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The Concept of Distinctive Divisions
Matthew 4:18 - 5:1

Introduction: We often read the Bible giving little thought to topography. Most of us spend little time looking at maps in the back of our Bible when we read. Today's message hopefully will give us an overview of the land of Israel in a new light.

A. Five distinct divisions

1. Coastal plain, Via Maris "way of the sea"
 - a. Approximately 116 miles in length
 - b. Houses about 70 % of the population today
 - c. Important in agriculture for citrus and crops
2. The Shephelah
 - a. Means "lowlands or foothills"
 - b. Very wet soil
 - c. Used as a place to meet between the hills and the plains
 - d. Several valleys as corridors to the hills
 1. Used to control
 2. Used cities to protect (Gezer, Azekah, Beth Shemesh, Lachish)
3. The central hill country
 - a. Range in height in northern Galilee 3 - 4,000 feet
 - b. Lower Galilee and Samaria about 2,000 feet
 - c. Site of the great stone quarries
 - d. Where Jerusalem is located
4. The Jordan Rift

a. The Great Rift Valley is a geographical and geological feature running north to south for around 4,000 miles, from northern Syria to central Mozambique in East Africa. Astronauts say it is the most significant physical detail on the planet that is visible from space. A series of some thirty lakes lies along its length; the three largest in Africa are known as the Great Lakes and include Lake Tanganyika, the deepest lake in the world, and Lake Victoria, the second-largest freshwater lake in the world. It varies in width from twenty to sixty miles, and in depth from a few hundred to several thousand yards. The northernmost part of the Rift forms the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon. To the south, in Israel, it is known as the Hula Valley separating the Galilee mountains and the Golan Heights. It is the home of the Jordan River, which flows southward through Lake Hula into the Sea of Galilee in Israel and then continues south through the Jordan Valley into the Dead Sea on the Israeli-Jordanian border. From the Dead Sea southward, the Rift is occupied by the Wadi Arabah and then the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea. Some of the oldest remains of ancestral humans have been found in the African segment of the valley.

- b. Deepest rift in the face of the earth
5. Trans - Jordan, Kings highway-east of Jordan
 - a. Stretches from Mt. Hermon to the Dead Sea

b. Biblical time, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites

c. Given to Tribes of Gad, Reuben , and half of Manasseh

B. Significance

1. Allowed Israel to be public in trade

2. Allowed Israel to be private in the hill country

Conclusion: God in his wisdom made Israel exactly as He needed to allow them to be the every people that He desired them to be. He made their land appropriate for them and for all those who would come into the land.