

Backdrop: Setting the Stage for the Greatest Story Ever Told

Now these things took place as examples for us. 1 Corinthians 10:6

Opening Discussion:

1. Have you ever watched a sequel without watching the first movie in the series? If so, what was that experience like? Did you enjoy the movie? Were you confused at points?
2. Why is it important to understand the background elements of the Bible like geography, politics, sociology, and even symbolism?
3. Can you remember a time that understanding the background of the Bible helped a passage come alive for you?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you know about the people and places of the Bible?
5. What's something you would like to know more about regarding the people and places of the Bible?

As we explore the people, places, and features that create the backdrop for the greatest story ever told, we must beware of unbiblical allegories and let Scripture be our guide.

Overview of the People, Places, and Features of the World of the Bible:

Regions and Nations:

- _____: The garden where God placed and dwelt with humanity; represents God's presence and fellowship with humanity
- The _____: The land promised to Abraham and his descendants; it represents God's promises to His people
- _____: The place where Israel was enslaved for over 400 years; spiritually represents bondage
- The _____: The place where Israel wandered for 40 years; spiritually represents separation from the world and dependence on God

Cities:

- _____: Means the house of God; where Jacob saw into Heaven; a place where God's presence is often manifested
- _____: Where the presence of God dwelt; the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant were located there before coming to Jerusalem
- _____: Means the house of bread; city of David, city of the Messiah
- _____: The word sounds like the Hebrew word for confusion; the city represents organized rebellion against God and evil
- _____: Means city of peace; represents God's Kingdom and God's Holy city

Features:

- The _____: Also referred to as the great river and marks the eastern most border of the Promised Land
- The _____: The sea Israel crossed when leaving Egypt; represents baptism and new birth
- The _____: the river Israel crossed to enter the Promised Land; represents the entrance to salvation and rest
- _____ and the Sea of _____: the site of much of Jesus' ministry and miracles
- Mount _____: The place where God established the Mosaic Covenant; represents the Covenant of the Law

- Mount _____: Known as the Garden of God; the place where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal; represents beauty and blessings
- The Valley of _____: A place of battle where Israel was often defeated; represents conflict between the people of God and those in rebellion against God

People:

- _____: Physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob; spiritually represents all the people of God
- _____: All nations and people who are not physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob; spiritually represents those in sinful rebellion against God
- _____ and God _____: Non-Jews who have some level of faith in the Creator and Covenant God of Israel
- _____: A group of tribes living in Canaan whose cultures were wicked beyond redemption; spiritually they represent sinful people
- _____: Descendants of Abraham through Ishmael (not Isaac)
- _____: Descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Esau (not Jacob)
- _____: Inhabitants of Assyria who were very wicked and conquered and scattered the Northern Tribes of Israel
- _____: Inhabitants of the region of Babylon who conquered the southern Kingdom of Israel and took them into exile
- _____: Those who conquered Babylon and sent the Jews back to Israel
- _____: Those who conquered the Persian empire and spread their cultural influence and language across the Mediterranean region; they are contrasted with Jews because they valued wisdom over signs and because of their more western way of thinking
- _____: Those who conquered the Greeks yet maintained much of their culture

Other Elements:

- The _____: The Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, The Mosaic Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant
- The _____: A tent constructed to house the Ark of the Covenant and for the formal religious ceremonies of Israel; it represents God's presence on earth and His fellowship with His people
- The _____: A permanent replacement of the Tabernacle
- The _____: The northern tribes of Israel spread throughout the Mediterranean world because of the Assyrian invasion; spiritually represents those whose spiritual citizenship is not in the world but in heaven
- The _____: The deportation of the remaining people of Israel from Jerusalem to Babylon; spiritually represents God's punishment of His people for sin

Fill in the Blank Answers:

Opening Discussion:

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Regions and Nations: Eden, Promised Land, Egypt, Wilderness

Cities: Bethel, Shiloh, Bethlehem, Babylon/Babel, Jerusalem/Salem

Features: Euphrates River, Red Sea, Jordan River, Galilee, Sinai, Carmel, Jezreel/Megiddo

People: Israel/Jews, Gentiles, Proselytes, Fearers, Canaanites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, Assyrians/Ninevites, Babylonians/Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans

Other Elements: Covenants, Tabernacle, Temple, Diaspora, Exile