

“Up” And “Down” In The Bible

by Bill Crews

It is very common for us to speak of traveling “up north” or “down south.” Even our maps are thus arranged – north is always “up” and south is always “down” on a map. This is not true in the language of the Bible.

“Now in those days there came **down** prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch” (**Acts 11:27**). Antioch was more than 300 miles **north** of Jerusalem.

“And when the brethren knew it, they brought him **down** to Caesarea” (**Acts 9:30**; cf. **11:2**). Caesarea was about 60 miles **north by northwest** of Jerusalem.

“And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went **up** and saluted the church, and went **down** to Antioch” (**Acts 18:22**). Read also **Acts 8:5, 15, 26**. “Up” and “down” in these verses refer to **altitude** and not **direction**. Jerusalem was in the mountains and *higher in altitude* than Antioch, Caesarea, Lydda and Gaza.

The same holds true in the Old Testament. When Jonah chose to flee rather than go to Ninevah, he went **down** to Joppa (**Jonah 1:3**). Several references depict various individuals going from Canaan **down** to Egypt or from Egypt **up** to Canaan.

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