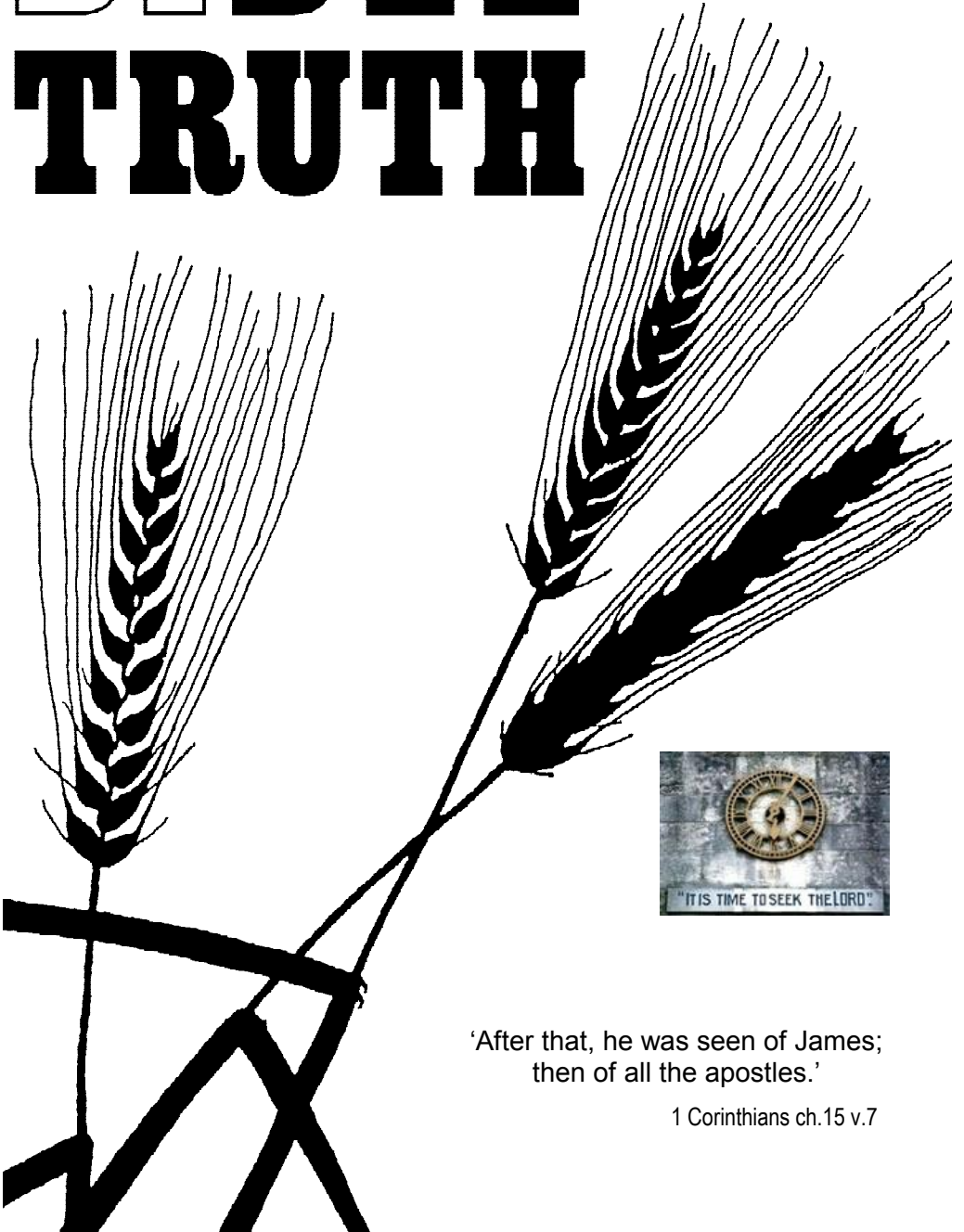


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 275
July/September 2014



'After that, he was seen of James;
then of all the apostles.'

1 Corinthians ch.15 v.7

The Sorek Valley & its surroundings

The Sorek Valley featured several times in the life of Samson. In the valley bottom runs the Sorek river which once formed the boundary between Israel and the Phillistines. It was also a border city lying between Judah and Dan and one given to the Levites. Opposite Beth Shemesh were the villages of **Eshtaol** and **Zorah**.

It was here that Samson tied the tails of 300 foxes together (Judges ch.15 v.4). It was also the setting of Judges ch.13 which prophesied Samson's birth and here Judges ch.16 v.31 describes the place of his burial. Towards the end of the valley lies **Timnah** (Tibneh, Timnath) where he found the Philistine woman he wished to wed (Judges ch.14 vv 1-2). Later he was deceived by the other woman, Delilah who lived elsewhere in the valley.

Beth Shemesh, the most important city in the area, held a strategic position overlooking the valley which led on to **Azekah**, **Gath**, and **Lachish** and of course the Phillistines. Thus it was here that the Israelites would likely to have watched the Ark of the Covenant return to their land on a new cart, drawn by two milch kine.

‘And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

And the kine took the straight way to the way of **Bethshemesh**, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh. And they of Bethshemesh ... lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to **Ekron** the same day.

1 Samuel ch.6 vv 11-16

The name Sorek translates to mean ‘special’ or ‘generous’ vine, highlighting grapes grown in the area for wine, though these days the valley is largely given over to cereals. In our time the **Jaffa** (Tel Aviv) railway winds its way through the area towards **Jerusalem**.