

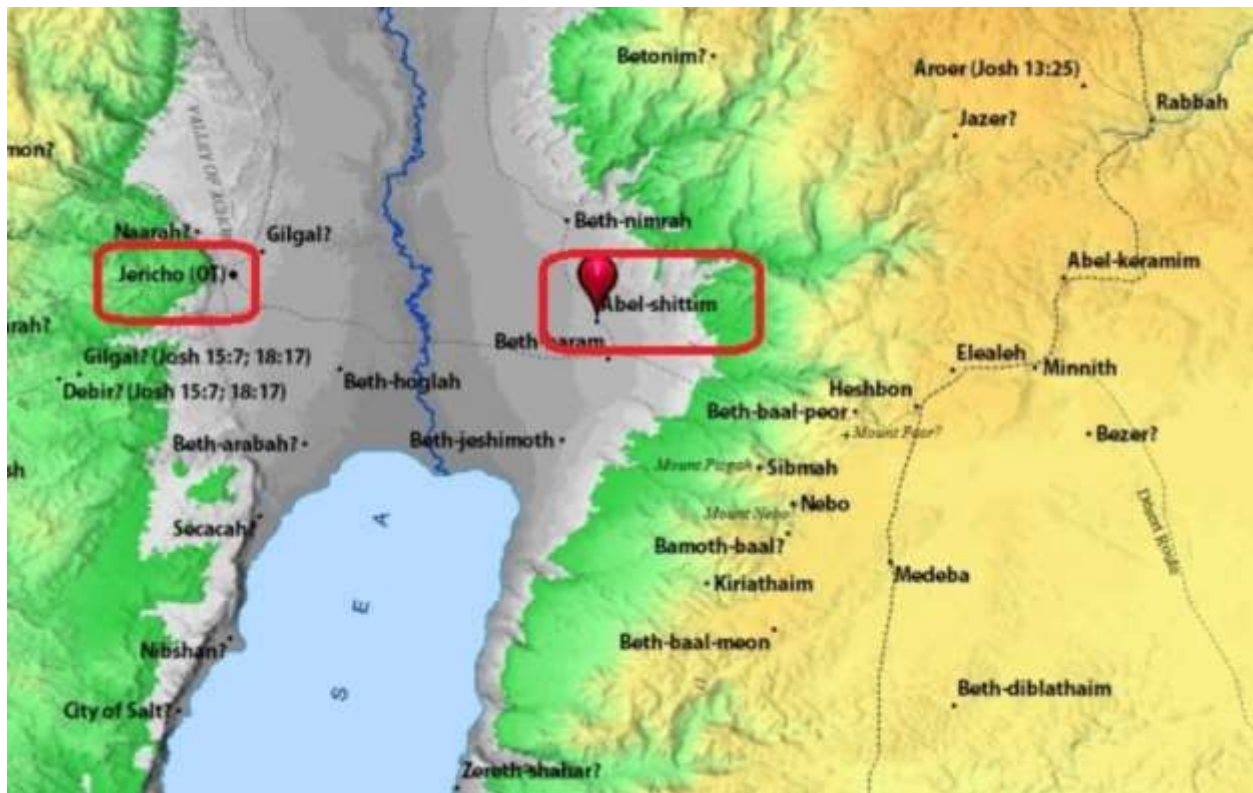
Joshua 3

Verses 1 - 4

Then Joshua got up early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they spent the night there before they crossed. ² Then at the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp; ³ and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. ⁴ However, there shall be a distance between you and it of about two thousand cubits by measurement. Do not come near it, so that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.”

Then Joshua got up early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they spent the night there before they crossed.

See map 305



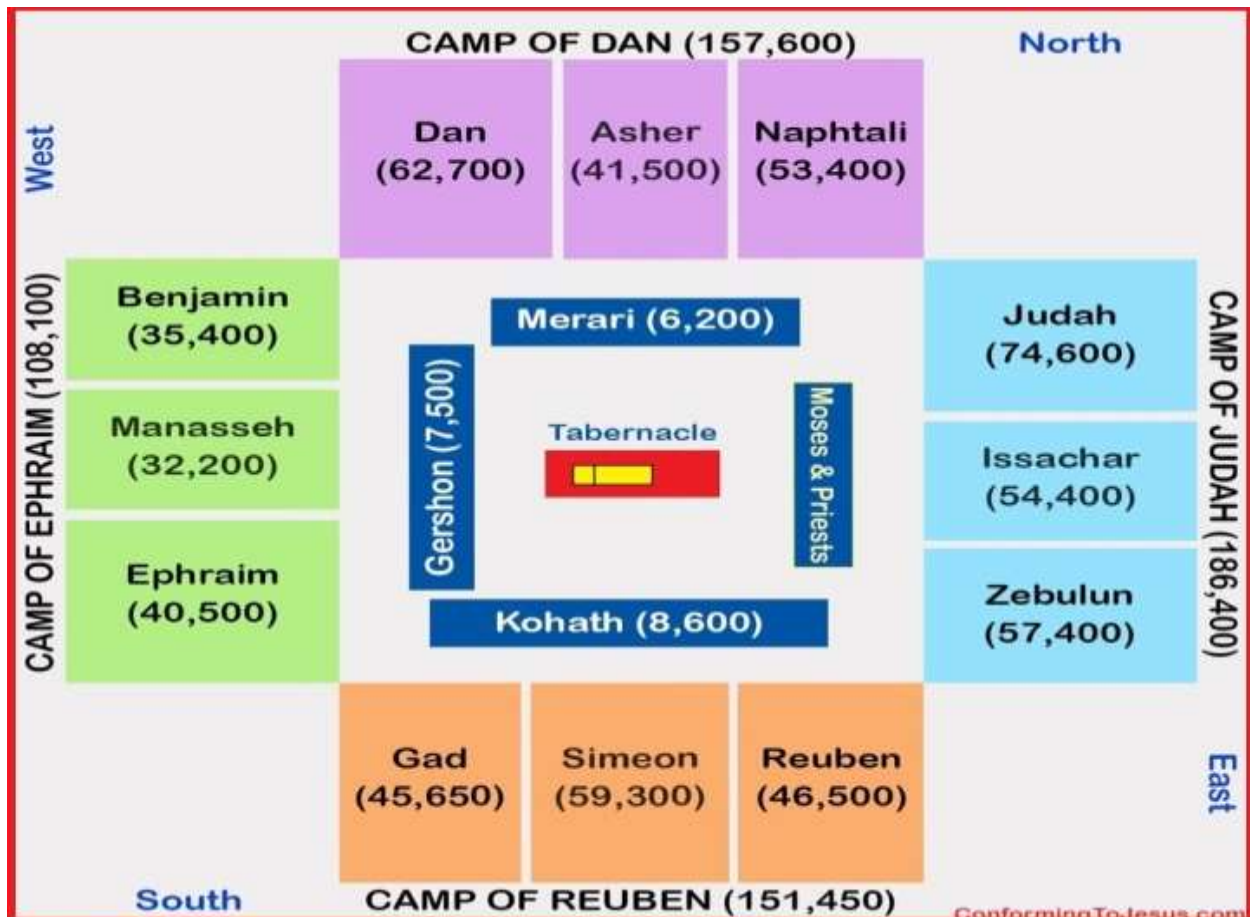
² Then at the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp;
³ and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

When Israel first came to the Jordan, Joshua had planned on crossing the next day but the two spies had not returned yet so the crossing was delayed for 3 days.

⁴ However, there shall be a distance between you and it of about two thousand cubits by measurement. Do not come near it, so that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.”

In the wilderness the tribes were kept a safe distance from the tabernacle because the Levites were stationed (camped) on all four sides.

See pic 310



While crossing the Jordan they had to stay about 3,000 feet behind the Ark.

Verses 5 - 6

⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do miracles among you.” ⁶ And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do miracles among you.

The people had to do two things to consecrate themselves.

See Exodus 19:14 – 15

¹⁴ So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. ¹⁵ He also said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

1. The washing of their garments
2. Abstaining from sexual relations.

Verses 7-13

Now the Lord said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they will know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. ⁸ So you shall command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand *still* in the Jordan.’” ⁹ Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God.” ¹⁰ And Joshua said, “By this you will know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly drive out from you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan. ¹² Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. ¹³ And it will come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *that is*, the waters which are flowing down from above; and they will stand in one heap.”

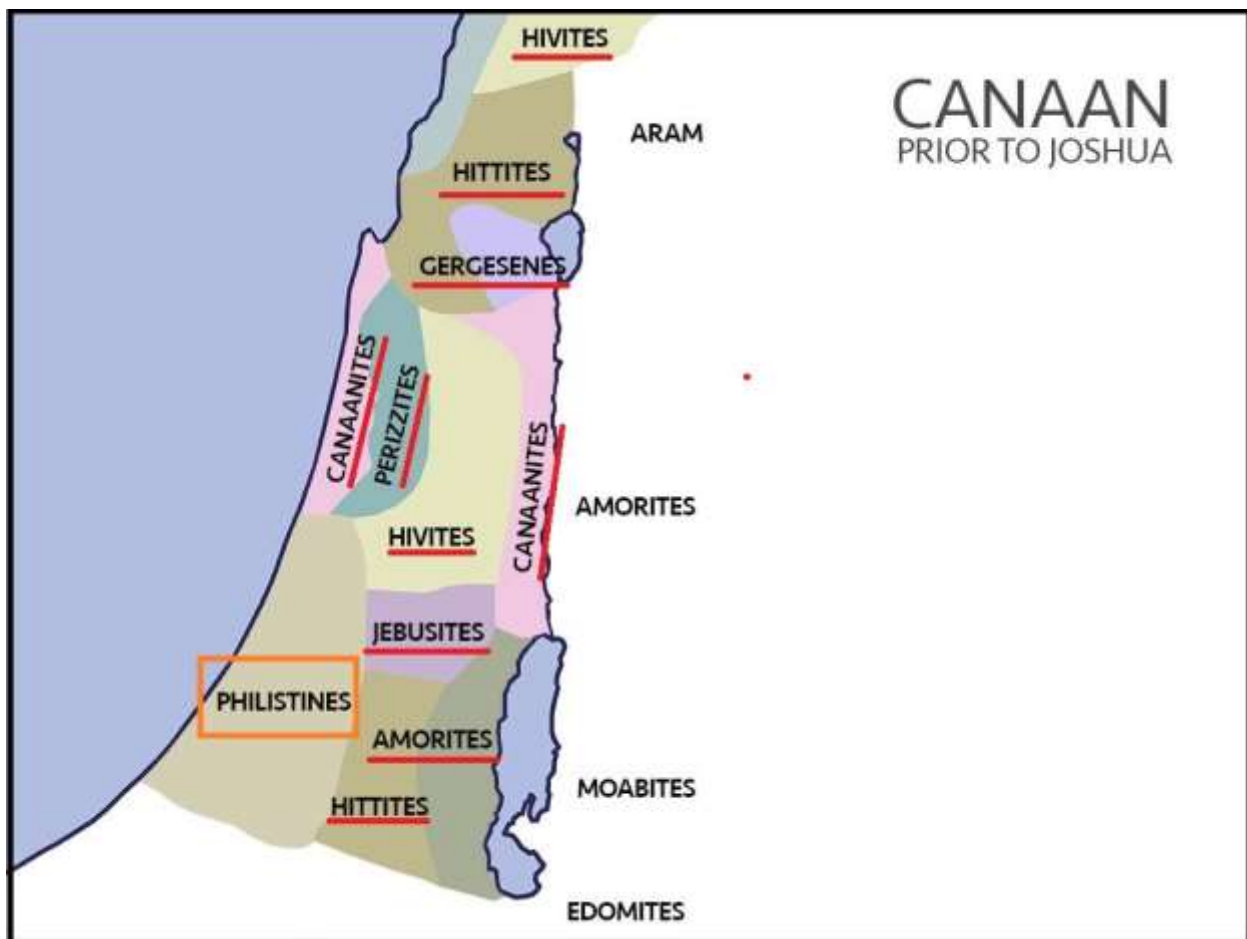
⁷ Now the Lord said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they will know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.

Before any nation goes to war it is vitally important that they have confidence in their leaders. Therefore, God performed a miracle that all of Israel would see, leaving no doubt that He was with Joshua just as He had been with Moses.

¹⁰ And Joshua said, “By this you will know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly drive out from you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite (or Gergesenes), the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

The seven tribes mentioned here made up the land of Canaan

See map 315



The Philistines are not mentioned in the list of 7 nations but several descriptions of the Promised Land indicate that that area was meant to be part of Israel.

13 And it will come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *that is*, the waters which are flowing down from above; and they will stand in one heap.”

This miracle was not as impressive as the Red Sea Crossing but for those who were 40 years of age and under this would be the greatest miracle they had ever seen.

See chart 320

Who saw the Red Sea Crossing miracle?

Only those who were 20 years old or younger at the time of the rebellion were able to enter Canaan except for Joshua and Caleb.

The rebellion took place in 1444 BC, the second year in the wilderness, so the maximum age of anyone who entered Canaan in 1406 BC would be 58 (except for Joshua & Caleb of course).

Based on this information the Israelites can be divided into three equal groups.

1. Newborn to 20
2. 20 to 40 years old
3. 41 to 58 years old

The Red Sea crossing took place 40 years ago so 2/3 of the people seeing this miracle at the Jordan River had not experienced the Red Sea Crossing miracle.

Verses 14-17

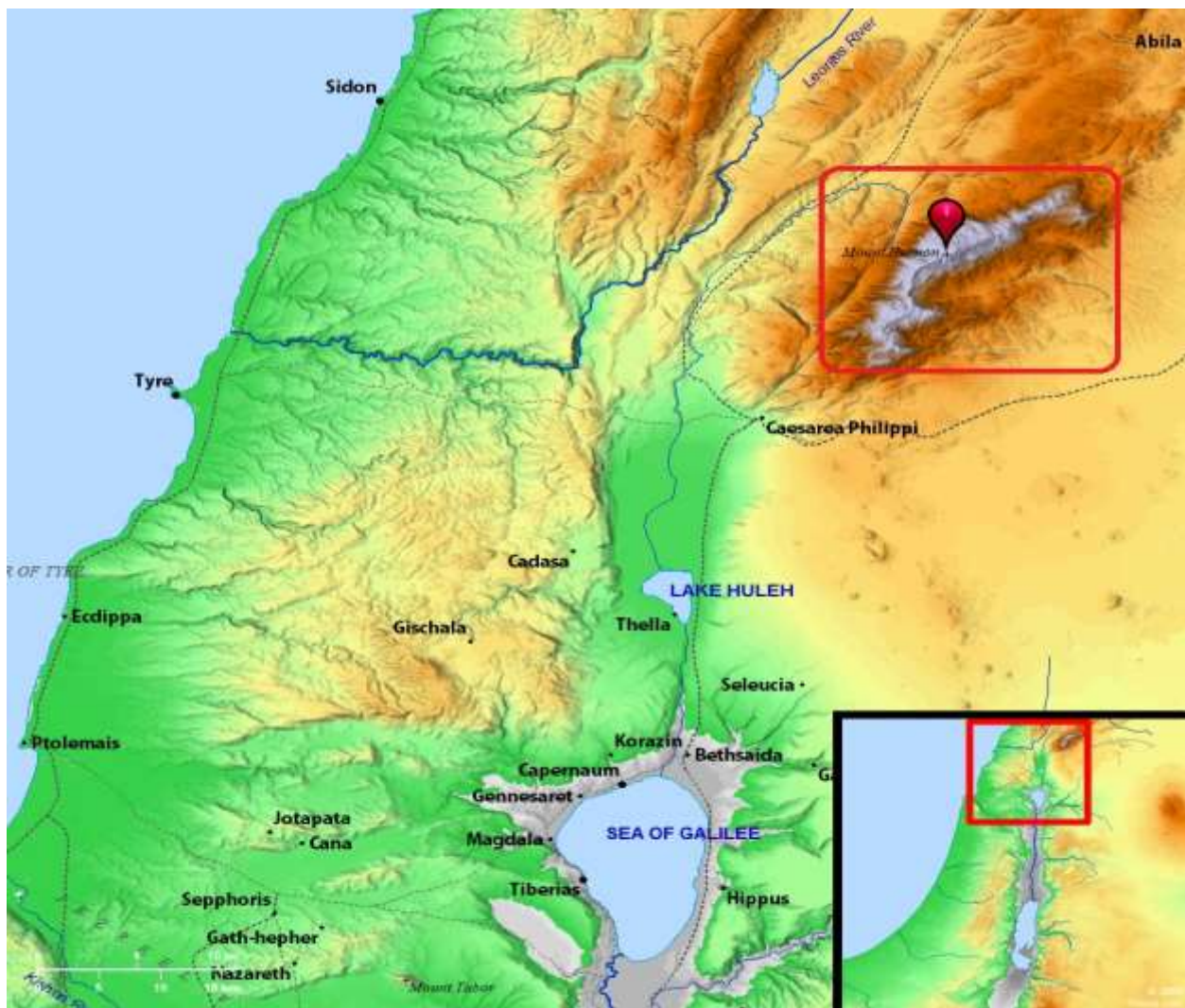
14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵ and when those who were carrying the ark came up to the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the ark stepped down into the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), ¹⁶ then the waters which were flowing down from above stood *and* rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

¹⁵ and when those who were carrying the ark came up to the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the ark stepped down into the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest),

The Flax harvest was mentioned in chapter two when Rahab hid the spies under the sheaves of flax. The Flax harvest takes place in the spring (March / April).

This is also the time of year when the Jordan River is in flood stage. The reason for this is the melting snow on Mount Hermon.

See map 325



The melting snow of Mount Hermon feeds a spring at the base of the mountain that forms the Jordan River. The Jordan River then flows into the Sea of Galilee which overflows back into the Jordan River and ends up at the Dead Sea where it evaporates.

See map 330



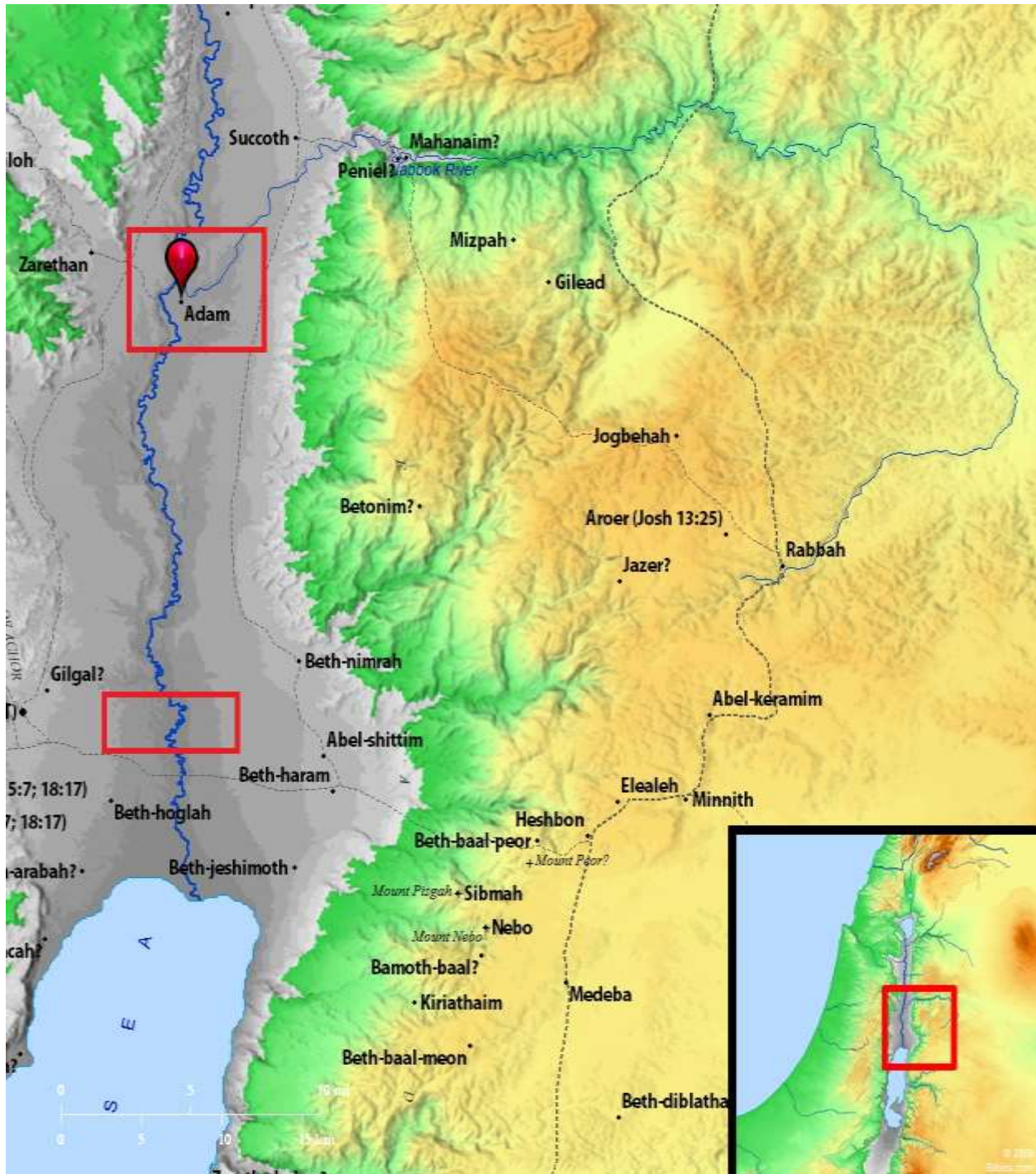
Mount Hermon rises to 9,232 feet and is quite majestic.

See pic 335



¹⁶ then the waters which were flowing down from above stood *and* rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam

See map 340



Adam is about 20 miles north of the location where Israel crossed the Jordan River which we know was due east of Jericho.

Many people try to find a natural event, like an earth quake or a land slide, to explain this miracle but neither one holds up under examination.

An earthquake or a land slide would not make the water rise up in a heap.

In the case of an earth quake the water would flow into the crevice that was formed and follow whatever path was created. In the case of a landslide the water would once again be rerouted, seeking whatever new path was created, but it would not stand up in a heap.

If people want to explain an event using a naturalistic approach they should realize that the law of gravity cannot be suspended.

And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

The Priests and the Ark remained in the middle of the dry river bed as the nation of Israel passed by.

We can assume the people did not go single file but spread out as they crossed; otherwise it would have taken days to cross the river.

However, it seems likely that the people still had to maintain the ½ mile distance from the Ark as was commanded in verse 4. This was not a problem since the water was cut off some 20 miles away. The people could have crossed on either the Northern or Southern side of the Ark.