

Lanier Theological Library Lecture

The Journeys of Jesus and Jewish Geography

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Introduction

Twenty-seven towns named in the Gospels

Focus on parallel discoveries in:

- 1. Old Testament**
- 2. Josephus**
- 3. Rabbinic literature**

- + 4. Comparisons: Josephus & Apocrypha**

1. Old Testament Locations

1. Old Testament Locations

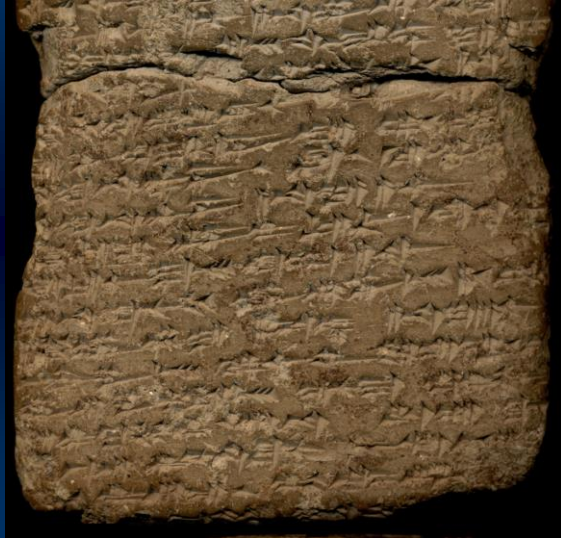
Jerusalem –

In the Old Testament:

Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings,
1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther,
Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs,
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel,
Daniel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah,
Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi

1. Old Testament Locations

Jerusalem
a.k.a. 'Urusalim'



El Amarna: EA 287

1. Old Testament Locations

Jerusalem a.k.a. U-ru-sa-lim

'[To the kin]g, my Lord, [thus says] Abdu-Heba, [thy] servant... If this year there are archers, then the lands [and] the regent will belong to the king, my lord; [but] if there are no archers, the lands and the regents will not belong to the king. Behold, this land of **U-ru-sa-lim**, neither my father nor my mother gave it to me; the mighty arm [of the king] gave it to me.'

(El Amarna: EA 287; tr. C. Mullo Weir, adapted)

1. Old Testament Locations

Jerusalem

- Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BC)
- Polybius (2nd cent. BC)
- Cicero (106-43 BC)
- Strabo (1st cent. BC—1st cent. AD)
- Livy (64/59 BC – AD 17)
- Pliny the Elder (AD 23 – 25 August 79):
 - ‘by far the most famous city not only of Judaea but of the whole of the east’

1. Old Testament Locations



1. Old Testament Locations

Jericho

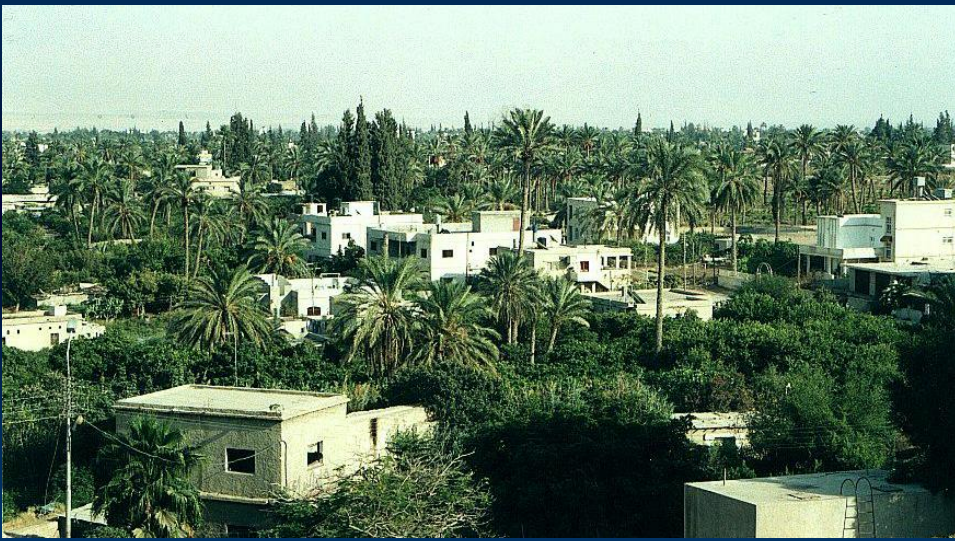
one of the oldest inhabited cities

“Jericho, the city of palm-trees” (Deut. 34.3)

“Jericho, with many palm-groves” (Pliny)

noted in some Classical authors, e.g. Strabo

1. Old Testament Locations



1. Old Testament Locations

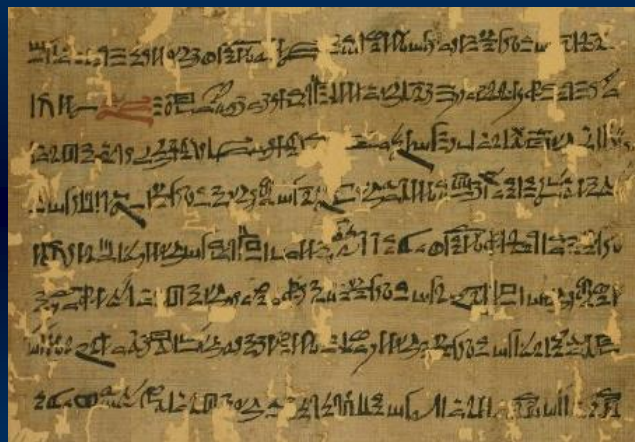
Tyre (x 48 in OT) and **Sidon** (x 23), e.g.:

Jer. 47.4: “For the day has come to destroy all the Philistines, and to remove all survivors who could help Tyre and Sidon.”

Joel 3.4: “Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon, and all you regions of Philistia?” (NIV)

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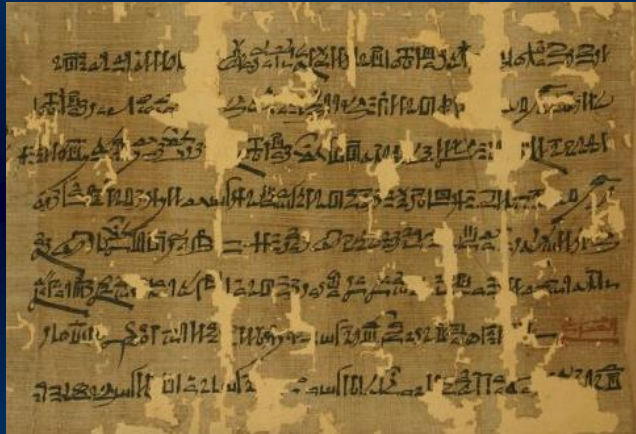
Tyre



P.Anastasi 1, col. 21

1. Old Testament Locations

Sidon



P. Anastasi 1, col. 20

1. Old Testament Locations



D-d-n
(Sidon)

D-r
(Tyre)

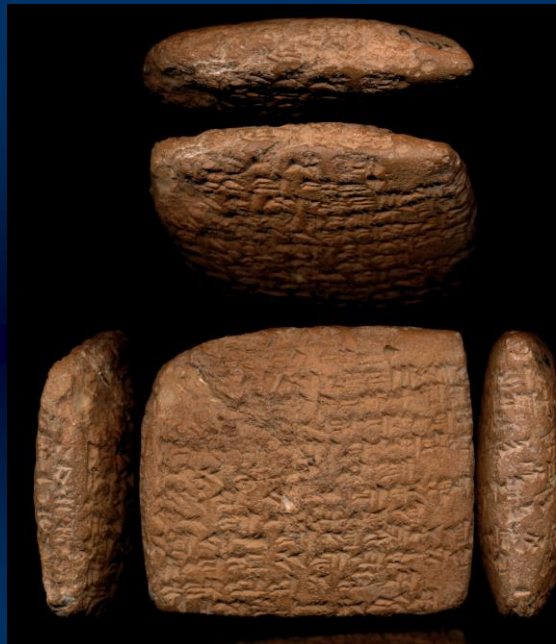
1. Old Testament Locations

Bethlehem a.k.a. Ephrath

“So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).” (Gen. 35.19)

Bethlehem
a.k.a. Ephrath
a.k.a. Bit-Lahmi

“Bit-Lahmi, a town of the land of Jerusalem”



El Amarna: EA 290

1. Old Testament Locations

Bethlehem a.k.a. Ephrath a.k.a. Bit-Lahmi

'[To] the king, my lord, say: ... Now even a town of the land of Jerusalem, *Bit-Lahmi* by name, a town belonging to the king, has gone over to the side of the people of Keilah. Let my king hearken to 'Abdu-Heba, thy servant, and let him send archers to recover the royal land for the king!'

(El Amarna: EA 290; tr. W.F. Albright)

1. Old Testament Locations

Bethlehem a.k.a. Ephrath a.k.a. Bit-Lahmi

1 Sam. 20.6: 'If your father misses me at all, tell him, "David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown..."'

Micah 5.2: 'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...'

1. Old Testament Locations

Ephraim

2 Sam. 13.23: “After two full years Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.”

2 Chron. 13.19: “Abijah pursued Jeroboam, and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages and Jeshanah with its villages and Ephron/Ephraim with its villages.”

1. Old Testament Locations

Arimathaea

הַרְמָה

Haramah

Αρμαθαμ Armathaim

Haramathaim

הַרְמַתִּים

Ραμά

Ramah

Haramathah

הַרְמַתָּה



Aenon	Chorazin	Magadan
Arimathaea	Dalmanutha	Magdala
Bethany	Emmaus	Nain
Bethlehem	Ephraim	Nazareth
Bethphage	Gadara	Salim
Bethsaida	Gergesa	Sidon
Caesarea-P	Gennesaret	Sychar
Cana	Jericho	Tiberias
Capernaum	Jerusalem	Tyre

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2. Locations in Josephus

2. Locations in Josephus

Cana

“Now at this time my abode was in a village of Galilee, which is named Cana.” (*Life* 86)

2. Locations in Josephus

Capernaum

“It supplies men with the principal fruits, with grapes and figs continually, during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together, through the whole year; for besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Capernaum.” (*War* 3.519)

2. Locations in Josephus

Capernaum

“The horse on which I rode, and upon whose back I fought, fell into a quagmire, and threw me on the ground, and I was bruised on my wrist, and carried into a village named Cepharnome.” (*Life* 403)

2. Locations in Josephus



2. Locations in Josephus

Gadara

“Gadara, the metropolis of Perea, which was a place of strength” (*War* 4.413)

2. Locations in Josephus

Caesarea Philippi

“When Philip, also, had built Paneas, a city at the fountains of Jordan, he named it Caesarea.” (*Antiquities* 18.28)

2. Locations in Josephus



2. Locations in Josephus

Caesarea Philippi

“When Philip, also, had built Paneas, a city at the fountains of Jordan, he named it Caesarea.” (*Antiquities* 18.28)

(a few years later)

“About this time it was that Agrippa built Caesarea Philippi larger than it was before...” (*Antiquities* 20.211)

2. Locations in Josephus

Caesarea Philippi and Bethsaida

“When Philip, also, had built Paneas, a city at the fountains of Jordan, he named it Caesarea. He also advanced the village of Bethsaida, located at the lake of Gennesaret, to the dignity of a city, both by the number of inhabitants it contained, and its other grandeur, and called it by the name of Julias...” (*Antiquities* 18.28)

2. Locations in Josephus

Tiberias

- Josephus
- Ptolemy
- Pliny
- Coins →



2. Locations in Josephus

Tiberias

“And now Herod the tetrarch, who was in great favour with Tiberius, built a city of the same name with him, and called it Tiberias. He built it in the best part of Galilee, at the lake of Gennesaret. There are warm baths at a little distance from it, in a village named Emmaus.” (*Antiquities* 18.36)

2. Locations in Josephus

Emmaus

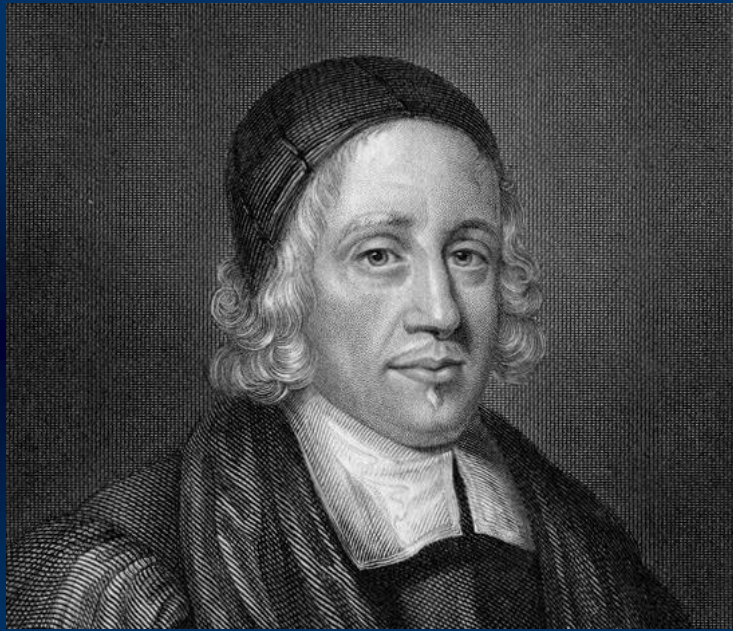
“He (Vespasian) founded no city there (in Judaea), but reserved the country for himself. However, he assigned a place for eight hundred men only, whom he had dismissed from his army, which he gave them to live in. It is called Emmaus, and is thirty stades from Jerusalem.” (*War* 7.217)



Aenon	Chorazin	Magadan
Arimathaea	Dalmanutha	Magdala
Bethany	Emmaus	Nain
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3. Locations in the Rabbis



John Lightfoot (1602-1675)

3. Locations in the Rabbis



3. Locations in the Rabbis

Bethphage

“The Two Loaves and the Shewbread were alike in that they were kneaded and rolled outside [the Temple Court] but baked inside....

“R. Judah says: They were wholly prepared inside [the Temple Court].

“R. Simeon says: It was always the custom to say, The Two Loaves and the Shewbread were valid whether they were made in the Temple Court or in Bethphage.”

(Mishnah, Tractate Menachot 11.2)

3. Locations in the Rabbis

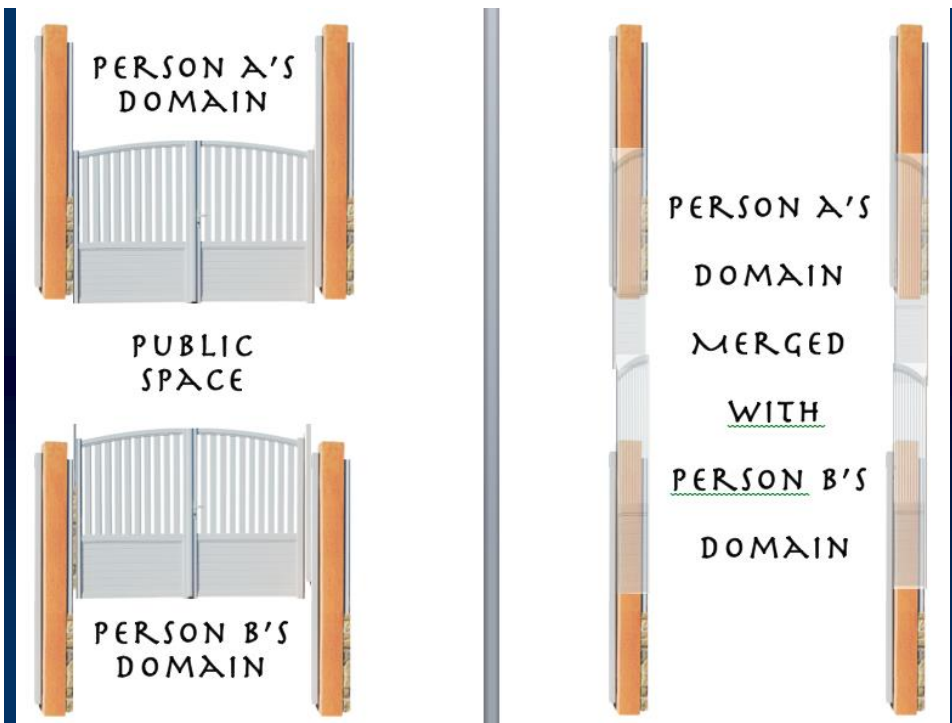
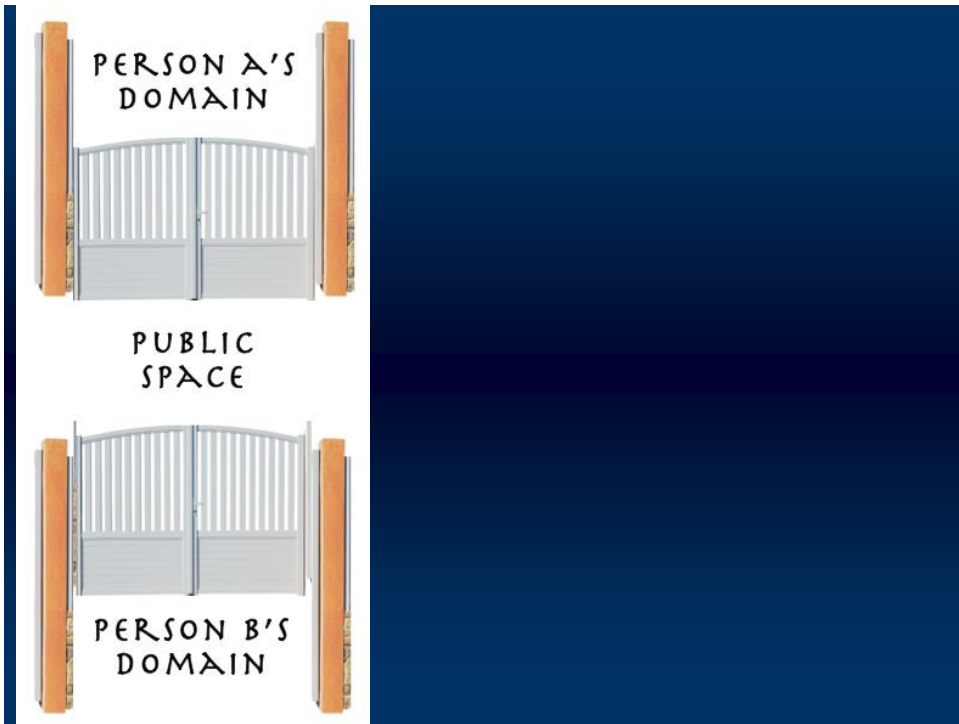
Sychar

“The [best fulfillment of the] commandment of the *omer* is [that it] come from a nearby land.

If [the areas] close to Jerusalem were not yet ripe they could bring them from any place.

It once happened that it came from Gaggot Tzrifin and the two loaves came *from the valley of ‘Eyn Socher/Suchar.*”

(Mishnah, Tractate Menachot 10.2)



3. Locations in the Rabbis

Gennesaret

“The sages concede to R. Yehuda in the case of *Gennesar*:

if Person A opens the gate of his enclosed area and closes off the public domain,

and Person B opens the gate of his enclosed area and closes off the public domain

(then) they prepare an “erub”, so that they may carry or set objects in the centre.”

(Tosefta, Tractate ‘Eruvin 7.13).

3. Locations in the Rabbis



3. Locations in the Rabbis

Chorazin

“Come and hear: R. Jose said, They would have brought it even from the wheat of Karzaim/Chorazim and of Kefar Ahim if only they had been nearer to Jerusalem...”

(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Menahot 85a)

3. Locations in the Rabbis

Magdala

“Said R. Abbahu in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: [The period for fermentation is] as long as it takes a man to walk from Migdal Nunia to Tiberias, which is a mile.”

(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 46a)

3. Locations in the Rabbis

Nain

'Issachar is a strong donkey...Like a donkey is lower on both its sides but is upraised in the middle, so there is in Issachar a valley on both sides and, in the middle, mountains.

Crouching between the sheepfolds. This refers to the two valleys...

And he saw that rest was good. This is Tin'am.

And the land pleasant (naamah). This is Naim.'

(Genesis Rabbah 98 on Gen. 49.14-15)

3. Locations in the Rabbis

Gergesa

R. Nehemiah said, "When the Holy One, blessed be he, shows Israel the grave of Gog and Magog, behold the feet of the Shekinah will be upon the Mount of Olives, and the grave of Gog and Magog will be open from the south of the Kidron Valley to Gergeshta on the east of the Sea of Tiberias..."

(Midrash Zuta to Song of Songs)

3. Locations in the Rabbis

Nazareth

“Nations thou shalt crush with afflicting plagues,
over Nazareth may you renew your glance.”
(Haduta, c. AD 600)

“The seventeenth course of Hezir: Mamliach,
The eighteenth course of Hapizzetz: Nazareth,
The nineteenth course of Petahiah Akhla: ‘Arab
The twentieth course of Yehezkel: Migdal ...”
(Caesarea Inscription, c. AD 400)



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4. Comparisons

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4a. Josephus

Comparison with Josephus's *Vita*

44 towns:

35 attested outside Josephus

9 unattested

4. Comparisons

4a. Josephus

Comparison with Josephus's *Vita*

44 towns:

35 attested outside Josephus

9 unattested

Gospels: 22 out of 27 places attested = 81%.

Josephus: 35 out of 44 places attested = 80%.

4. Comparisons

4b. Apocryphal Gospels:

Absence of Geographical Detail

***Gospel of Truth* (and *Gos. Mary*):**

no places

***Gos. Thomas*, *Gos. Judas*:**

“the world”, “Judaea”

***Gos. Philip*:**

“the world”, “Jerusalem”

4. Comparisons

4b. Apocryphal Gospels:

Mistakes of Geographical Detail

Sophia of Jesus Christ:

‘in Galilee, on the mountain called Olivet’

Infancy Gospel of Thomas:

‘region of Bethlehem, in the town of Nazareth’

Gospel of Barnabas:

Jesus ‘sailed to his city of Nazareth’

Gospel of Philip:

‘irritatingly unrealistic topography’ (Schenke)

Conclusion: 22/27 known

O.T. Jerusalem, Jericho, Tyre, Sidon,
Bethlehem, Ephraim, Arimathaea

Jos. Cana, Capernaum, Gadara, Caesarea
Philippi, Bethsaida, Tiberias, Emmaus

Rab. Bethphage, Sychar, Gennesaret, Naim/n,
Chorazin, Magdala, Gergesa, Nazareth.

? Magadan, Dalmanutha, Bethany, Aenon, Salim

Conclusion: 22/27 known

‘The Gospels provide an extremely vivid, and in geographical terms quite extensive, view of what the area of Jewish settlement was in Jesus’ time.’

– Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East*, p. 342.