



Three main international routes crossed **Palestine** from south to north.

1. The Way of Shur - crossed the **Negev Desert** from **Succoth** in **Egypt** to **Beersheba** and then went north via **Hebron** and **Jerusalem**, through the hill country of **Ephraim** via **Bethel, Shiloh** and **Shechem** to join the **Via Maris** at **Megiddo**.

2. The King's Highway - went along the high plateau to the east of the **Arabah** and the **Jordan Valley** from **Etzion Geber** on the **Gulf of Aqaba** north to **Heshbon, Rabbah, Mahanaim** and **Ramoth Gilead** to **Damascus**.

3. The Way of the Sea – the **Via Maris** – followed the coast from the **Nile Delta** in **Egypt** north to **Gaza, Ashdod** and **Aphek** before cutting inland across the **Vale of Jezreel** via **Megiddo** and **Hazor** to **Damascus** and **Mesopotamia** – the land of the **Assyrian, Babylonian** and **Persian** Empires.



The fortress at Megiddo guarded a strategic routeway

Each of these three main routes was used during Old Testament times:

- 1.** Abraham followed **The Way of Shur** to and from **Egypt** (see Genesis 12:10 & 13:1-3), as did Joseph and his father and brothers (see Genesis 37:12-28 & 46:5-7).
- 2.** Abraham pursued the four kings along **The King's Highway** to rescue Lot (see Genesis 14:14), and the twelve tribes of Israel entered the 'promised land' of **Canaan** along this route (see Numbers 21:22).
- 3.** King Neco led the Egyptian army north along the **Way of the Sea** en route to **Assyria** and killed King Josiah of Judah at **Megiddo** (see 2 Kings 23:29), while King Nebuchadnezzar of **Babylon** invaded **Judah** along this route and seized **Gaza** (see 2 Kings 24:1-7).

Cities such as **Megiddo**, **Shechem** and **Ramoth Gilead** owed their wealth to their location on these important trade routes.