

~GREAT SEA (263)

[Latin, *Mediterranean*]

- That immense body of water separating Europe and Africa, with Asia to its east. While the Hebrews called it the Great Sea, today it is commonly called by its Latin-based name, *Mediterranean*, meaning in the Middle of the Land, for it is practically landlocked.
- This circumstance, plus the fact that hot winds off the Sahara Desert blow over it, results in a proportionately higher than usual evaporation rate and this, in turn, gives the water a higher specific gravity.
- That is why at the Strait of Gibraltar the lighter water of the Atlantic flows in near the surface and the heavier Mediterranean water empties out near the bottom.
- Ocean shipping may pass in and out of this inland sea only through narrow gateways through the Strait of Gibraltar to the West, through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus to the Northeast, and since the past century, through the Suez Canal to the Southeast.
- It is not amiss today to call the Mediterranean the Great Sea, as ancient peoples did from the time of Moses onward, for it certainly measures up to all this name implies.
- As for a west boundary, it must prove to be for you the **Great Sea** and the shoreland. This will become your west boundary.
(Numbers 34:6)
- Now this will become your north boundary. From the **Great Sea** you will mark out to Mount Hor as a boundary for yourselves.
(Numbers 34:7)
- Apart from its various arms that are also seas, the Mediterranean is about 3,540 kilometers (2,200 miles) long, over 970 kilometers (600 miles) wide at its greatest breadth, and it covers an area of about 2,510,000 sq kilometers (969,100 square miles). Its deepest point is 5,093 meters (16,709 feet)
- The Italian and Greek peninsulas that jut down from the North create the Tyrrhenian, Ionian, Adriatic, and Aegean Seas, thus adding

to the irregular shape and greatly increasing the length of the coastline.

- About mid-distance East and West, the sea narrows down to a width of about 150 kilometers (90 miles) between Sicily and North Africa, and there the water is also comparatively shallow.
- Ezekiel's prophecy speaks of very many fish in the **Great Sea**.
- And it must occur that fishers will actually stand alongside it from En-gedi even up to En-eglaim. There will come to be a drying yard for dragnets. In their kinds their fish will prove to be, like the fish of the **Great Sea**, very many. (**Ezekiel 47:10**)
- Fine coral and an abundance of sponge are found in these waters, in addition to more than 400 varieties of fish.
- Bible writers not only used the name **Great Sea**.
- From the wilderness and this Lebanon to the **great** river, the river Euphrates, that is, all the land of the Hittites, and to the **Great Sea** toward the setting of the sun your territory will prove to be. (**Joshua 1:4**)
- And it came about that as soon as all the kings who were on the side of the Jordan in the mountainous region and in the Shephelah and along the whole coast of the **Great Sea** and in front of Lebanon, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, heard of it. (**Joshua 9:1**)
- They began to assemble themselves all together to make war against Joshua and Israel unanimously. (**Joshua 9:2**)
- And the western boundary was at the **Great Sea** and its shoreland. This was the boundary all around, of the sons of Judah by their families. (**Joshua 15:12**)
- Ashdod, its dependent towns and its settlements. Gaza, its dependent towns and its settlements, down to the torrent valley of Egypt, and the **Great Sea** and the adjacent region. (**Joshua 15:47**)
- See, I assigned to you by lot these nations that remain as an

inheritance for your tribes, and all the nations that I cut off, from the Jordan to the **Great Sea** at the setting of the sun. (**Joshua 23:4**)

- And this is the boundary of the land to the northern side, from the **Great Sea** by the way to Hethlon, as one comes to Zedad. (**Ezekiel 47:15**)
- And the southern side is to the south, from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, the torrent valley to the **Great Sea**. This is the side to the south, toward the Negeb. (**Ezekiel 47:19**)
- And the western side is the **Great Sea**, from the boundary straight ahead to the entering in to Hamath. This is the western side. (**Ezekiel 47:20**)
- And by the boundary of Gad, to the southern border, it will be southward, and the boundary must prove to be from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the torrent valley, as far as the **Great Sea**. (**Ezekiel 48:28**)
- But they also referred to it by other comprehensive terms. To them this body of water was **the western sea**, forming as it did the western boundary of their God-given land.
- Every place on which the sole of your foot will tread will become yours. From the wilderness up to Lebanon, from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea your boundary will become. (**Deuteronomy 11:24**)
- Then Moses proceeded to go up from the desert plains of Moab into Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which fronts toward Jericho. And Yehowah went showing him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan. (**Deuteronomy 34:1**)
- And all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea. (**Deuteronomy 34:2**)
- From the location of Jerusalem it was viewed as the western sea in contrast with the eastern sea, that is, the Dead Sea.
- And the northerner I shall put far away from upon you, and I shall actually disperse him to a waterless land and desolated waste, with his face to the eastern sea and his rear section to the

- western sea. And the stink from him will certainly ascend, and the stench from him will keep ascending, for He will actually do a great thing in what He does. (Joel 2:20)
- And it must occur in that day that living waters will go forth from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. In summer and in winter it will occur. (Zechariah 14:8)
 - Or it was called **the sea of the Philistines**.
 - And I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines and from the wilderness to the River, because I shall give into your hand the inhabitants of the land, and you will certainly drive them out from before yourself. (Exodus 23:31)
 - **The Sea**
 - And the boundary must change direction at Azmon to the torrent valley of Egypt, and its termination must prove to be at **the Sea**. (Numbers 34:5)
 - From time immemorial, Phoenicians and other bold seafaring people traversed the **Great Sea**, discovered a number of its islands, and carried on trade between many of its port cities.
 - The Bible mentions such islands as Arvad, Cauda, Chios, Cos, Crete, Cyprus, Malta, Patmos, Rhodes, Samos, and Samothrace. Also, some of the coastal cities and sites on these islands and along the continental shores of the eastern section of the **Great Sea** are listed in the Bible, namely:
 - Acco or Ptolemais, Achzib, Adramyttium, Alexandria, Amphipolis, Ashkelon, Attalia, Cnidus, Dor, Fair Havens, Gebal, Lasea, Patara, Phoenix, Puteoli, Rhegium, Salamis, Salmone, and Syracuse.
 - Jesus Christ visited the seaport regions of Tyre and Sidon.
 - From there he rose up and went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house and did not want anyone to get to know it. Yet he could not escape notice. (Mark 7:24)
 - Now coming back out of the regions of Tyre he went through Sidon to the sea of Galilee up through the midst of the regions of

Decapolis. ([Mark 7:31](#))

- **Peter was in Joppa and Caesarea.**
- **So now send men to Joppa and summon a certain Simon who is surnamed Peter. ([Acts of Apostles 10:5](#))**
- **This man is being entertained by a certain Simon, a tanner, who has a house by the **sea**. ([Acts of Apostles 10:6](#))**
- **On the day after that he entered into Caesarea. Cornelius, of course, was expecting them and had called together his relatives and intimate friends. ([Acts of Apostles 10:24](#))**
- **Paul was in Paphos, Troas, Neapolis, Cenchreae, Ephesus, Assos, Mitylene, and Miletus.**
- **The men, together with Paul, now put out to sea from Paphos and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. But John withdrew from them and returned to Jerusalem. ([Acts of Apostles 13:13](#))**
- **Therefore we put out to sea from Troas and came with a straight run to Samothrace, but on the following day to Neapolis. ([Acts of Apostles 16:11](#))**
- **However, after staying quite some days longer, Paul said goodbye to the brothers and proceeded to sail away for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, as he had the hair of his head clipped short in Cenchreae, for he had a vow. ([Acts of Apostles 18:18](#))**
- **So they arrived at Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ([Acts of Apostles 18:19](#))**
- **So when he caught up with us in Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene. ([Acts of Apostles 20:14](#))**
- **And, sailing away from there the succeeding day, we arrived opposite Chios, but the next day we touched at Samos, and on the following day we arrived at Miletus. ([Acts of Apostles 20:15](#))**

- The **Great Sea** is noted for its fierce storms that have resulted in numerous shipwrecks and much loss of life. Among the more fortunate were those who survived with Paul.
- After no great while, however, a tempestuous wind called Euroaquilo rushed down upon it. ([Acts of Apostles 27:14](#))
- As the boat was violently seized and was not able to keep its head against the wind, we gave way and were borne along. ([Acts of Apostles 27:15](#))
- Finally when it became day, they could not recognize the land but they were observing a certain bay with a beach, and on this they were determined, if they could, to beach the boat. ([Acts of Apostles 27:39](#))
- So, cutting away the anchors, they let them fall into the sea, at the same time loosing the lashings of the rudder oars and, after hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. ([Acts of Apostles 27:40](#))
- When they lighted upon a shoal washed on each side by the sea, they ran the ship aground and the prow got stuck and stayed immovable, but the stern began to be violently broken to pieces. ([Acts of Apostles 27:41](#))
- At this it became the determination of the soldiers to kill the prisoners, that no one might swim away and escape. ([Acts of Apostles 27:42](#))
- But the army officer desired to bring Paul safely through and restrained them from their purpose. And he commanded those able to swim to cast themselves into the sea and make it to land first. ([Acts of Apostles 27:43](#))
- And the rest to do so, some upon planks and some upon certain things from the boat. And thus it came about that all were brought safely to land. ([Acts of Apostles 27:44](#))