

READING PLAN WEEK 1 for **The Epic of Eden: Deborah**

Word from the Author: Since there was no preparatory work prior to watching the session 1 video, your individual study this week will include both a review of what we heard in today's video and some of what comes in our next week's session. Since, often, Biblical characters can seem legendary or distant, we can slip into thinking of them as caricatures rather than the real flesh and blood individuals we are invited to know and with whom we can fully resonate. As we launch these 8 weeks together, develop the habit of taking Deborah, Barak, and all the characters we will be studying, out of the make-believe worlds they seem to occupy and put them (and their experiences with our God) into real time and space. Encounter their real faith in the living God, and allow the Holy Spirit to show you where your story and their stories might align.

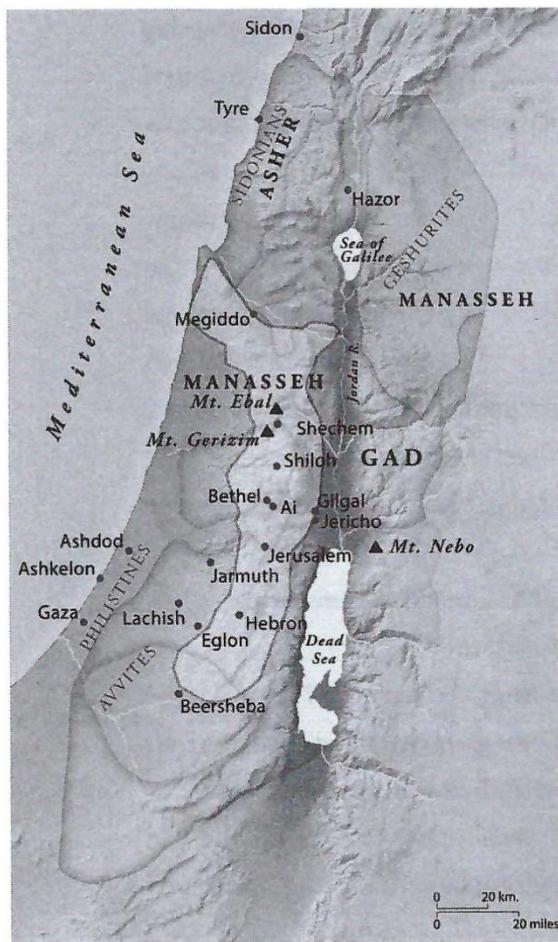
Day #1: We often focus on God's spiritual promises to His people – and rightly so. But, in order for God's promises to become a fundamental element of Israel's influence, they will need the tangible resources of LAND. **Read Genesis 11:26-32.** Other than the familiar names, do you see the looming specter of the land which God's people are approaching and which He tells them plainly must be conquered? **Read Genesis 12:1-9** (Abram's first covenant encounter with Yahweh). Note how often the word "land" appears. **Read Genesis 15:1-21.** Now that your eyes are tuned to it, do you see the land covenant God is making with His people? Do you hear the echo of God's territorial promises here, as Israel is departing Egypt? Finally, **Read Joshua 1:1-9.** In order to succeed in their God-given mission, what two things must Israel do?

Day #2: To give us a perspective of the land of the region, have a look at a couple maps (See OVER). **Read Joshua 13:1-7.** Note how much of the land was not yet conquered. Clearly, Israel had begun to take over the land God had promised, but after many long years, much of it remained the possession of Israel's (and God's) enemies. You can imagine the conflicts of interest and devotion which confront God's people surrounded by these nations. Consider the intensity of this conflict on Israel's forward movement into God's promises.

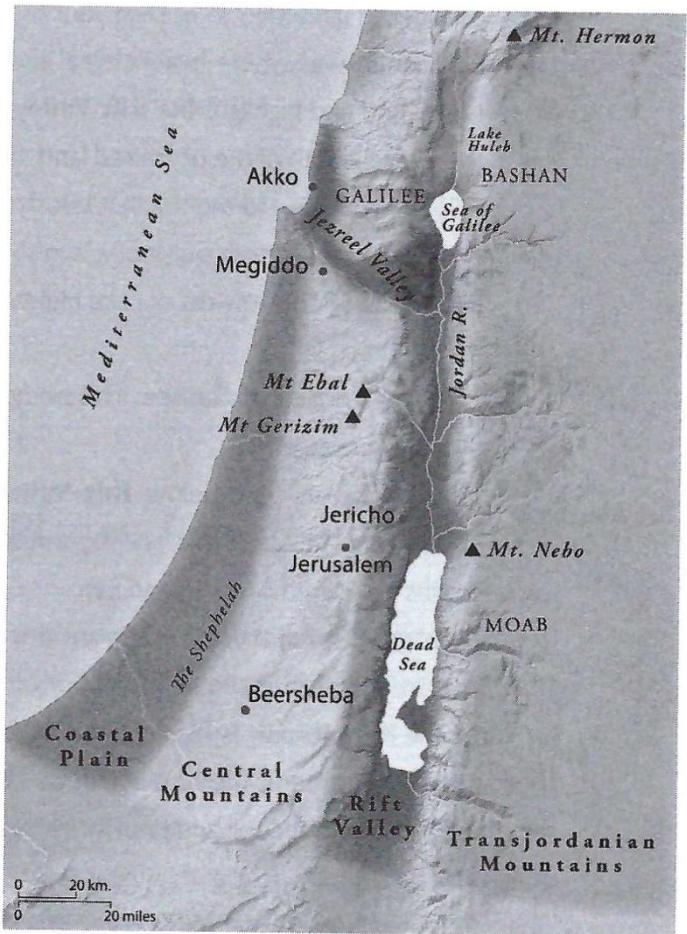
Day #3: The book of Judges follows Joshua's death, his exhortation to Israel to hold the course, and the need for Judges to come to Israel's rescue time and time again. **Read Judges 2:6-19** to get a quick summary of the intended influence of the judges and the rebounding sin of Israel. Our girl, Deborah, is among the 12 judges who rule over Israel in these days.

Day #4: We will have four days of reading each week of this study, because we want to understand the Judges better and, thereby, the travails of Israel and how they may relate to us and our own lives. Today, we look at Othniel, Israel's first judge. **Read Judges 3:7-11** for a very brief glimpse into his formative role as Israel's leader. How does the behavior and attitude of Israel strike you? Can you relate AT ALL to their fickle devotion? Was there ever a time in your life when your devotion to God was scant?

Israel's Conquered Land



Physical Topography of Israel's Promised Land



A place for your notes during your Week #2 Small Group meeting: