respect to Israelite settlements in other parts of the country, “so there is no real problem in attributing them to the tribe of Naphtali.”¹⁸ Archaeologists estimate this settlement occurred no earlier than the end of the twelfth century BC. Settlement in Upper Galilee was relatively stable during all periods, as there were almost no periods of complete abandonment. It became an important area of Jewish occupation during the Roman-Byzantine period. The northern sectors of Upper Galilee (Lebanese Galilee) were much more level, with more opportunities for settlement than the southern sectors.



VIEW WEST: THE POSSIBLE ROUTE JESUS TOOK TO THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON, WHICH FOLLOWS THE ROMAN ROAD OF HIS DAY. THE MAP ALSO CONTAINS MANY OF THE NAMES MENTIONED IN THE UPPER GALILEE DESCRIPTIONS AS WELL AS FAMILIAR BIBLICAL SITE NAMES TO HELP ORIENT YOU IN GALILEE.

JESUS IN UPPER GALILEE

Jesus left Capernaum and “went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and would *that no man should come unto him*. But he could not *deny them; for he had compassion upon all men*” (JST Mark 7:22–23). Elder McConkie commented on these verses:

In search of rest and seclusion, and desiring respite from the increasing persecution of the Jews, Jesus and his disciples left Capernaum and traveled north to Syrophenicia, to the coastal area and villages around the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon.¹⁹

While He was there, “a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” After Jesus did not answer, the woman must have continued her petition because “his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us” (i.e., grant her petition by healing her daughter). Jesus reminded his disciples, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:23–24).

The woman returned, this time worshipping Jesus and humbly pleading, “Lord, help me” (Matt. 15:25). The first test of her faith came when Jesus didn’t respond to her at all. The second test came when “Jesus said unto her, Let the children *of the kingdom* first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs”²⁰ (JST Mark 7:26).

The woman, undeterred, answered, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

It was enough. “Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour” (Matt: 15:27–28).²¹

ENDNOTES

- 1 Bruce R. McConkie, “Drink from the Fountain,” *Ensign* (Apr. 1975), Gospel Library.
 - 2 See the map on page 58 for many of the sites and places mentioned by Josephus, George Adam Smith, Edward Robinson, and William Thomson in the Upper Galilee descriptions. The map also contains familiar biblical site names.
 - 3 Flavius Josephus, *Seven Books of the Jewish War*, in *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus the Jewish Historian*, trans. William Whiston (London, 1737), 3.3.1, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus>.
 - 4 The Mishnah is a written collection of Jewish oral traditions known as the Oral Torah. It was redacted by Judah ha-Nasi at the end of the second century and beginning of the third century AD.
 - 5 Mishnah Sheviit, 9:2.
 - 6 William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton Co., 1911), 2:587.
 - 7 Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841), 3:374–75.
 - 8 Edward Robinson, *Later Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1856), 66.
 - 9 Yehuda Karmen, *Israel—A Regional Geography* (New York: Wiley Interscience, 1971), 178.
 - 10 Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 2:551.
 - 11 Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 2:558–59.
 - 12 Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, 3:368.
 - 13 Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, 3:370.
 - 14 George Adam Smith, “Galilee,” in *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014), chap. 20, Kindle.
 - 15 Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977), 201.
 - 16 Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2.21.2.
 - 17 Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land*, 203.
 - 18 Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988), 106, 109.
 - 19 Bruce R. McConkie, “Jesus Heals a Gentile’s Daughter,” in *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 1:328.
 - 20 “The original term here translated ‘dogs’ connoted, as the narrative shows, not the vagrant and despised curs elsewhere spoken of in the Bible as typical of a degraded state, or of positive badness, but literally the ‘little dogs’ or domestic pets, such as were allowed in the house and under the table. Certainly the woman took no offense at the comparison, and found therein no objectionable epithet. Instantly she adopted the analogy, and applied it in combined argument and supplication.” James E. Talmage, “The Apostolic Mission, and Events Related Thereto,” in *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve Inc., 2006), chap. 21, Gospel Library.
 - 21 Faith requires that we “wait upon the Lord,” relying on His wisdom to grant or withhold requested blessings. For example: “And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him” (Isa. 8:17); “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us” (Ps. 123:2); “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).
- See also Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “O How Great the Plan of Our God,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2016), Gospel Library. “Does it not fill our hearts and minds with wonder and awe to contemplate the great plan of happiness our Heavenly Father has prepared for us? Does it not fill us with unspeakable joy to know of the glorious future that is prepared for all who wait upon the Lord? If you have never felt such wonder and joy, I invite you to seek, study, and ponder the simple yet profound truths of the restored gospel.”