Look Closer: Canaan's Peaks and Valleys

At a Glance:



This map activity introduces the New Church concept that there is a relationship between the physical features of the land of Canaan and spiritual ideas. As a whole, Canaan pictures the kingdom of heaven. Its mountains picture states of mind motivated by the highest love—love to the Lord. Its hills and valleys picture states of mind motivated by lower loves—serving others, or the hope of earning money. Students will learn the basic layout of Canaan and the location of selected peaks and valleys.

Supplies Needed:

- *Canaan's Peaks and Valleys* readings for each student
- *Canaan's Peaks and Valleys Teacher Page*
- blank map for each student to complete
- already colored map for the class to use as a sample
- pencils or pens
- colored pencils or markers
- Bibles or Words (students may share)
- *optional:* large contour map of the land of Canaan to show students (not provided)

Directions:

1. Tell the students that today we will look at the land of Canaan where Esau and Jacob lived with their parents, Isaac and Rebekah. Canaan was promised to Abraham, Isaac's father, as an inheritance. Abraham's descendants inherited the land many years later—after the children of Israel were released from slavery in Egypt.
2. Read the Canaan's Peaks and Valleys Student Page with the class.
3. Complete the student page activity using Bibles.
4. Discuss the answers together.
5. Look at the map page. Identify mountains and valleys by comparing the student map with the completed map.
6. Choose a color to identify the mountains. Shade the mountains.
7. Choose a color to identify the valleys. Shade the valleys.
8. At the start of the story of Esau and Jacob they are living together with their family in Beersheba in the south. Mark Beersheba on the map and label it.

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Canaan's Peaks and Valleys

The mountains, hills, rocks and valleys in the land of Canaan represent heaven in its entirety (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10438).

If you ask young children where heaven is they often point upwards and say "up there." Although this is not completely accurate, it is true that heavenly ideas are high up, above worldly thoughts. Older people sometimes use the words "high" and "low" when they are talking about whether something is good or not, e.g. high ideals or low motives. In ancient times people knew that natural objects pictured spiritual qualities.

The relationship or correspondence between spiritual and natural things has been revealed again in the Heavenly Doctrine. Spiritual height is pictured by mountains. We can understand spiritual height by seeing the way mountain peaks rise into the sky. Similarly, the experience of climbing up out of a deep valley helps us understand the hard work that it takes for a person to rise from the "depths" they experience during a difficult time.

Most of the stories in the Old and New Testaments take place in the land of Canaan—the land that the Lord promised to Abraham and his descendants. The Lord also promises us a land, but our inheritance is not physical; it is the kingdom of heaven—which is what Canaan corresponds to in the Word. The struggles the children of Israel experienced to possess their inheritance describe the struggles we experience to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Word often mentions the fact that events take place on mountains or in valleys. This gives us clues about the hidden spiritual meaning that is within each story. Using a copy of the Word, look up the following stories to find out whether they took place on a mountain or in a valley. Mark your answers in the boxes.

Event	Reference	Mountain	Valley
The Lord called Moses….	Exodus 19:20; 20:1-17		
A certain man went…from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves.	Luke 10:30		
And seeing the multitudes…He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit…."	Matthew 5:1-3		
Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John…and He was transfigured.	Mark 9:2		
The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down…and it was full of bones.	Ezekiel 37:1		

Discuss your answers. What might this information tell us about these stories?

In the life after death people are surrounded by landscapes that reflect what they love. Heavenly or celestial angels, who love the Lord, live on mountains. Angels from the spiritual kingdom, who love others, live on hills (see *Apocalypse Explained* 405). People living in valleys have not yet been raised up into heavenly life (*Arcana Coelestia* 10438).



Canaan's Peaks and Valleys

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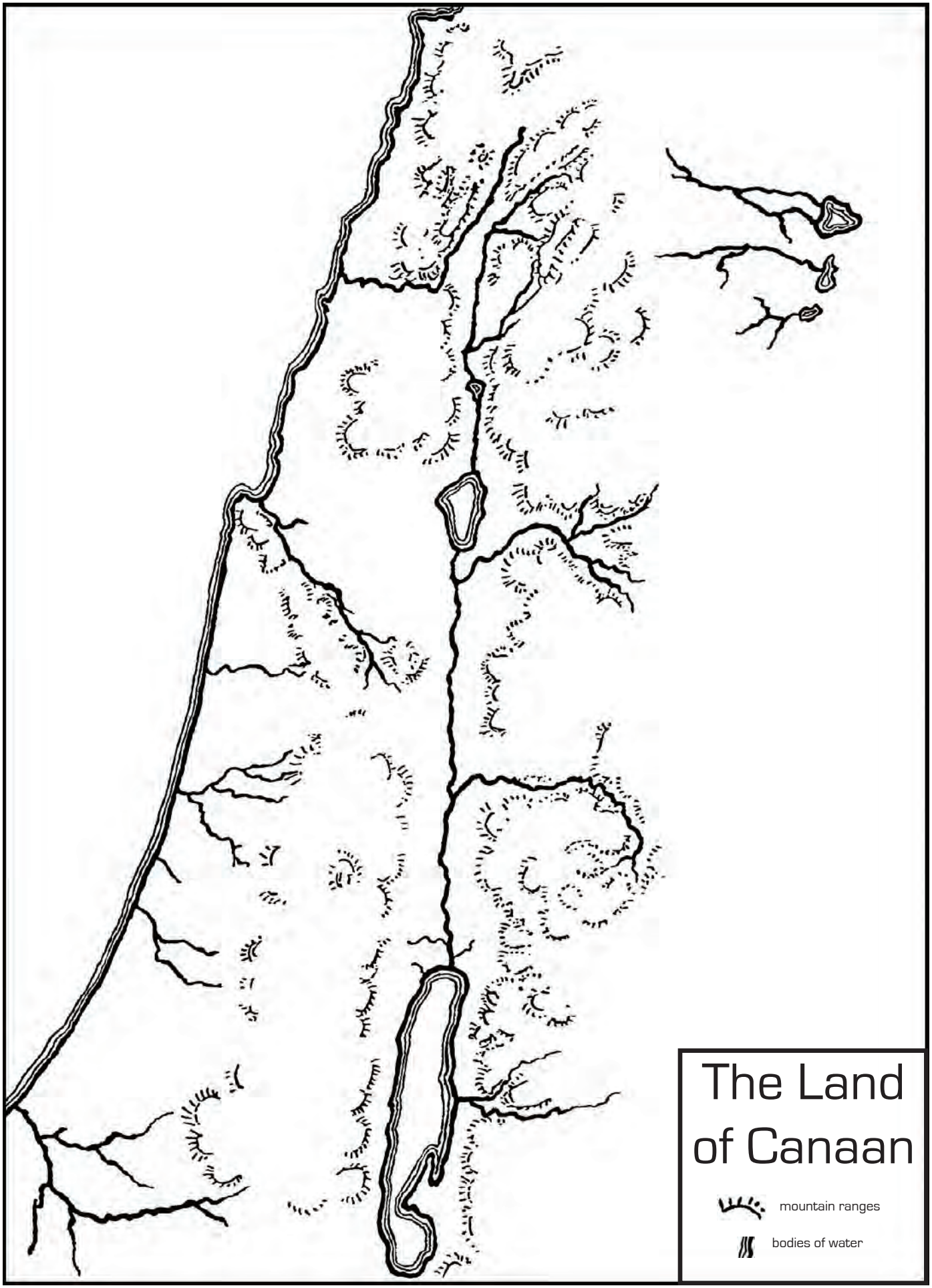
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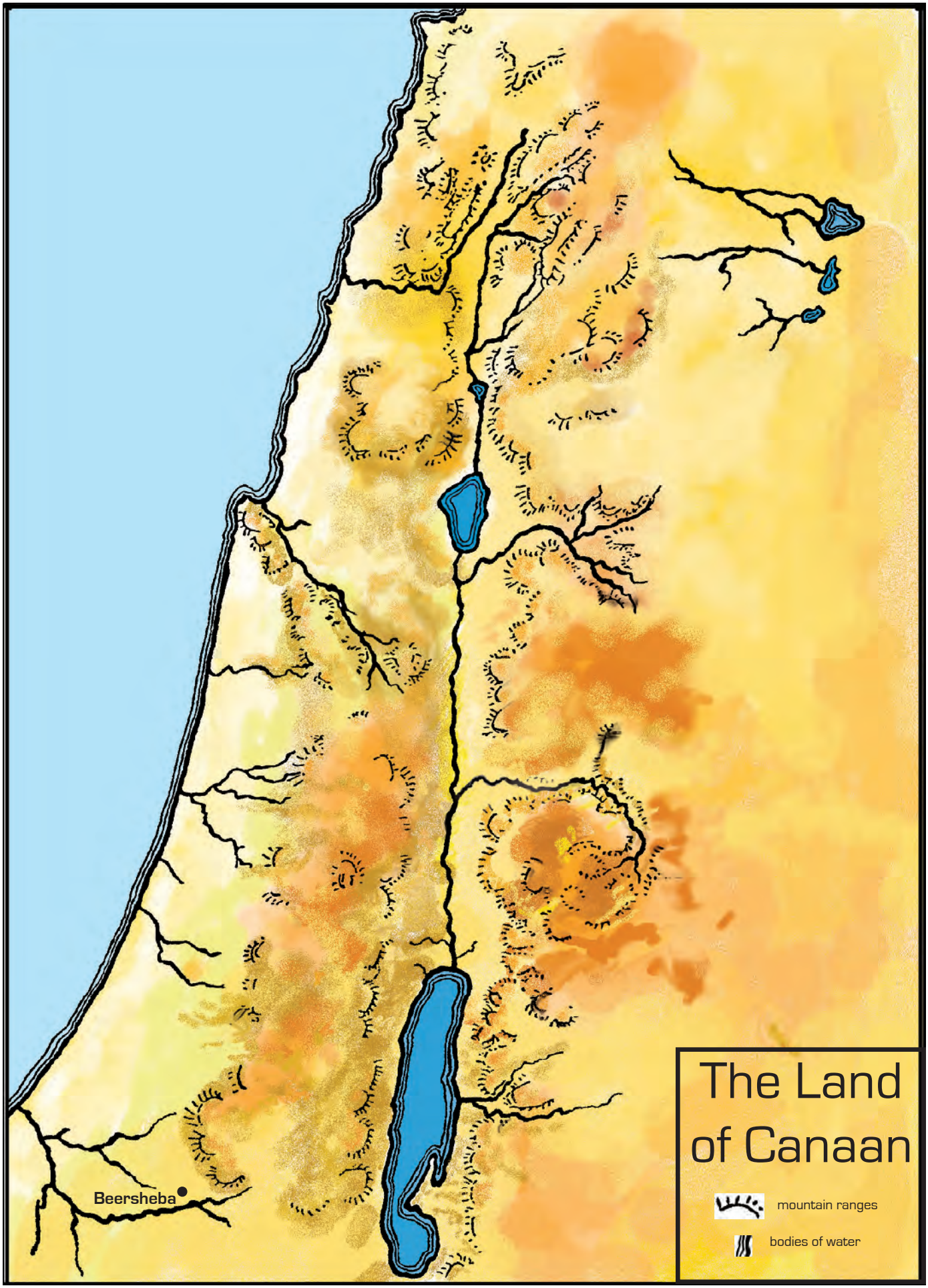
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