

**Carta's New Century Handbook and Atlas  
of the Bible Book Review**

**A Presentation Paper presented to:  
Professor R. Steven Notley, Ph.D.**

**Alliance University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Course  
BIB381: Land of the Bible**

**by  
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**Rainey, Anson F., Notley, R. Steven. *The Carta's New Century Handbook and Atlas of the Bible*  
Jerusalem, 2007 \$59.50**

In Anson F. Rainey's and Steven Notley's book *Carta's New Century Handbook and Atlas of the Bible*, they give an in-depth overview of the historical geography of the ancient world of the Levant through the Land of Israel during the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age. This new addition is a concise version of their earlier work, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World*, written in Jerusalem 2006. Rainey covers the first half of the 270-page volume covering Chapters 1 – 11, which covers from the Ancient World through the Persian Domination of Late Sixth to Fourth Centuries B.C.E. The greatly esteemed Professor Notley of Alliance University, (formerly Nyack College), covers Chapter 12- 20 covering later history of Israel starting with the conquest of Alexander the Great through the Bar Kochba Revolt in 132 to 135 CE.

Rainey makes it clear from the beginning that most Christians will look to the Bible for most of their information regarding the Old Testament times and stories we have come to know so well, but he states, "Yet without the geography, that message is obscured or vitiated for the unformed reader." It is the geography of the land that gives a clearer picture of the people, places, and times of the Old Testament KJV of Bible. The knowledge of Hebrew and the other Semitic languages will also give a real everyday account of what was happening on the land, from the children of Israel's time in the Wilderness until the end of the destruction of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar. The combination of the various semitic Canaanites and the addition of the Sea Peoples, that came by way of the water, shows an interesting conquest that is a little different from the way we came to know about who were the nomadic wanderers during this time

in a real world. The atlas is not just for the study of Israel and its formation, but also as a great resource if you are studying Assyrian and Egyptian times and conquest.

The second half of the book was written by Notley. Notley begins by focusing on historical data and evidence for the Persian era and following time periods that may not be as clear and plentiful as the Assyrian era. He states, "The dating of the Persian period dating (539-333BCE) have epigraphic witnesses in at least a dozen languages, Akkadian, Elamite, Aramaic, and Greek." The language gives a good idea of who was where, and why they were there. He also does a thorough job of giving a brief overview of each Canaanite group from the Phoenicians to Cyrus located in the land at that time "Beyond the River." (Pages 158-159).

The maps and pictures throughout the Atlas are beautiful. They give great clarification of the battles and the land during the period with biblical sources and other literature in red throughout the chapters to give you the option to dig deeper in your research. Chapter seventeen (Pages 224-238) gives a historical geography of the gospels in the New Testament which is a rare occasion since the New Testament geography is often forgotten about in this sort of Atlas. Since the New Testament is written in Greek and some of the places are turned around due to error in the translation of names, this guide as you read along with the Bible give you an in depth look of Jesus's Ministry and the places He visited.

This book is compact and well written. Even though the type is small because of the vast amount of information useful for students as well as professors for reference use, it is thorough in its assignment of being a book you will reference for years to come as you continue to seek for

accurate information concerning the land of early Palestine. Full of scripture references and helpful maps with markers, and artefactual pictures, with a concise conclusion at the end of every chapter makes it an easy read for all your research needs and will be useful for years to come. It will be a staple in my Biblical Studies Library.

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