Samaria was the hilltop capital of the northern Kingdom of Israel. It was the site of the royal palace; the official residence of the kings of Israel and the place of their burial. Yet the city of Megiddo was strategically more important surrounded on three sides by alternating hills and deep valleys; it sat astride the great north-south "Way of the Sea" and overlooked the fertile Jezreel Valley that stretched to the east. The compound of Jezreel perched on the foothills of the Gilboa range stood sentry; a small but crucial military outpost. The geography and archaeology of these three great Biblical sites so crucial to our understanding of ancient Israel will be discussed.