

In Old and New Testaments it is rarely mentioned. One reason for this is doubtless the nature of the sea coast there. It is a long and straight and rocky shore, ill-adapted in the sending out of fleets. There are only two good harbors in Palestine and they are not particularly good. They are Jaffa, called Joppa in ancient times, and Haifa. Altho the sea is visible from many parts of Palestine the Israelites rarely ventured out upon it and when one thinks of it only two incidents come to mind. One is the time when Jonah, ordered to go to Ninevah and preach against it, turned and went in the opposite direction and going down to Jaffa, found a Phoenician ship there, bound for Spain or Tarshish as it was then called. The other incident is that crucial point in the life of Elijah when he stood against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Reading that incident one would not realize that Mount Carmel is right at the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It is only in the sequel that this comes vividly to light. There we read how Elijah went up to the top of the mountain and looked out to the sea and saw no sign of rain. Eventually, however, he saw a cloud the size of a man's hand coming from the Mediterranean and then he rushed down to Ahab and told him to hurry back to his home as the heavy rains would soon come. When one recalls the long drought which preceded this during which Elijah had spent a long time down in the brook, Cherith, there being fed by the ravens until the water of the brook entirely dried up and then going to the Phoenician city of Zaraphath, to escape the wrath of the wicked king, Ahab--as one has this background in mind it makes the incident very impressive indeed as one sees the cloud coming in from off the Mediterranean Sea. These two incidents are the only cases which come vividly to mind where the Mediterranean Sea plays a part in the history of Old or New Testament. Except, of course, for the missionary journeys of Paul, in the life of Christ, the Sea of Galilee is the sea which is important. Many of the incidents of His life took place on the shores of that small but turbulent body of water.