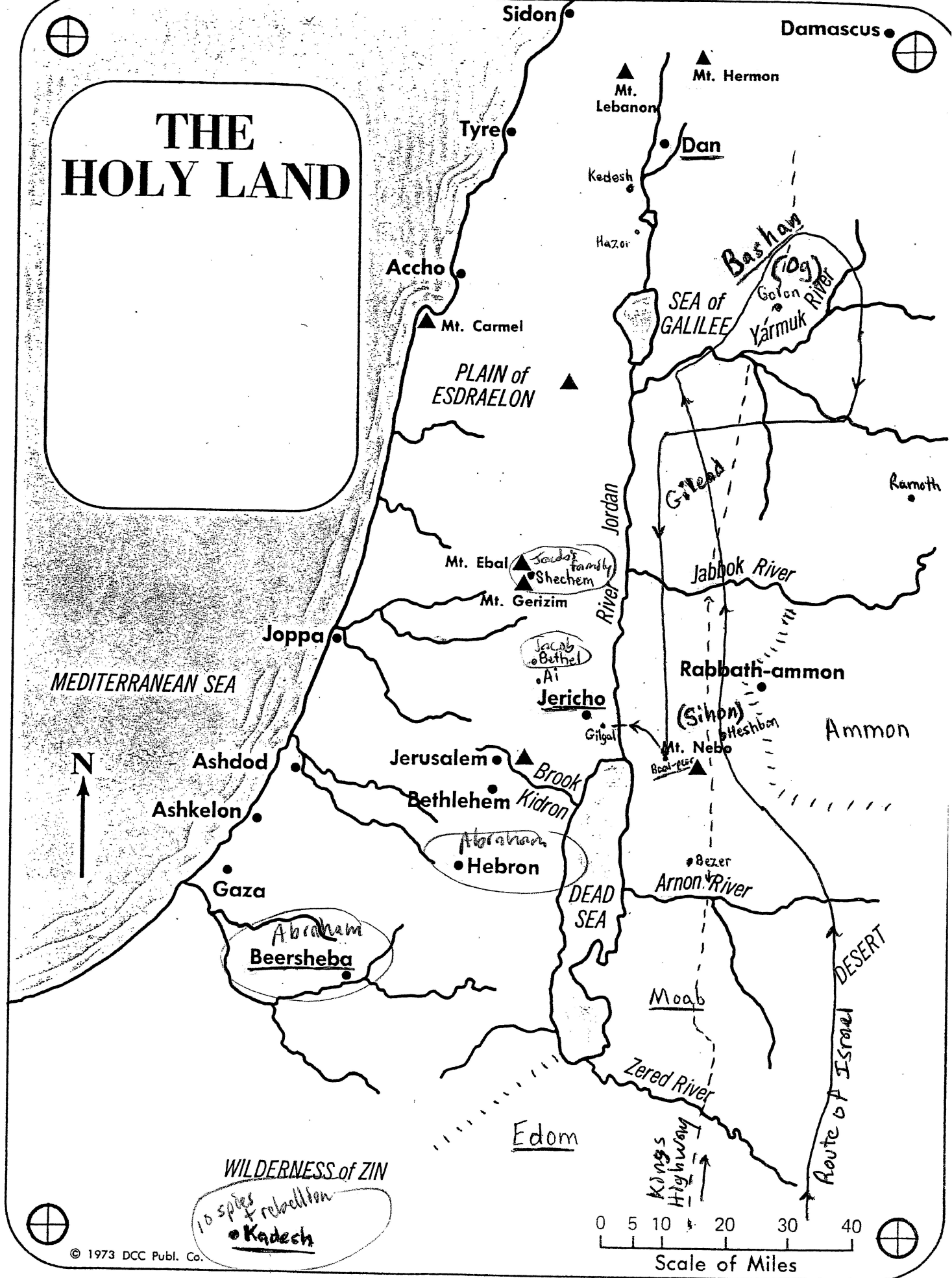


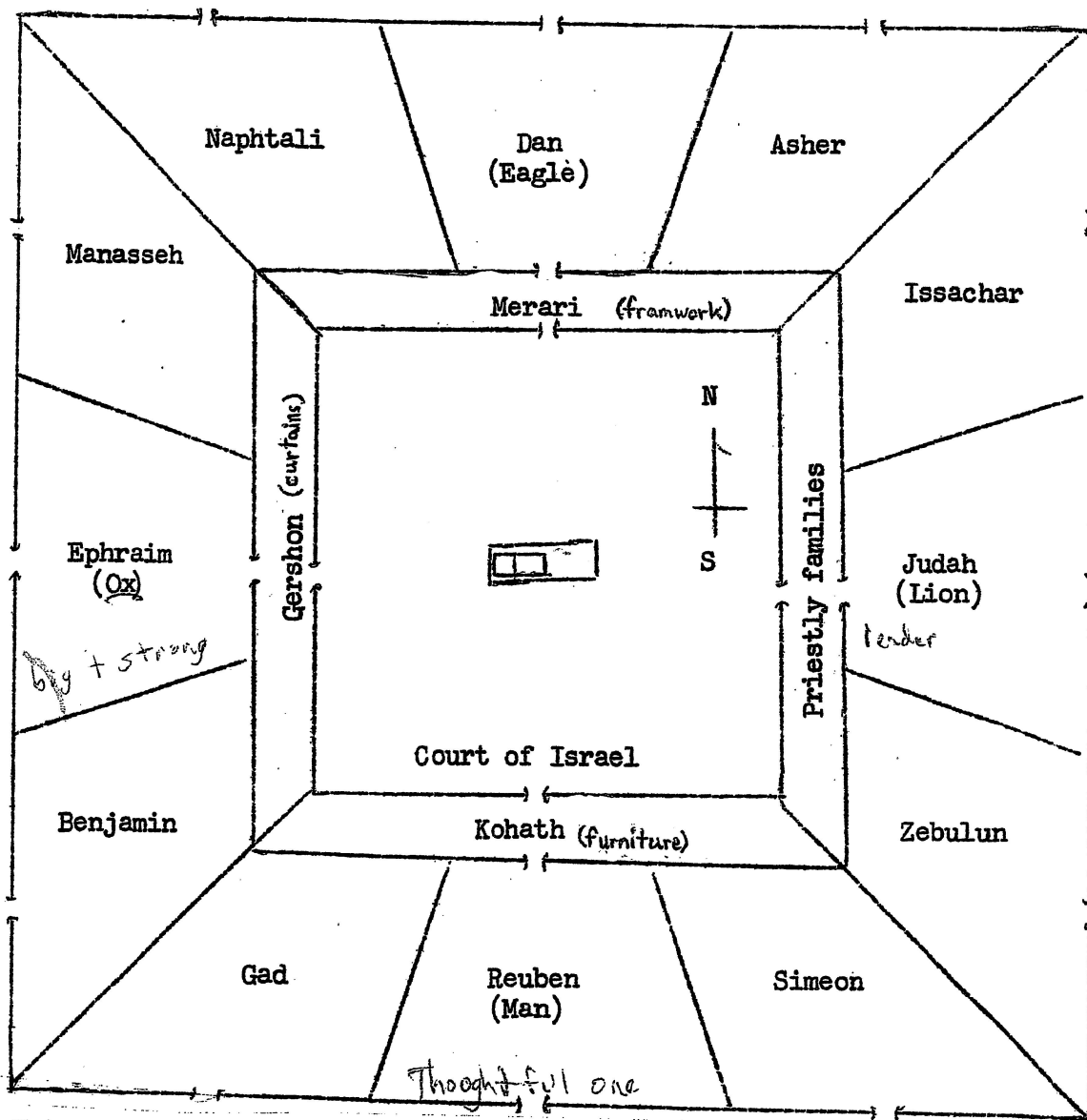
THE HOLY LAND



Study
Guide
sheet

The encampment of Israel as pictured in Numbers (Numbers 1:47-2:31 was a perfect square. Each tribe pointed toward the sanctuary; each had outer gates (Ex. 32:26, 27) making a total of twelve, three to a side. This formed the basis for later descriptions of an idealized Jerusalem as the future capital of the Messianic Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:30-35 and Revelation 21:10-14).

The four most prominent tribes stood on the compass points from the sanctuary. Their famous symbols (e.g. "the lion of the tribe of Judah") are featured prominently in several places in scripture, but especially in visions of the Throne of God, where his people are symbolically portrayed as surrounding Him. (Ez. 1-3; Rev. 4, 5, 14, etc.).



Note that the sanctuary itself, here deliberately pictured overlarge, stood at the center of a hollow square, known as the "Court of Israel," far removed from the dwellings of the people (contrary to most artists' conceptions). This pointed out the holiness of Yahweh and the need for open confession of sin, since the sinner had to lead his offering across the open square in the sight of other people.

The open square around the sanctuary was the Court of Israel, where the congregation stood on holy days and convocations. A corresponding court was incorporated into the temple Solomon constructed and was to be found in the temple of Ezekiel. Outside the court, but between the people and God, were the tents of the three Levitical families and the priests, befitting the mediatorial role of the tribe of Levi (Numbers 3:14-39)