

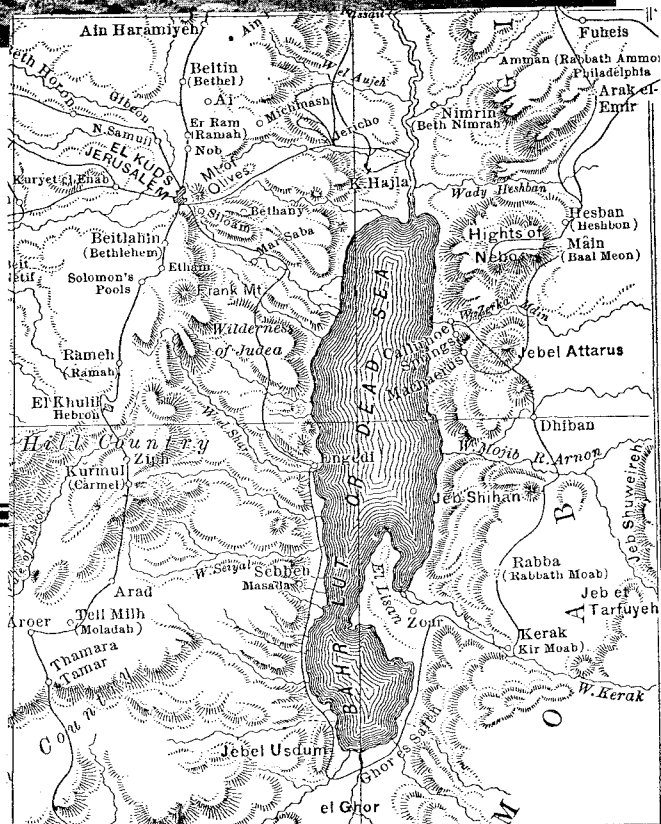
Mt. Nebo – Moses Rehearses Divine Wonders and Warnings

Deuteronomy 32:49

Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession.

Deut 34:1

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Introduction:

Mount Nebo is mentioned in connection with the death of Moses. Just before the greatest of all Old Testament prophets faced death, he was permitted to view the promised land from Mount Nebo. The German scholar Kurtz gives a summary of the activity of the last day of Moses' life.



Jehovah now announced most distinctly to Moses, what he had already dimly suspected and feared,—namely, the future apostasy of the Israelites. He also commanded him to write a song with this as the subject, and to impress it upon the memory of the people, in order that when the curse denounced should come upon them, this song might testify against them as a witness (chap. xxxi. 21). On the same day, therefore, Moses went, according to the command, and wrote, from the fullness of the Spirit which dwelt within him, a *song*, as majestic in form, as it was terribly earnest and electrifying in its substance (chap. xxxii.) (1). Being warned once more of his approaching end, he pronounced his *blessing* upon the tribes of Israel (2), as Jacob had formerly done upon his death-bed, and then betook himself to Mount *Nebo*, where he was permitted to enjoy an extensive view of the promised land (3). There Moses, the servant of Jehovah, died, being 120 years old; and Jehovah Himself *buried* him, so that no man has ever been able to discover his tomb (4).

(J. H. Kurtz, *History of the Old Covenant*, Vol. III, Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1859. 490-91 [emphasis in the original]).

The Song of Moses:

One Old Testament scholar called the Song of Moses "one of the most impressive religious poems in the entire Old Testament." (William F. Albright³⁴⁶) It contrasts the faithfulness and loyal love of God with the unfaithfulness and perversity of His people. As other important poems in the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen. 49; Exod. 15; Num. 24), it also teaches major themes.

Keil and Delitzsch³⁴⁷ observe fittingly: "The song embraces the whole of the future history of Israel, and bears all the marks of a prophetic testimony from the mouth of Moses, in the perfectly ideal pictures which it draws, on the one hand, of the benefits and blessings conferred by the Lord upon His people; and on the other hand, of the ingratitude with which Israel repaid its God for them all."

(Thomas Constable, *Notes on Deuteronomy*, 2012 Edition, 101).

1A. The Confusion Concerning Mount Nebo:

Until recent decades, scholars have labored over the identification of Mount Nebo, which is only mentioned twice in the Scriptures (Deut. 32:49; 34:1).

1b. The location of the mountain:

John McFarlane has perhaps the best explanation for the three names that are used in connection with the mountain, Mount Abarim, Mount Nebo and Mount Pisgah:

Mount Nebo is the name of one of that range, and Mount Pisgah was the most elevated and commanding peak of Nebo. The range of Abarim extended southward from the land of Canaan towards the river Arnon, and possibly to the range called Seir, of which Hor is one. Nebo is usually identified with mount Attarous, about ten miles north of the Arnon, and nearly the same distance east from the north-eastern extremity of the Dead Sea. It is a barren mountain, which offers nothing remarkable. It is, however, the most lofty elevation in the neighbourhood, and its summit is now distinguished by a large wild pistachio tree, overshadowing a heap of a stones. In the text we are told that Nebo was over against Jericho, which makes it evident, that from its summit the promised land could easily be viewed.

(The Mountains of the Bible: Their Scenes and Their Lessons. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1849, 175.)

Kurtz agrees that Abarim refers to the mountain range. However, he extends the range to the southern end of the Dead Sea.

Why should not the name "*Mountains of Abarim*" have been common to the whole of the Moabitish range of mountains along the entire eastern coast of the Dead Sea, from the Wady Ahsy to the latitude of Heshbon? This is just as likely as that the name "*Mountains of Seir*" should be given to the whole of the mountainous district of Edom, which covers twice as much ground (Kurtz, 371 [emphasis in the original]).

While the exact identification of Mount Nebo is not possible, Kurtz has given possibly the best explanation:

According to Num. xxxiii 47, Mount Nebo was in the MOUNTAINS OF ABARIM. In Deut. xxxiv. 1, on the other hand, it is said to have been upon the top of Pisgah, over against Jericho. The two statements may easily be reconciled, on the supposition that the Nebo was a peak of the *Pisgah*, and that this again was one portion of the larger range of mountains called *Abarim* (Kurtz, 369 [emphasis in the original]).

2b. The view from Mount Nebo:

Deut 34:1-4

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, ³ the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. ⁴ Then the Lord said to him, "This *is* the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

R. L. Alden comments on the passage:

In 34:1 one reads, "Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho." The places one can see from there are listed in this and the following verses: Gilead as far as Dan, Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, all Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, the Plain, the Valley of Jericho as far as Zoar. On

clear days most of these, as well as things beyond such as Mt. Hermon, can be seen. However, the mountain range on which Hebron and Jerusalem are situated obstructs the view of the Mediterranean. The easiest solution to this is to say that it is not literal. God "showed" them to Moses, but anyone else could not have seen them. Another solution is to understand that a mirage is meant. Sometimes it looks like water beyond the Palestinian watershed. Another explanation is to say the verse states only that Judah extends to the Western Sea—not that one can necessarily see that far. A fourth suggestion is that the Dead Sea is meant, not the Mediterranean.

(The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. 4, Merrill C. Tenney, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975, 297.)

Another explanation is possible for Moses' ability to see locations that are impossible to see from Mount Nebo:

John Urquhart, in his famous but little-noticed multi-volume work, *The New Biblical Guide*, writes the following:

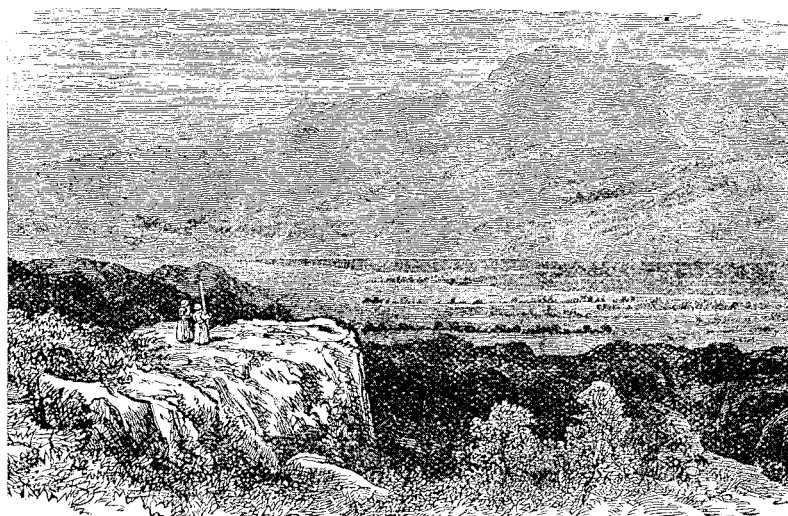
The land of Naphtali (extending to Tabor) can be seen, and the mountains of Gilead, the I and of Ephraim and of Manasseh, of Judah, with the Negeb (the dry or South country), are seen for more than a hundred miles. Jericho, the city of palm trees, and its plain, is at our feet unto Zoar, which lies at the foot of the Moab chain. If we make the simple change of reading 'towards,' instead of 'unto," in the cases of Dan and 'the Western sea" (the Mediterranean)—a change not forbidden by the meaning of the Hebrew particle—the whole account read as correctly as that of an eye-witness; but it is certain that Dan (if the site near Banias be intended), and the utmost, or 'hinder,' or most Western sea, cannot be visible to any mortal eye.

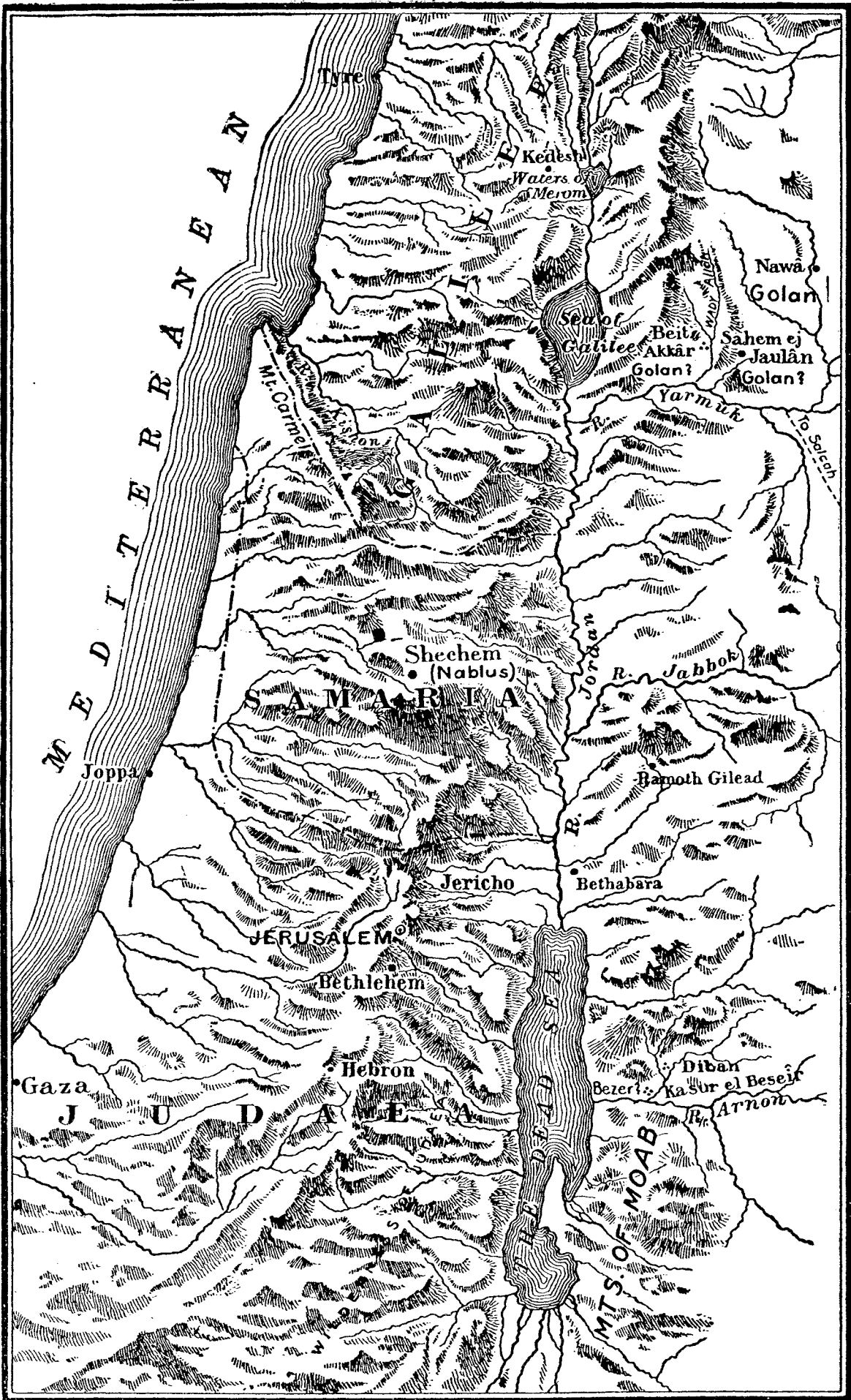
(The New Biblical Guide. Popular Edition, Vol. IV. London: S. W. Partridge & Co., n.d. 317.)

God permitted Moses to see the whole land of Canaan even though his sin at Kadesh prevented him from entering it. (Thomas Constable, 104).

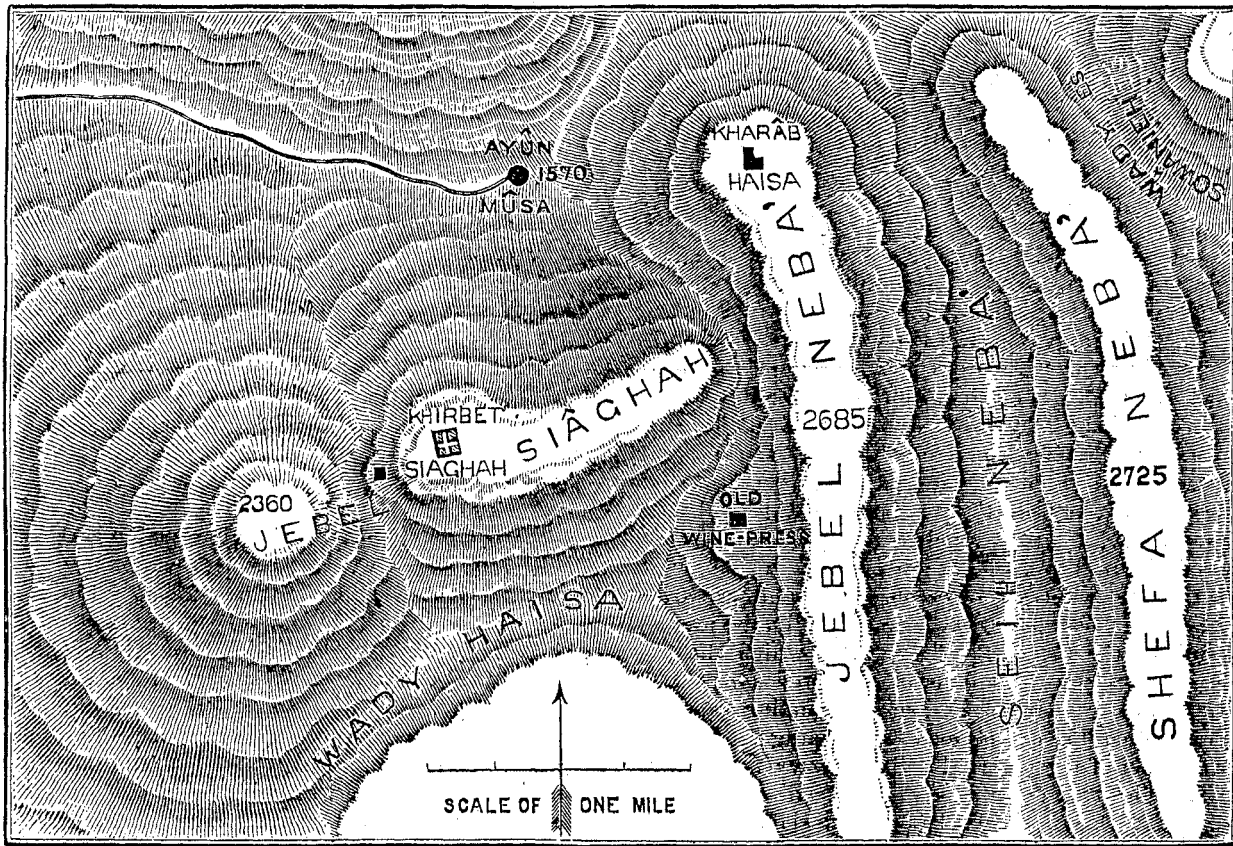
Eugene Merrill has a fitting explanation of Moses' sin:

The Lord had told him to speak to the rock (Num. 20:8), the mere act of speaking being designed to demonstrate the power of God who creates by the spoken word. To strike the rock was to introduce an interruptive element and thus to diminish the significance of the powerful word. By doing this, Moses betrayed not only anger and disobedience but he correspondingly reflected on the God whom he served by implying that God could not bring forth water by the divine word alone (cited by Dr. Constable's *Notes on Deuteronomy*, p. 104).

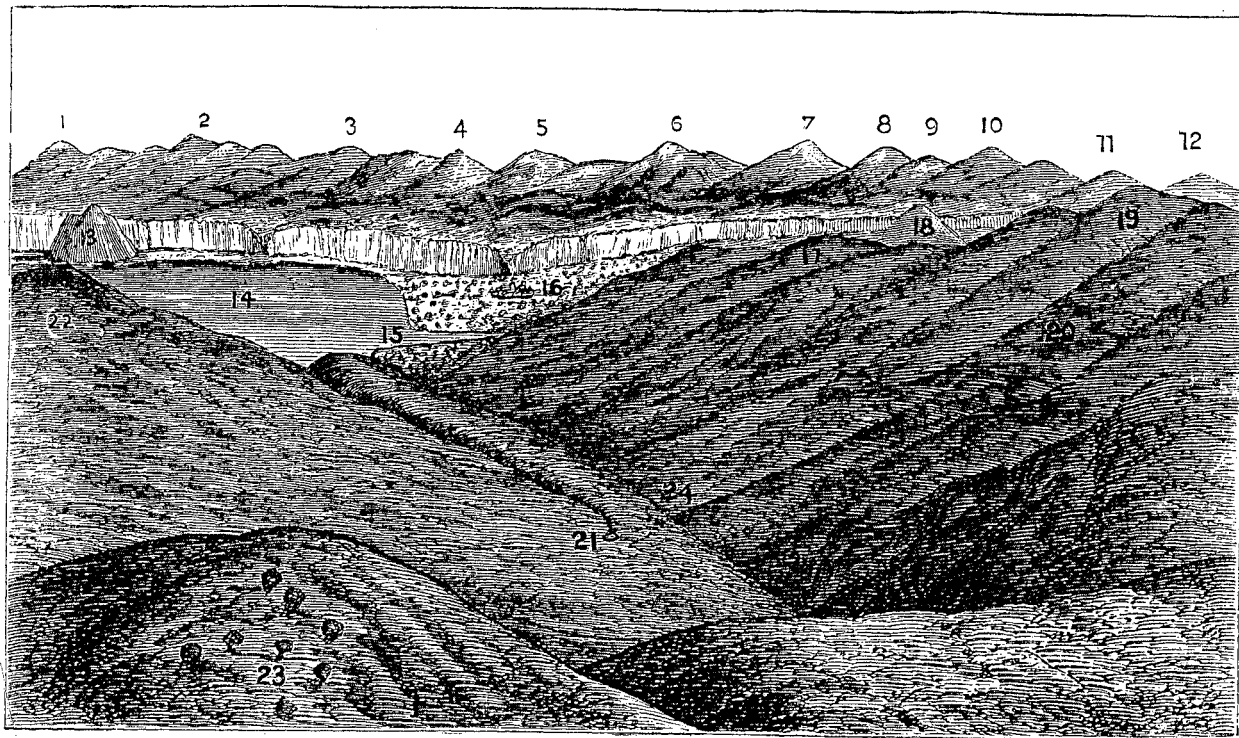




Map Showing the Location of the Cities of Refuge.



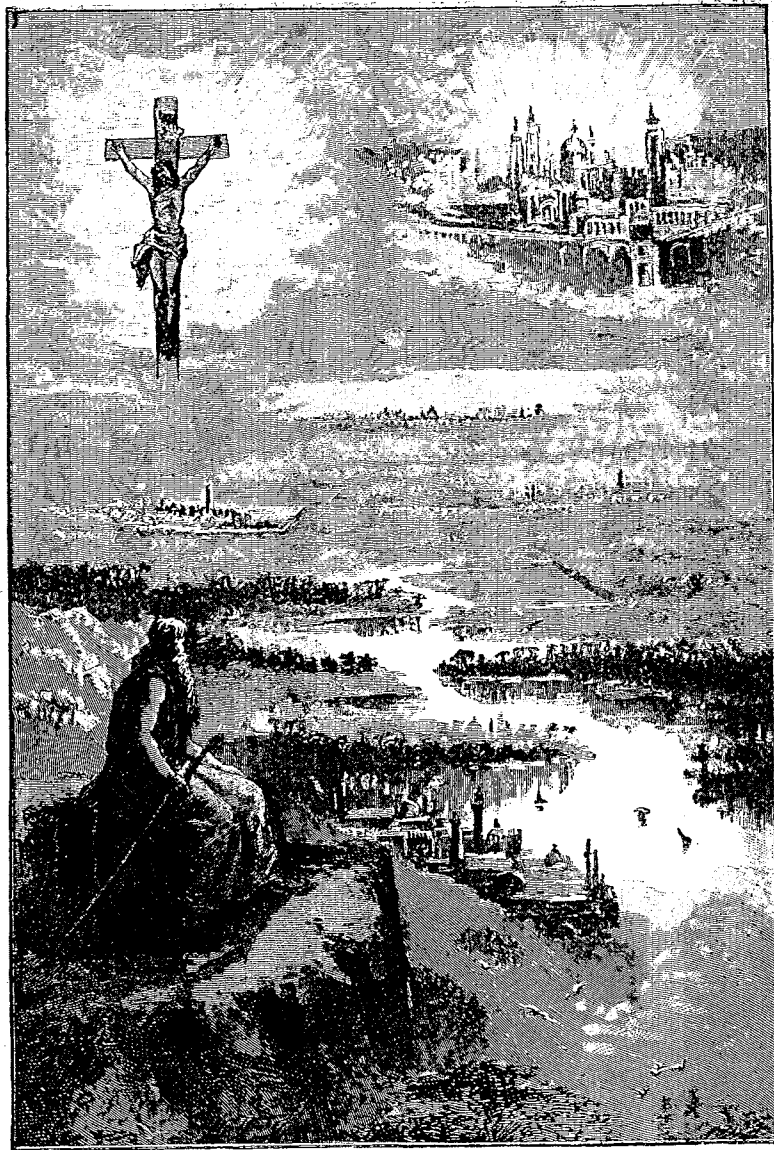
Map of Mount Pisgah.



View westward from the summit of Mt. Pisgah. (From a sketch taken on the spot.)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The Negeb, or "South Country." | 7. Gerizim. | 13. Massada. | 19. Jebel Osha. |
| 2. Hebron. | 8. Ebal. | 14. Engedi. | 20. Mounts. of Gilead. |
| 3. Bethlehem. | 9. Mounts. of Samaria. | 15. Mouth of Jordan. | 21. Ayun Musa. |
| 4. Jerusalem and Mount of Olives. | 10. Carmel. | 16. Jericho. | 22. Mounts. of Moab. |
| 5. Nebi Samwil. | 11. Gilboa. | 17. E. brow of Jordan Valley. | 23. Jebel Siaghah. |
| 6. Mounts. of Ephraim. | 12. Mounts. of Galilee. | 18. Kurn Surtabeh. | 24. Wady Hesban. |

M'Clintock + Strong, VIII, "Pisgah," 232 f (1894)



Moses erblickt das verheißene Land.

2A. The Content of the Song of Moses:

1b. Observation:

While volumes have been written on this marvelous song of Moses, it is difficult to know what to emphasize rather than looking at Israel's failure and apostasy. It is good to look at **God's providence, protection and provision for Israel**. The ultimate end is the salvation of His nation through regeneration, which in the Old Testament is suggested by the term "circumcising the heart." Deut 30:6: "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." A brief outline of the song will help us in our final section, which will focus on God's mercy and Israel's uniqueness.

2b. Outline: *Deuteronomy 32*

1c. Admonition to remembrance: 1-14

1d. Prominence:



- 2d. Passion:
- 3d. Protection:
- 4d. Provision:
- 2c. Acknowledgement of apostasy: 15-42
 - 1d. Indifference: 15
 - 2d. Idolatry: 31:16
 - 3d. Ignorance: 32:28 "For they are a nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them."
- 3c. Announcement of redemption: 43-47
 - 1d. Repentance of the people:
 - 2d. Return to the land:
 - 3d. Regeneration of the nation: 32:43
 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people;
 For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
 And render vengeance to His adversaries;
 He will provide atonement for His land and His people." (cf. 30:6, 10)

3A. The Centrality of the Nation of Israel (Deut. 32:8-10)

1b. Historically and geographically Israel is the center of the earth:

- 1c. God placed the nations in relationship to Israel:

Deut. 32:8 "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. ⁹ For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

- 2c. Israel is placed in the center of the earth:

Ez. 38:12 "To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land (literally in the center of the earth)."

Ez. 5:5 "Thus saith the Lord God; this is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her."

2b. Spiritually and presently Israel is the apple of God's eye:

- 1c. Israel is God's most priceless possession:

Deut. 32:10 "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed hi, he kept him as **the apple of his eye.**"

2c. Even in apostasy, Israel is the apple of God's eye:

Zech. 2:8 "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the **apple of his eye.**"

Rom 9:4-5 "Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

Israel is blessed above all nations; they have the adoption; the glory, the covenants, the law, the service, the promises, the patriarchs and prophets and the MESSIAH (Rom. 9:4-5).

Rom. 3:1-2 "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

3c. God will deal with nations in accordance with how they treat the chosen people:

Gen. 12:3 "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

3b. **Prophetically and nationally Israel is the key to the future:**

1c. God will be merciful to HIS land and HIS people:

Deut. 32:43 "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people."

2c. God loved Israel above all people. The reason:

Deut. 7:6-8 "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

As difficult as it might be to understand, the Lord loved Israel because in eternity past He made a sovereign decision to love Israel. Similarly, He has loved His elect from with His sovereign elective love for the pas eternal eons (Jer. 33:3).

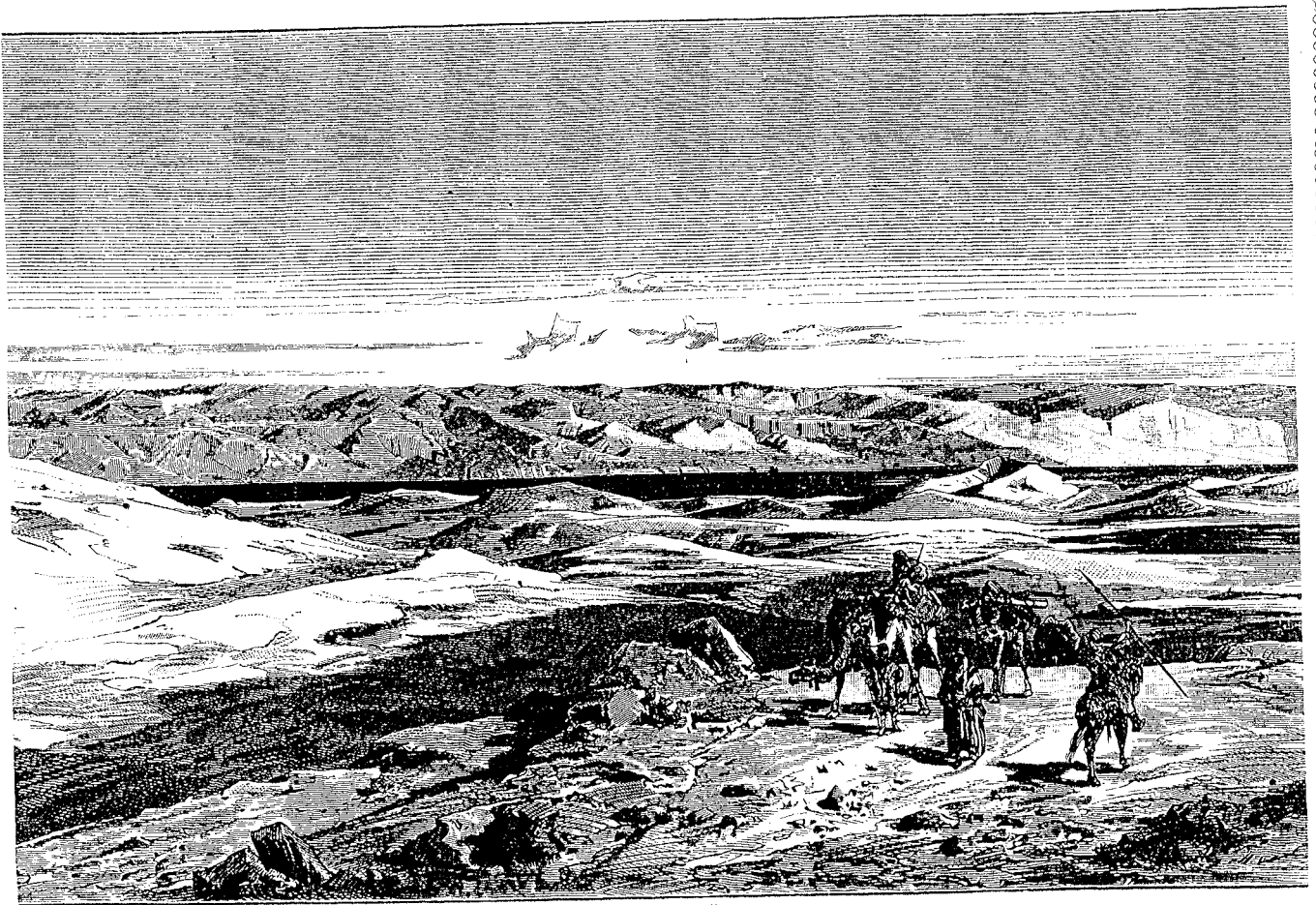
3c. God will be the glory in Jerusalem (v. 5), will dwell in it (v. 6), and inherit the land, with Jerusalem as the world's capital:

Zech. 2:5-6 "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord.

FOR ISRAEL'S PEACE

Not just today, but every day
 For the peace of Israel we must pray,
 Driven and homeless, lonely, too,
 Their only crime to be born a Jew.
 Across our world resounds the cry
 Of a stricken race which cannot die,
 Through centuries the nations fail,
 But Jews still weep at the Wailing Wall.
 O Father above, the debt we owe
 To this race should cause our prayers to flow
 In a daily stream of faith that they
 Shall find release from hatred's flay.
 Give us the vision, Lord, to see
 That love for Jews is love for thee. —Clara Bernhardt



Das Tote Meer vom Ölberge aus.

When we visit Mount Nebo on our tour to the Holy Land, it is the first stop of the New Year. As we view the Promised Land, much as Moses did, we read the following poem to remember the great prophet and meekest man on the earth.

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
 East of the Jordan's wave,
 In a vale in the land of Moab,
 There lies a lonely grave.
 And no man knows that sepulcher,
 And no man saw it e'er,
 For the angels of God upturned the sod,
 And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
 That ever passed on earth;
 But no man heard the trampling,
 Or saw the train go forth:
 Noiselessly as the daylight
 Comes back when night is done,
 And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
 Grows into the great sun.

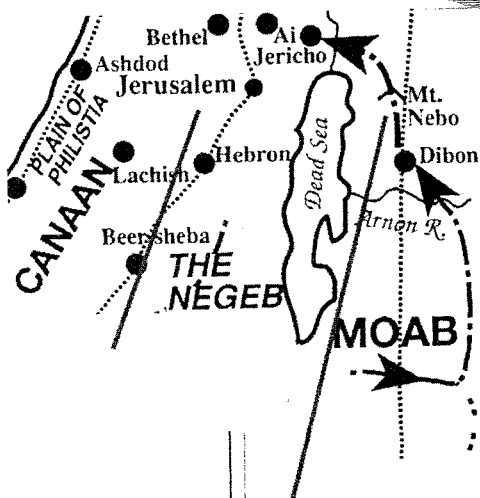
This was the truest warrior
 That ever buckled sword,
 This the most gifted poet
 That ever breathed a word.
 And never earth's philosopher
 Traced with his golden pen,
 On the deathless page, truths half so sage
 As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honor?
 The hillside for a pall,
 To lie in state while angels wait,
 With stars for tapers tall,
 And the dark rock-place, like tossing plumes,
 Over his bier to wave,
 And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
 To lay him in the grave?

In that strange grave without a name,
 Whence his uncoffined clay
 Shall break again—O wondrous thought!—
 Before the judgment-day,
 And stand with glory wrapt around
 On the hills he never trod,
 And speak of the strife that won our life
 With the incarnate Son of God.

O lonely grave in Moab's land!
 O dark Beth-Peor's hill:
 Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
 And teach them to be still.
 God has his mysteries of grace,
 Ways that we cannot tell;
 He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
 Of him He loved so well.

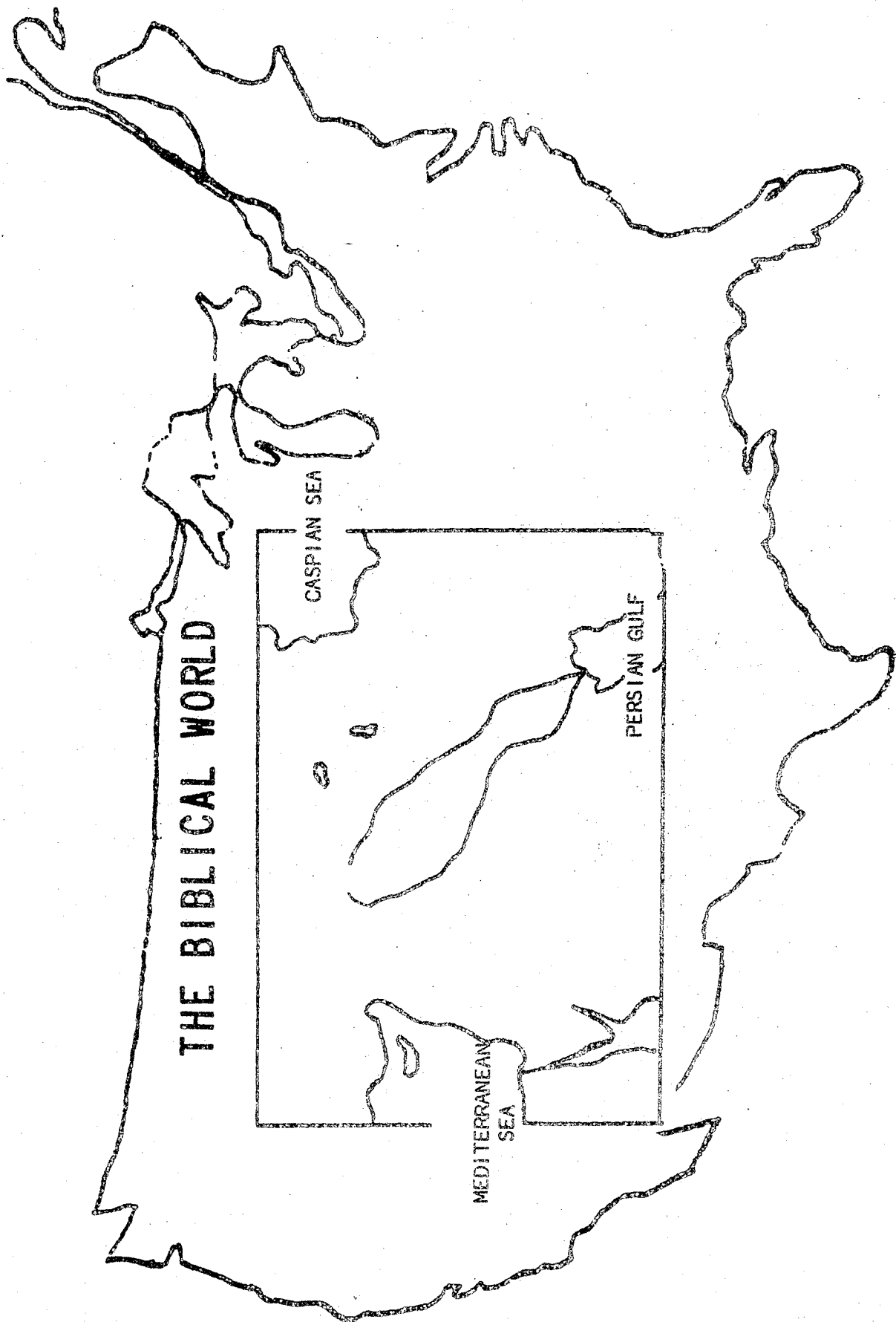




V. Mose. Kap. 34, Vers 1—4.

Mose Tod.





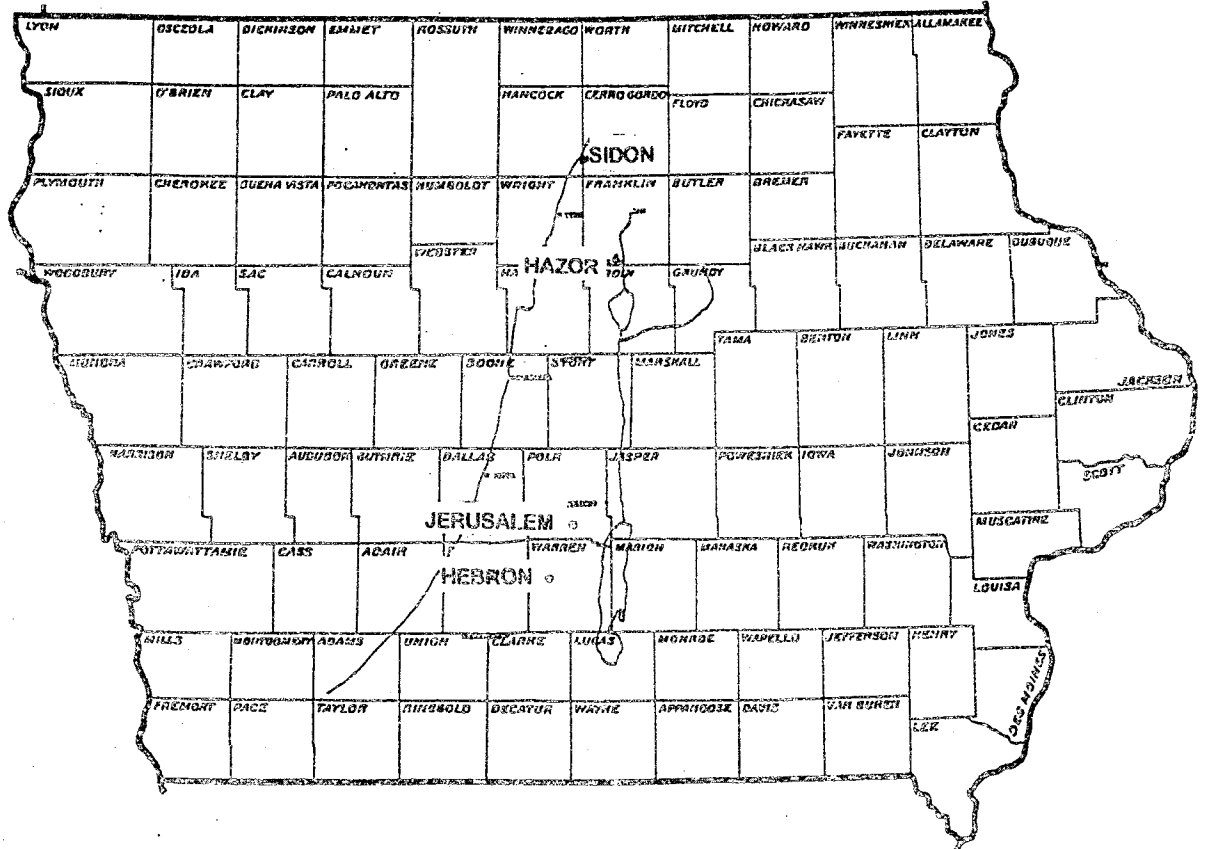
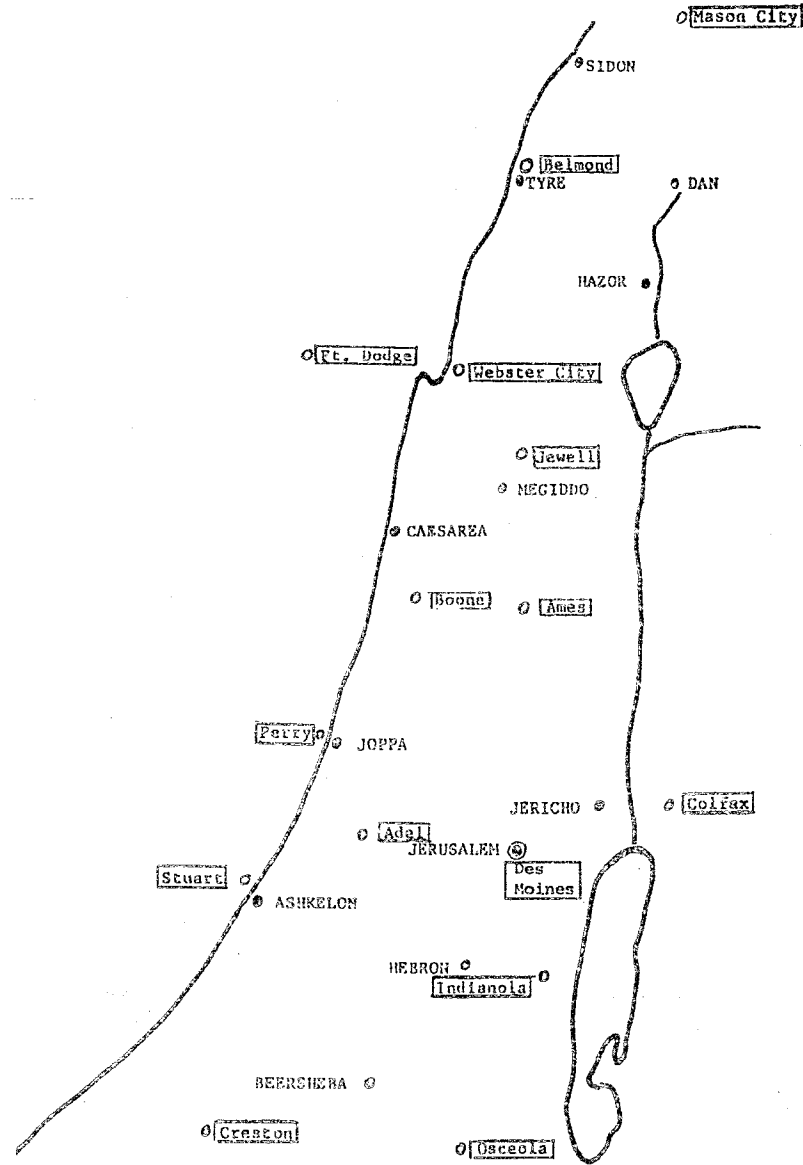
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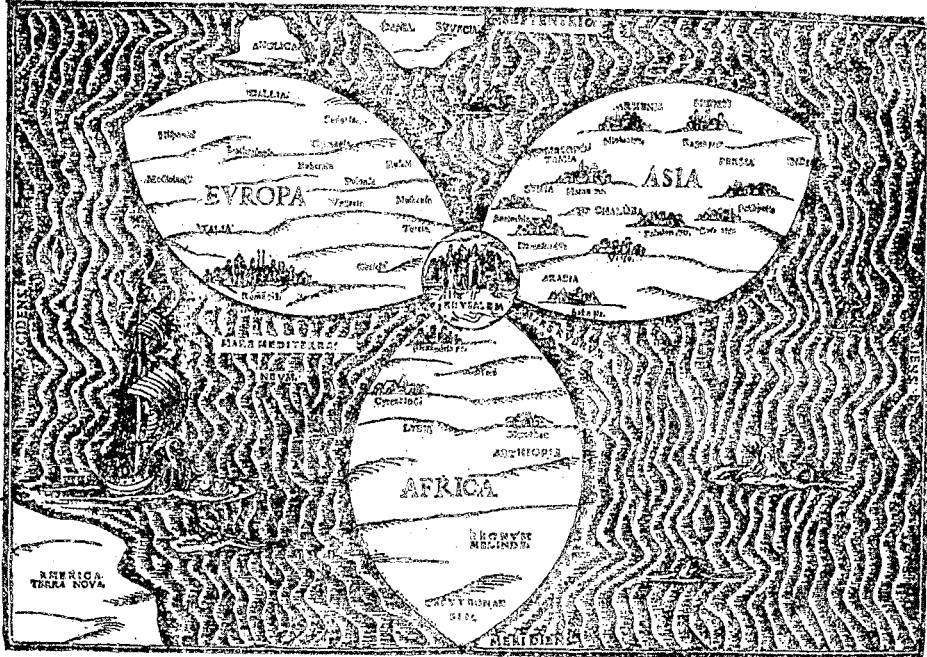
IOWA AND ISRAEL: A COMPARISON



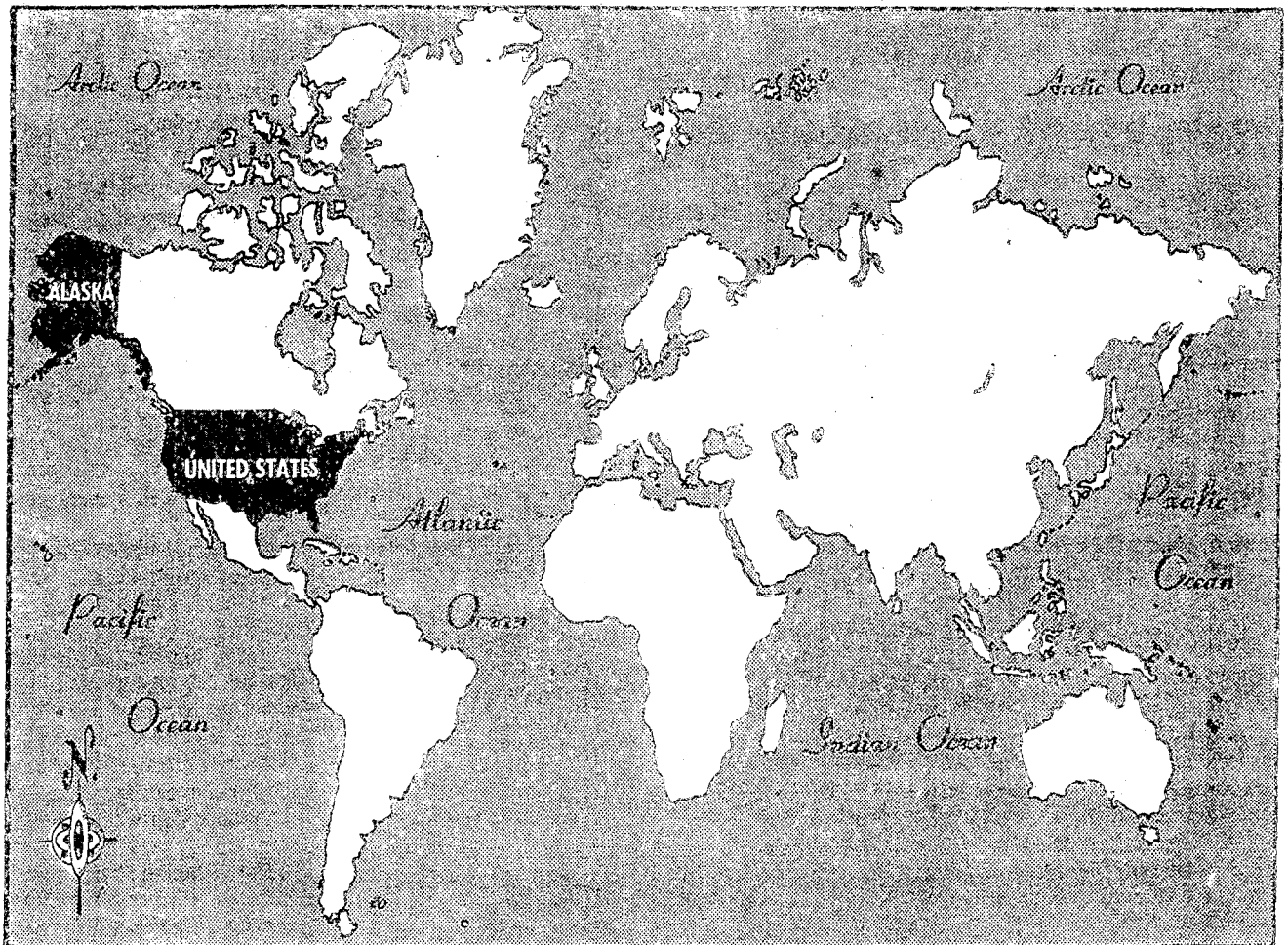
RELATIVE SCALE MAP COMPARING CITIES IN IOWA TO CITIES IN ISRAEL

Robert J. Lyman

Jerusalem in the Centre of the World

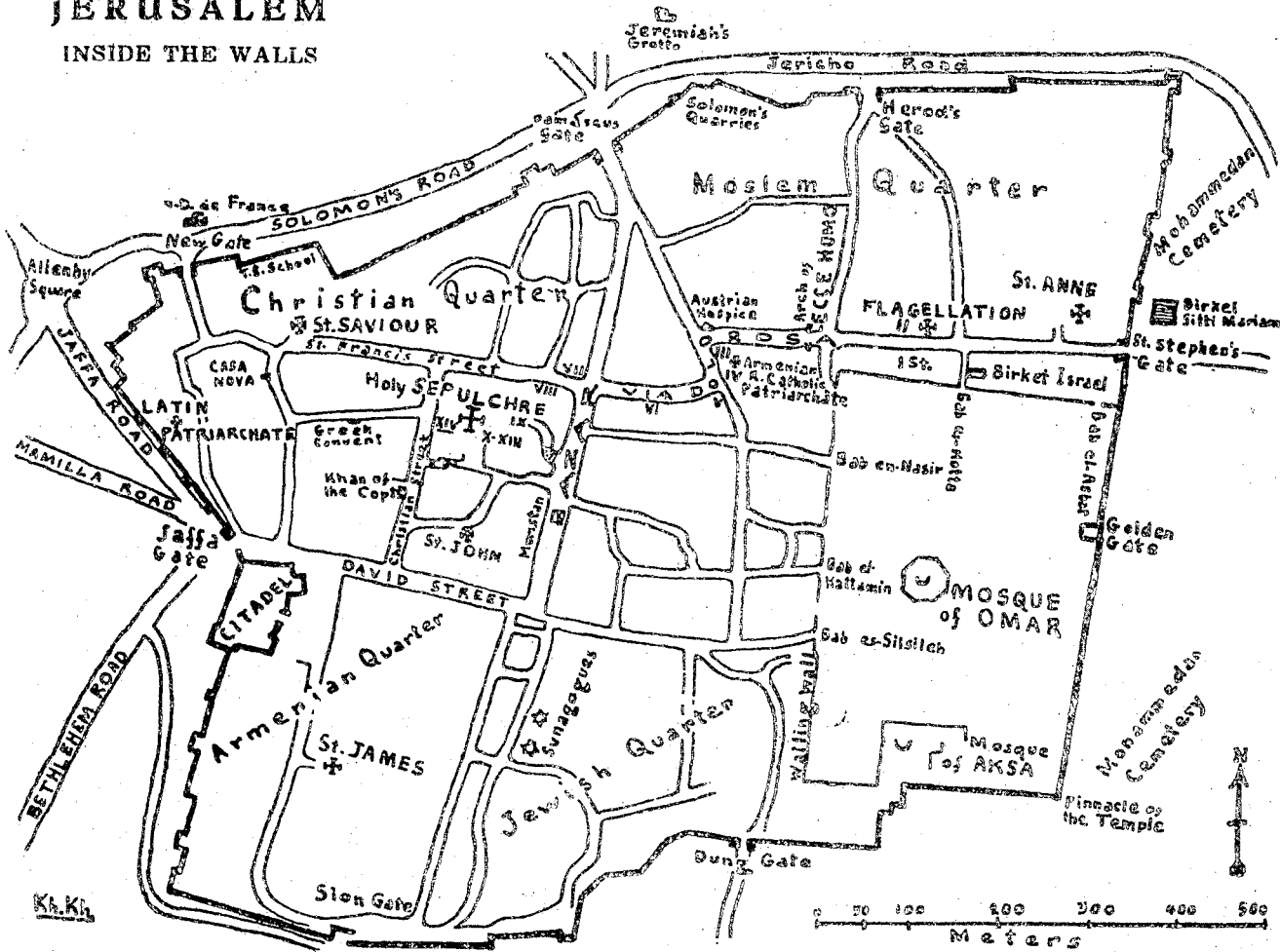


MAP OF THE YEAR 1492. In the left corner, America Terra Nova -- The New Land.



JERUSALEM

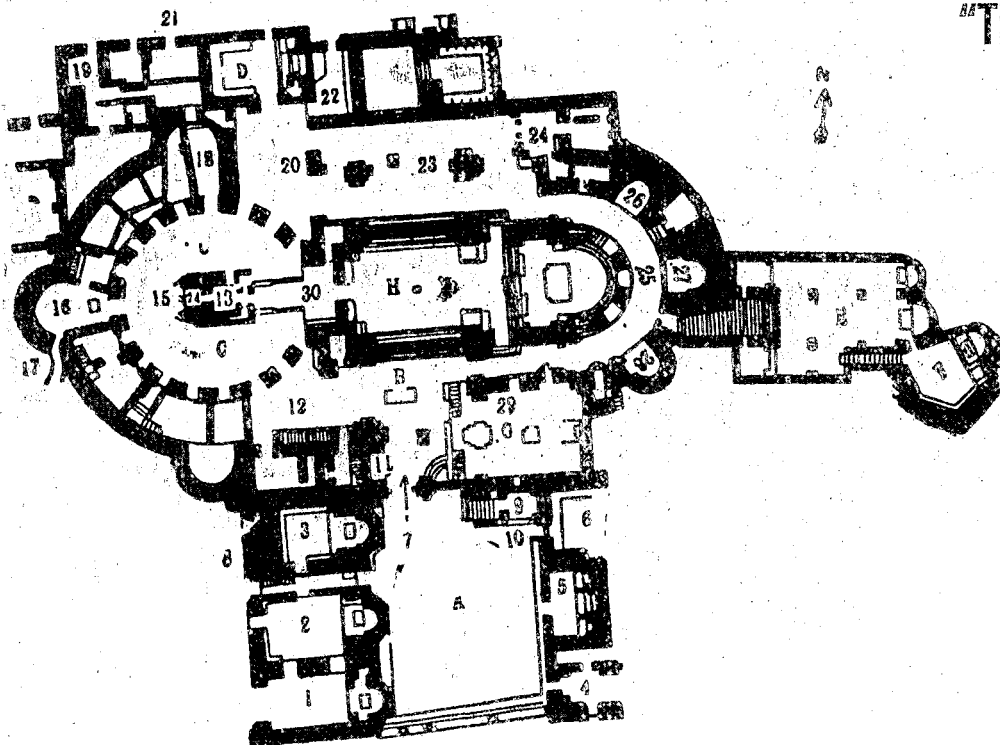
INSIDE THE WALLS



The Church of the Holy Sepulcher



"The Navel of the Earth"



Jerusalem is situated in the heart of Israel. The center of Jerusalem is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located over Calvary. At the center of the church stands, since Crusader days, a mysterious object in the shape of a human navel. The place where our Savior died is, indeed, the center or "navel of the earth".