

COAST, SHEPHELAH, NEGEV, NORTHERN SINAI

Name	Scripture reference*	Notation
------	----------------------	----------

COAST

Acco	Jgs 1:31 Acts 21:7	<p>Acco, about eight miles north of modern Haifa, was an important city on the Mediterranean coast although it is only mentioned once in the OT. Similarly, it is mentioned only once in the NT as a place where Paul spent a day while enroute to Caesarea from Tyre at the end of his third missionary journey. The ancient OT city of Acco, renamed Ptolemais in the NT period, are barely visible at the end of this video clip as they are east of the bay on higher land. The buildings and harbor facilities that are prominent in this video date from the Persian period (ca 400 BC). The modern seawall seen here was constructed on the ruins of much earlier seawalls dating to the fifth century BC. Many of the walls seen surrounding the city, and some of the buildings, date to the Crusader period (AD 1150).</p>
Tel Dor (Coastline)	1 Chr 7:29 1 Kgs 4:11	<p>Along the Mediterranean coast, 21 miles south of Acco, is the ancient city of Dor. The coastline in this area, and along most of the Mediterranean coast of Israel, is sandy and smooth and not favorable as ports for shipping. The infrequent natural harbors, like those at Acco, Dor, and Jaffa, are not remarkable. This lack of natural harbors may account for the fact that Israel never achieved notice as a naval power. During the reign of Solomon, Dor became the center of his fourth administrative district. Dor's modest harbor resulted in it becoming an important coastal city in the Assyrian, Persian and Hellenistic periods (sixth through second centuries BC). By the fourth century AD the city was in ruins, rebuilt and briefly occupied by the Crusaders in the eleventh century AD after which it again fell into disrepair.</p>
Tel Dor (Excavation)	Jos 11:2 Jos 12:23 Jos 17:11 Jgs 1:27	<p>The western part of the ancient city of Dor can be seen in this video. The excavated areas closest to the sea are the earliest occupation levels dating to a time before the Conquest (Jos 12:23). However, as reported in Judges 1:27, archaeological work has determined that the city remained Canaanite. By the time of the divided kingdom the city was under the control of the Israelites and became the major port of the northern nation of Israel. It was found to have had massive walls and an impressive gate system. The camera flies around a maritime area that centers on a 250-meter-long bay that was used as a secondary harbor throughout most of the site's long history. The primary bay, 750 meters wide, can be seen south of the peninsula at the beginning and end of the clip. In ancient times the primary bay was protected by a series of small islands behind which ships anchored while transferring merchandise to smaller ships for transportation to the city.</p>
Caesarea Maritima (Overview)	Acts 9–11 Acts 23:23 Acts 24–26	<p>South of Dor and Acco (see above) is the Roman city of Caesarea Maritima (not to be confused with Caesarea Phillipi). This remarkable city was designed and built during the reign of Herod the Great (37 BC–4 AD) in honor of his patron, Octavian Augustus Caesar. The city was constructed along a desolate section of coast that had no natural harbors. It was a planned city with the usual amenities a Roman citizen would expect including baths, temples, a theatre, amphitheatre, markets and residential quarters. It took 12 years to build and was completed about 10/9 BC. It soon became the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. It was renowned for the splendor of its buildings. Three of Caesarea Maritima's columns are now in Venice. It was the residence of Cornelius, a Roman</p>

		<p>centurion, who was the first Gentile convert to Christianity (Acts 10). The helicopter overview begins at the south end of the excavated coastal area of the city. First in view is the theatre that had seating for 4,000 spectators. Passing by the theatre the camera next captures a promontory jutting into the sea that has the ruins of an impressive palace with a pool in its western section. It is believed by some archaeologists that this palace is where the events in Acts 24–26 occurred and where Paul was held prisoner for two years. Moving north along the coast, the camera next views the colossal amphitheatre that seated 10,000 people and was used for horse races and other sporting events (see next clip for more details). Inland from the amphitheater, and under the temporary flat roofs, are ongoing excavations of a large bathhouse complex and commercial areas. The modern buildings that next come into view rest on the foundations of a temple Herod dedicated to Augustus and in later times supported a Byzantine church, mosque and Crusader chapel. The camera then follows along the breakwater constructed over a similar one built by Herod to enclose a large artificial harbor. The clip ends with a view of the fortified medieval city (more details in next clip), inner quay and the harbor areas.</p>
Caesarea Maritima (Excavation)	Acts 9–11 Acts 24–26	<p>In this scene the camera first pans over the excavations of a palace complex, believed to be the palace of Herod where the events of Acts 24–26 occurred. The flat area with a few columns in the northwest corner marks the location of a large swimming pool, over six feet deep, with a porch surrounding it. Other buildings of the complex were constructed around this pool. The western end of this promontory has been washed into the sea, but what does remain confirms this was a magnificent facility consistent with Herod’s ambitious architectural projects. Next the camera flies over the southern end of the amphitheater built by Herod. This amphitheater was almost a thousand feet long and over 150 feet wide, seating an estimated 10,000 people. It overlooked the sea and provided spectators a picturesque location in which to watch chariot races, running and other games. Next are seen archeological excavations of a bath complex built several centuries after Herod along with administrative and storage complexes. The helicopter then begins to circle the Crusader walls and dry moat enclosing the medieval city, considerably smaller than the city in Herod’s time, and ends with a panoramic view of the entire site from the south.</p>
Caesarea Maritima (Aqueduct)		<p>Since Caesarea Maritima had no rivers or springs, drinking water was brought from springs on the southern slopes of Mt. Carmel, just visible in the distance at the beginning of the clip. Plastered channels over arches, like those seen here, and a tunnel cut through sandstone (not visible) brought the water several miles from the north. It has been estimated that Herod’s aqueduct carried approximately 900 cubic meters of water per hour into the city.</p>
Jaffa, Tel Aviv	2 Chr 2:16 Jn 1:3 Acts 9–11	<p>The urban sprawl of Tel Aviv, with its 2.3 million residents (one-third of Israel’s population), masks the fact that until AD 1948, Tel Aviv was only a tiny suburb of Jaffa that can be seen briefly in the opening moments of this clip. If the video is paused at the beginning, the small natural harbor of Jaffa (OT and NT Joppa) can be seen. Since there were so few natural harbors along the Palestinian coast, Joppa became a center of trade and port for Canaan and Israel. Here, Solomon imported timbers needed for construction of the temple, and Joppa later became the port for the southern kingdom of Judah during the divided kingdom period. The prophet Jonah departed from Joppa. When Herod constructed Caesarea Maritima 32 miles to the north (see clips, above), Joppa lost its importance. Peter stayed in the house of Simon the Tanner in Joppa where he received the vision that Gentiles could be admitted into the church. As the scene moves north from the Jaffa area, beaches, hotels and the downtown area of modern Tel Aviv are seen.</p>

Philistine Plain	Jos 13:3 Neh 6:2 Neh 11:35 Jer 47:5	<p>This shot shows a portion of the broad, fertile, Philistine Plain that stretches over 50 miles along the Mediterranean coast from just north of Tel Aviv (Joppa) (see above) to a wadi system south of Gaza. It takes its name from the Philistines who settled in this area about 1200 BC and built five great cities: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza (Jos 13:3). The Greek name “Palestine,” now used to refer to the whole land of Israel, is derived from “Philistine.” The plain is about ten miles wide at the northern end and 25 miles wide in the south. The plain is bounded on the east by the <i>Shephelah</i> (see next section) and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. The coastline is uninterrupted by bays, except for some small ones like that formed by the promontory at Jaffa (discussed in “Jaffa, Tel Aviv” above). The landscape is flat to slightly rolling. Rainfall is from 16 to 20 inches a year. Grain is the major agricultural product and explains why the Philistines worshiped the grain god, Dagon (1 Sm 5:2–5). The Philistine Plain had a major road running north to south through it, generally where the modern highway is today. This was the principal route taken by traders and armies as they moved between Africa, Asia and Europe. There is no direct reference to the Philistine Plain in the OT but the northern region, Ono, is mentioned (Neh 6:2) and there is an oblique reference to the plain as the “Valley of the Craftsmen” in Nehemiah 11:35.</p>
------------------	--	--

SHEPHELAH (LOW HILLS OF JUDAH)

Beth Shemesh (Region)	1 Sm 6 2 Chr 25	<p>This brief clip introduces the viewer to the <i>Shephelah</i>, a transitional zone separating the Philistine Plain (see section, above) from the Hill Country of Judah. The Hebrew, <i>Shephelah</i>, is translated “(western) foothills” in the NIV Bible. The <i>Shephelah</i> is about 27 miles long, 10 miles wide. Grain and grapes are grown in the broad, alluvial valleys between its low rolling hills. Villages are built on the hilltops and hillsides so as to avoid using farmland in the valleys. This footage is of the western end of the Sorek Valley, one of five valleys of the <i>Shephelah</i>. In the foreground are the ruins of Beth Shemesh, the city that guarded it. Beth Shemesh is east of the Philistine Plain and on the road that led to Jerusalem via Kiriath Jearim. Seen in this shot are excavations of Beth Shemesh, the Sorek Valley behind Beth Shemesh and, toward the end of the clip, a look east up the Sorek Valley into the Hill Country of Judah. The Ark was rescued by the villagers of Beth Shemesh. While reaping the wheat harvest in the valley, they saw the Ark being pulled on a cart by cows after the Philistines decided to return it to the Israelites (1 Sm 6:13) (see Sorek Valley, below).</p>
Sorek Valley	Jgs 13:2 Jgs 14 Jgs 16:4 1 Sm 6	<p>This clip, taken from the south side of the Sorek, shows the valley’s eastern terminus, the Sorek riverbed, and a road that leads to the Philistine Plain. At the battle of Aphek, the Philistines captured the Ark (1 Sm 4). After seven months they returned it (1 Sm 6:1). They put the Ark on a cart that moved along a route through the Sorek Valley—probably taking the same road as seen here. The Sorek was also the scene of Samson’s exploits (Jgs 13–16). Timnah, the hometown of Samson’s first wife, is at the western end of the Sorek near the Philistine Plain. Delilah’s home was somewhere in this valley. The camera begins by looking north and then turns to the west toward the Philistine Plain. At the beginning of the video is the hill north of the Sorek on which Samson’s hometown, Zorah, was located (see next clip, “Zorah”). The ruins of Zorah cannot be seen because the trees at the top of the hill obscure it.</p>
Zorah (Beth Shemesh)	Jos 19:41 Jgs 13:2 Jgs 18	<p>The scene, shot from the north side of the Sorek Valley, begins with a flight over the hill and ruins of Zorah, Samson’s hometown. A city allocated to the Danites, it was from here that the Danites departed to spy out and conquer Laish (later called Dan). The higher Judean hills can be seen in the</p>

		distance at the beginning of the footage. The camera turns south, then east, to view the whole Sorek Valley all the way to the Mediterranean Sea from the valley's northern side. Toward the end of the clip, barely visible on the south side of the valley about two miles away, is Beth Shemesh.
Elah Valley (Tel Socoh)	1 Sm 17	Five miles south of the Sorek Valley (see two previous segments) is the Elah Valley. The Philistine city of Gath protected the Elah on the west. The eastern end of the valley was guarded by the cities of Azekah (see the next clip) and Socoh. An ancient road runs through the valley from the Philistine Plain to the Bethlehem area and the modern road in the scene follows the same route. The Judean hill country, and the area near Bethlehem, can be seen in the distance. The Bible (1 Sm 17) reports that David confronted Goliath in this valley. The clip begins with the camera moving easterly along the southern ridgeline of the Elah valley near Socoh where, according to 1 Samuel 17:1, the Philistines gathered for battle. The camera then pans across the broad valley. The ridges along the northern side of the valley come into view next just beyond (east of) the large pond. Here, the northern hills are easily accessible from the Hill country. In the valley between the hills is a thin green line of vegetation marking a creekbed, just before two white satellite disks. This small creek could be the location of the duel with Goliath and where David gathered his five stones.
Elah Valley (Tel Azekah)	Jos 10:11–12 2 Sm 17 Jer 34:7	This view, taken further east in the Elah Valley than the previous clip (above), shows an area, <i>Ephes Dammim</i> (1 Sm 17:1), mentioned in the Bible in connection with the David and Goliath account. This is where the Philistines camped as they confronted Saul's army. Far in the distance can be seen the area where David met Goliath and, beyond that on the horizon, is the Judean hill country. The camera circles over the archaeological ruins of Azekah on the hilltop in the foreground. Azekah, strategically located, was where the Amorite kings were going after Joshua routed their armies at Gibeon. At 1,200 feet above sea level, and in the middle of the <i>Shepheleh</i> , Azekah's commanding location made it visible from the Hill country and many parts of the <i>Shephelah</i> . Jeremiah cites it and Lachish as among the last remaining fortified cities that stood against the invading Babylonian forces of Nebuchadnezzar in the early sixth century BC. Azekah was captured by Nebuchadnezzar (ca. 688 BC) shortly before the fall of Jerusalem.
Gath (Tel Zafit)	Jos 11:22 1 Sm 5:1–12 1 Sm 17:4 1 Sm 21:10–15 2 Sm 21:19–22	Although the identification is disputed, many archaeologists accept Tel Zafit as the location of biblical Gath. Tel Zafit is located just west of the Elah Valley before the valley enters the <i>Shephelah</i> (see discussions, above). The site dominates the road that traverses the hill on which Azekah is located further east and then runs into the Judean Hills as seen in previous videos. The hill also guards a north–south route through the <i>Shephelah</i> . Gath was known as a city of a race of giants, <i>Anakim</i> , who continued to live in Canaan after the time of Joshua (Jos 11:22). Goliath (1 Sm 17:4) and other Philistine warriors came from Gath (2 Sm 21:19–22). The Ark was taken to this city (1 Sm 5:1–12) during its sojourn with the Philistines and David took refuge here when he first fled from Saul (1 Sm 21:10–15).
Bet Guvrin (Bell Caves)		Located at the southern end of the <i>Shephelah</i> is this unusual series of caves. The holes and caves seen in the video are, in fact, chalk quarries. In this area of the <i>Shephelah</i> , natural deposits of chalk are covered by a very hard surface crust. Quarrymen would cut a circular opening in the hard surface to reach the chalk. Once the softer chalk was reached, it was removed in large blocks in order to retain the chalk's moisture. As the quarrymen dug down, sometimes over 80 feet, the underground pit was enlarged making bell-shaped caverns. The bell-shape improved the stability of the walls by using the same principle of deflection of pressure as found in the construction of domes, vaults and arches. In many instances, the quarrymen cut diagonally into adjacent pits, forming large underground

		spaces, resembling caves, although they were, in actuality, a string of bell-shaped quarries. Over time, the roof of some these large underground complexes collapsed as seen in the video. The quarried chalk was used as a raw material in the manufacture of lime and cement.
Marissa (Late Spring)	Jos 15:44	The area in the previous video (Bet Guvrin/Bell Caves) is adjacent to the tell of Marissa. This scene shows the area of the Greek, Roman and subsequent Byzantine city which was once the hometown of Herod the Great. The green vegetation indicates that the time of year is late spring soon after the winter rains have ceased. In the hot, dry summer, the region becomes brown and desolate.
Moresha-gath	2 Chr 11:5–8 2 Chr 14:8–10 Mi 1:1 Jer 26:18	The Bible records that Rehoboam fortified the city of Moresha. At the beginning of the ninth century BC, Zerah, the Ethiopian, attacked Judea and engaged king Asa in battle here. The book of Micah states that he was from “Moreseth” (1:1, NIV, NASB). At the beginning of the clip, the camera provides a panoramic view of the Hebron mountains to the east on the horizon. The Philistine plain comes into view as the camera goes around the tell toward the end of the clip. The northwest corner of the tell, shown in the scene, has walls and a tower that date back to the time of the kingdom of Judah.
Lachish (1)	Jos 10:32 2 Kgs 18:13 Is 37:8 Jer 34:7 2 Kgs 14:19	This large tell (mound) of about 30 acres is the ancient city of Lachish. It is located at the western edge of the low Judean hills, the <i>Shepheleh</i> . From its strategic location Lachish commanded a major portion of the coastal plain and the international highway that passed nearby. Archaeologists have confirmed that the site was protected by fortifications from the time of the Patriarchs. Lachish's army was confronted, and defeated, by Joshua during the Conquest. By the period of the divided kingdoms, Lachish was fortified by Rehoboam and became the second largest city in the southern kingdom of Judah. The city was besieged and captured by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, in 701 BC as attested by large stone panels, seen today in the British Museum, picturing the defeat of the city. The clip begins with an aerial view of the southwest corner of the city where the main gate was located. It was here that Sennacherib broke through the walls and entered the city. The city was again rebuilt but met its end during the Babylonian conquest of Judah, 588/6 BC. Archaeologists found pottery in the gate area on which is writing: correspondence from a military commander at Lachish to his superior shortly before the Babylonian destruction. Jeremiah reports that it was Nebuchadnezzar who finally defeated Lachish.
Lachish (2)	See Lachish (1)	This clip is a continuation of the above shot(Lachish 1). The camera continues to circle the mound and the tell's impressive height becomes apparent. From the city walls the citizens of Lachish could view the coastal plain to the west, the city of Moresha-gath to the north and the Hebron hills to the east. Its importance was evidenced by the fact that King Amaziah fled to Lachish when a rebellion broke out in Jerusalem. At the beginning of the clip, just below the crest and above the faint outline of the outer wall, can be seen a well, 145 foot deep. A little further is a large depression on the crest that may have been an abortive attempt by Lachish's defenders to gain an alternate water supply. The clip ends with an excellent, close-up view of the southwestern gate. If the viewer pauses over the gate complex, the outer gate and access ramp can be ascertained. To enter the city, one passed through the outer gate, climbed the access ramp and at the top, made a right turn into the open court to reach a three-chambered inner gate, the largest known in Israel. It was this well-defended area that Sennacherib, and later Nebuchadnezzar, defeated.

NEGEV (THE SOUTH OF JUDAH)

Negev (Topography)	Gn 12:8	Genesis 12:8 records that Abraham left the Hill Country and continued toward the Negev. In the NT, Idumea controlled the Negev. The Negev, or "dry, south" in Hebrew, is the southern entrance to the Hill Country and is translated some 38 times in the Bible (NASB, RSV, NIV). The Negev is north of the Wilderness of Zin and the Sinai region (see Wilderness of Zin, below). In the Bible, it is the southern boundary of Judah and is an hourglass shaped, 70-mile, east-west zone. In this area are Beersheba and Arad. As the scene shows, the region is arid and can only support minimal agriculture because the rainfall is only about eight inches per year. In the OT the region had a pastoral economy that continues to this day, based primarily on the raising of sheep, goats, and camels. The entire region is covered with a layer of wind-deposited soil, called <i>loess</i> . With the first rain it forms a crust that makes subsequent rains run off into extensive gullies, or <i>wadis</i> , that drain the entire region.
Beersheba (Region)	Gn 21:31 Gn 22:19 Gn 45:4–7 Jgs 20:1 2 Sm 3:10	Beersheba was one of the principal cities in the Negev. Since the annual rainfall average here is limited, water must be obtained from wells. This condition led to several confrontations between Abraham and Isaac with the local people. Visible in the video are bridges over two dry river beds, or wadis, next to the ruins of the ancient city of Beersheba. These wadis supplemented the water from Beersheba's well by channeling water during the rainy season into a large cistern that can be seen inside Beersheba's walls. Also seen in the video are highways that from ancient times marked this location as an international crossroads. Here, settlers on the hill were at the fork of two wadis that provided natural protection, cultivable alluvial soil, and access to the main crossroads. God tested Abraham by sending him from Beersheba to Mt. Moriah with instructions to sacrifice Isaac. Jacob left for Egypt from Beersheba. Beersheba is frequently mentioned in the Bible as the southern border of the Promised Land, Dan being the northern limit.
Beersheba (Excavation)		Extensive excavations have been done at Tel Beersheba. This fly-over gives a bird's-eye view of the work. Most visible on the 2.8 acres of the summit are ruins from a period that archaeologists name Iron Age II (ca. 1000–586 BC) although the site has evidence of occupation going back to 3,000 BC. Iron Age II is the OT time of the monarchy and divided kingdoms. The video begins and ends with the city gate. The gate and wall were constructed in the same place and along the same lines throughout the city's existence. The city's four-chambered gate of this period (two chambers on each side of the gateway) has been cleared and can be located in the reddish-looking soil above the structures with the black roofs. The smaller of the black roofed structures covers a 210-foot deep well outside. The city shows central planning with streets and buildings constructed in an oval that follows the site's topography. The streets converge in the city's square next to the gate. The gate itself served both for the defense of the city and as a seat for judges, merchants and others who used the various rooms in the gate complex as revealed by plastered benches that were found along the walls of one of the gate's rooms. The city wall can be seen in several places as the camera goes around the site. The square shaft seen toward the end of the segment is 50 feet deep and is the approach to cisterns mentioned in the previous clip (Beersheba (region)). Below the cistern, and at the base of the hill, is a portion of a revetment wall that supported a defensive ramp that led to an upper wall that is barely discernable today.
Arad (Region)	Nm 21:1 Nm 33:40 Jos 12:8,14 Jgs 1:16	Arad is one of two large cities in the Negev (the other was Beersheba—see the two clips about Beersheba, above). Numbers 21 records that a king of Arad fought against the Israelites when they tried to enter the Promised Land. Joshua later defeated a king of Arad. Kenites who had been living with the Israelites in Jericho went “to the wilderness of Judah which is in the south of Arad” (Jgs 1:16). Archaeology has shown that this site has a long

		<p>history. The overview seen in the video shows the tell and its two distinct occupation levels. The earliest city (see Arad Excavations, below) called the Lower City, dates to a time before 2,600 BC, when the population mysteriously abandoned the site. The city, over 25 acres in size, was enclosed by a wall almost 4,000 feet long that had gates and towers. The later city (see Arad Fortress, below), referred to as the Citadel, was constructed during the time of Solomon (ca. 950 BC) on the higher hill seen inside the walls of the older city. The Citadel lasted as an Israelite stronghold until destroyed around 586 BC. Because this site lay unoccupied for 1,500 years that included the time of Joshua’s conquest, some scholars believe that the “Arad” and its kings mentioned in Numbers and Joshua refer to the general region, or a nearby city that has not yet been found. As the camera pans the area, it captures typical Negev landscape and the southern Judean Hill country in the distance. The highway passing by the east side of the tell follows an ancient roadway that led north into the hill country to Hebron. This illustrates Arad’s strategic location as a protector of the southeastern approach to Judah and the hill country.</p>
Arad (IA Fortress)	<p>Ex 27:1 2 Kgs 18:4 2 Chr 34:3–8</p>	<p>The Israelites settled on the highest part of the site beginning in the eleventh century BC. Solomon erected a fortress on the site that was rebuilt several times before its destruction in 586 BC. As the camera flies over the excavated fortress its wall, 180 feet long and 164 feet wide with a two-chamber gate, can be seen. Inside the walls, archaeologists have found a shrine, water system, residential structures and storehouses. The shrine was found in the far northern corner opposite the parking lot. It was similar in plan to the tabernacle and temple in Jerusalem and had an altar of uncut stones of the same dimensions as described in Exodus 27:1. Two incense altars flanked the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The sanctuary, incense altars, and altar of uncut stones went out of use and were covered before the final destruction of the city. This has led scholars to believe that the sanctuary’s elimination may have occurred in the days of either Hezekiah or Josiah, two reformer kings of the southern kingdom of Judah.</p>
Arad (EB Excavations)		<p>In this clip the camera flies over a small portion of the excavated area of the lower Canaanite city of Arad. On the hill in the distance can be seen the later Israelite city discussed in the previous clip(see Arad (IA Fortress), above). The structures that are visible date to ca. 2,600 BC. The wall, almost 8 feet thick and 4,000 feet long, surrounds the city and is built of two shells of large stones and filled with smaller stones. Positioned along the wall are rectangular and semicircular towers, placed where they would have had the best view of the surrounding countryside. The city’s network of streets, and its division into functional districts, indicates that it had a centrally imposed plan. The economy of the city was diverse and included agriculture (wheat, barley, peas, flax, livestock) and various handicrafts. The Canaanite cities in the hill country exported olive oil to Egypt along with bitumen from the Dead Sea, all of which passed near or through this city. The lower city was abandoned ca. 2,600 BC, possibly due to climatic causes or Egyptian pressure because of Arad’s strategic location on the principle trade routes. The clip begins with a quick look at a depression where a deep 50-foot water reservoir is located. It then passes along the wall, over residential houses, a small gate, and concludes with a look at a district of palaces, temples, and the western gate.</p>

NORTHERN BIBLICAL SINAI

Maktesh Gadol	<p>Ex 19:1,2 Nm 1:1 Nm 10:2</p>	<p>The Northern Biblical Sinai is vast, dry and seemingly uninteresting. It is into this region that God led the Israelites for 38 years after they failed to enter the Promised Land (Nm 14). But the area is also rich in geological</p>
---------------	---	--

	Nm 14:20–38	history. This view is a fly-over of one of several unique geological formations in the northern Sinai often called “craters” (<i>maktesh</i> in Hebrew). However, a maktesh is not an impact crater from a meteorite or an extinct volcano. Rather, it is a geologic dome that has eroded from within, collapsed, and ultimately formed the spectacular basins seen in very few places in the world. East of this area is barren and wild desert, cut occasionally by dry riverbeds and gorges, and the wilderness of Zin (see, below). The wilderness of Zin is the southern border of Canaan and Judah.
Wilderness of Zin (Region)	Nm 13:21 Nm 20:1 Nm 27:14 Dt 1:19, 8:15 Dt 32:51 Jos 15:1	The Wilderness of Zin is one of seven "wildernesses" crossed by Moses and the Israelites after they left Egypt. The Bible refers to this as "that great and terrible wilderness" (Dt 1:19, 8:15). It formed the southern border of the tribe of Judah (Jos 15:1). Zin should not be confused with the Wilderness of Sin that is much further south in the Sinai peninsula. The deep canyon visible in the clip is one of the wadis that crosses the desolate Wilderness of Zin and drains its scant rainfall to the Arabah, just observable at the top of the screen toward the end of the clip. The Wilderness of Zin is mentioned in the Bible as a place the spies investigated (Nm 13:21) and is where Miriam died and was buried (Nm 20:1). Most scholars believe that Kadesh Barnea is in the western part of this area and it also includes the Wilderness of Paran from where the spies were dispatched (Nm 13:3). Because of their lack of faith in God to bring them into the Promised Land, the Israelites had to travel and live in this desolate area for 38 years until that unfaithful generation died.
Wilderness of Zin (Ein Avdat)	Ex 16:14–16 Ex 17 Nm 20	A closer look at Ein Avdat, a natural spring that forms a great canyon slicing through the Sinai on its way east to the Arabah (see Arabah, below). The starkness of the region and limited water resources, impact viewers as they consider how the Israelites struggled to survive in the bleak Sinai. They would have perished without God’s miraculous provision of water (Ex 17, Nm 20) and food in the form of manna (Ex 16:14–16).
Avdat (Byzantine Ruins)		The Roman and Byzantine ruins (ca. fourth through sixth centuries AD) visible on the hilltop remember the site’s ancient economic history. Alongside important trade routes that came from the east, this locality was occupied as early as the fourth century BC as a resting station for the caravans moving from Petra and Eilat to Gaza. During the time of Jesus it was a military camp for the Nabatean camel corps that protected the trade roads. The Romans and Byzantines subsequently occupied the site for the same reasons. On the acropolis are the remains of a fortress, churches, temples and residences first built by the Romans. All these were rebuilt by the Byzantines after the Romans lost control of the area. The site was destroyed and abandoned during the Arab conquest of Palestine (ca. AD 636). In addition to showing interesting views of the city, this clip illustrates the essence of the Sinai region, both geographically and economically.
Mitzpe Ramon		Mitzpe Ramon is a modern town on the northern rim of the largest maktesh in Israel, Ramon (see, Maktesh Gadol, above, for an explanation of a maktesh). Maktesh Ramon is now the center of two popular nature preserves. It is a geologist’s paradise with fossils, rock and volcanic formations. It is also the home to a wide variety of desert animals and plants, some of which are found in few other places. The view begins with a quick fly-over of the city and then turns east, flying parallel to the northern rim. Also seen is an observation deck and tower from which visitors get a spectacular view of the depression.
Maktesh Ramon	Jer 2:6	Here, the helicopter flies over part of the northern rim of Maktesh Ramon and the camera looks south. Maktesh Ramon is the largest maktesh in the world. Twenty-five miles long, five miles across at its widest point, and 1650 feet deep. It contains archaeological treasures as a result of the major trade road that passed through it over the centuries.

Wilderness of Paran	Gn 21:21 Nm 10:12 Nm 12:16 Nm 13:3 Nm 13:26 1 Sm 25:1 1 Kgs 11	The Wilderness of Paran is in the central part of the Northern Biblical Sinai. Although it appears foreboding, many travelers crossed it in antiquity going to Egypt or other points east and west. For example, Hadad the Edomite, fleeing Joab’s army, crossed Paran on his way to Egypt (1 Kgs 11). The boundaries of Paran are uncertain but can be inferred from various OT sources. Paran is first mentioned as “El Paran” in the account of the four eastern kings who captured Lot and his family and were eventually defeated by Abraham. While living in the wilderness of Paran, Ishmael received an Egyptian wife (Gn 21:21). The Israelites camped in the wilderness of Paran (Nm 10:12; 12:16). Moses dispatched men from the wilderness of Paran to search the land of Canaan (Nm 13:3) and they returned 40 days later to “the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh” (Nm 13:26). David, apparently in mourning, went to Paran after Samuel died (1 Sm 25:1).
Timnah (Solomon’s Pillars 1)	Dt 8:9 Job 28:2	About 19 miles north of the Gulf of Aqaba, and just west of the Arabah (see video, below), is a horseshoe-shaped valley that has been exploited over the centuries for its deposits of copper ore. In fact, the mines in this basin are some of the oldest known in the world. God promised the Israelites that He was going to bring them into a land “out of whose hills you can dig copper” (Dt 8:9), certainly an apt description of this place. Eleven mining camps and several smelting furnaces have been excavated. Slag heaps found here are testimony to intensive mining activities that occurred over hundreds of years. The camps and furnaces date from the fourth millennium BC to the second century AD. However, the most active period for mining was during the Egyptian New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1100 BC), the time of the Exodus and Conquest and, archaeologically, a period known as the Late Bronze Age when copper was in high demand. This clip begins with a quick look at the basin in which the mines are located and then circles unusual vertical red sandstone formations, popularly known as “Solomon’s Pillars.” High on the face of one of these eroded sandstone “pillars” has been found a carving of Pharaoh Rameses III (ca. 1190 BC) making an offering to Hathor, goddess of the mines.
Timnah (Solomon’s Pillars 2)	Ex 26:14 Nm 21:9	Mining the copper ore was hazardous, exhausting and hot work. The mines consisted of deep vertical shafts extending as far down as 115 feet. From the shafts extended narrow, horizontal galleries that were carved into the rock. The goddess Hathor was worshipped to protect miners and a temple to her has been discovered at the base of one of the “pillars” in the scene. The place where the temple was found can be momentarily seen at the beginning of the clip. It is in the shadow at the base of the “pillar” and appears as a small walled square. The main phase of use for the temple was in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC. Inside the temple’s rectangular walls was found a raised platform and fragments of a heavy red and yellow textile, apparently for a covering over the temple. This reminds one of the shape of the Israelite sanctuary and its covering (Ex 26:14). A gilded copper serpent is among the many important archaeological finds in the area. God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and set it on a standard so that if a man was bitten he could look at the bronze serpent and live (Nm 21:9). There is no evidence that the Israelites ever visited this area; however, this fascinating site and its artifacts does remind us of the many of the activities recorded in the Bible that took place in the Sinai during the periods of the Patriarchs, Exodus and Conquest.
Arabah (Southern Dead Sea Valley)	Nm 20:14–17 Is 35:1, 6	A small portion of the globe’s Great Rift valley, a scar on the surface of the earth that begins north of Israel in southern Turkey and continues south into the continent of Africa, is seen here. Today, a section of the Rift Valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba is called the Arabah. This part, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, is a valley about 110 miles long, and up to 25 miles wide. The Negev region is to the west and the hills

		of Edom are on the east. Visible on the horizon is the wilderness of Edom. Scanty rainfall and few springs give the land a dismal, yellow appearance as can be seen as the helicopter flies north along the western edge of the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea. Isaiah used the seemingly impossible image of flowers blooming in the Arabah (Is 35:1,6). The Israelites traveled south through this valley as they went toward the Promised Land after being denied permission to cross at Punan (Nm 20:14–17). As a result, they were forced to detour over 100 miles through this forbidding landscape.
Eilat (Arabah, Edom)	Dt 2:8	In this view, the camera flies over the southern extent of the Arabah and Israel's modern port city on the Gulf of Aqaba, Eilat. The camera is oriented east and north. Here, the Arabah is narrow as the mountains of Midian, in the modern state of Jordan on the east, can be clearly seen. After their sojourn in the desert for about 38 years, somewhere near and north of here in the Arabah valley, the Israelites crossed the Arabah and then traveled north toward Moab bypassing Edom.
Eilat (Red Sea)	Dt 2:8 1 Kgs 9:26 2 Chr 8:17 2 Chr 20:36	Today, Eilat is a bustling commercial city whose economy is dependent upon tourism and international shipping. Seen in this clip are some of the many hotels that cluster along Israel's narrow coast, as well as the Eilat's harbor and several ocean-going cargo ships waiting to be unloaded. The mountains of Midian, in modern Jordan, are seen in the first part of the video and, as the clip ends and the camera turns to the southwest, the Sinai mountains in modern Egypt can be seen. Along the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba near here was Solomon's shipyard and port city, Ezion-geber. Later, during the time of the divided kingdom Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, allied himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, and together used Ezion-geber as a shipyard and port.

* The Scripture references are not intended to be exhaustive.