

Israel

Genesis 12:1 – “Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you”

- God chose this land for His people . . .God chose this land for His Son.
- The Jews refer to it as Israel.
- The Arabs refer to it as Palestine . . . or, “Occupied Palestine.”

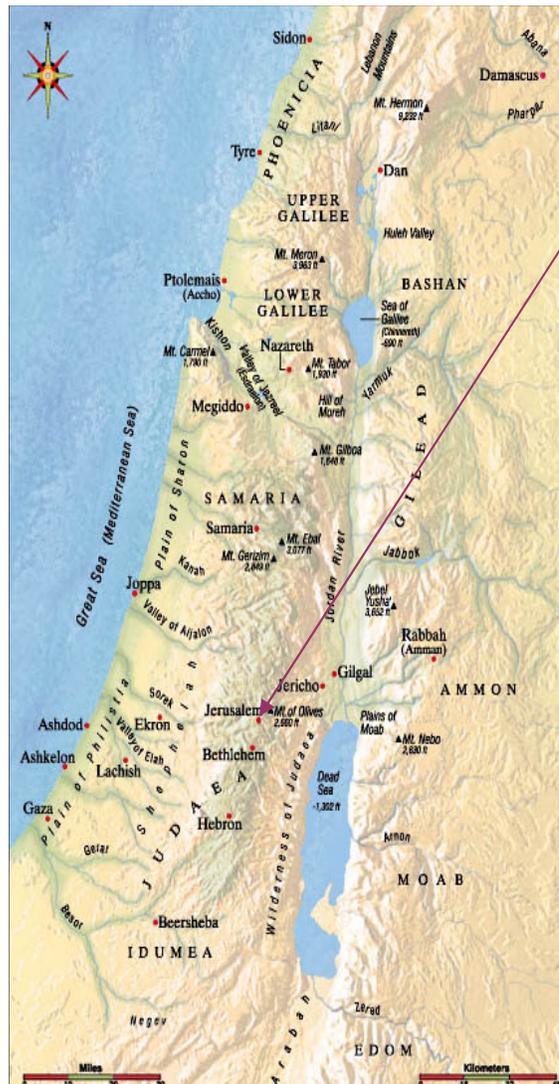
- Israel** - Covers about 10,000square miles.
- Approximately 175 miles from north to south.
 - About the size of New Hampshire
 - A land with some incredible beauty.
 - Three religious days each week.
 1. Friday – Moslem
 2. Saturday – Jews
 3. Sunday – Christians

Political Divisions

- In New Testament times, Palestine, then under Roman rule, was made up of six provinces:
 1. Judea
 2. Samaria
 3. Galilee
 4. Perea
 5. Decapolis
 6. Northeastern Palestine
- These six provinces were formed partly because of political considerations and partly because of the physical features of the land.

	West of the Jordan River WEST	“Beyond Jordan” EAST
South	Judea	Perea
Central	Samaria	Decapolis
North	Galilee	Northeastern Palestine

Zephaniah 3:14 – “Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!”



Judea

Judea was the southern province west of the Jordan River, lying between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The name is a corruption of the name “Judah,” the tribe which was once the chief possessor of the region. It was the heart of the Jewish nation, not because it was the largest province, but because Jerusalem lay within its borders. The holy city of the Jews is located due west from the upper end of the Dead Sea. Bethlehem lies six miles to the south, Bethany two miles to the east, and Jericho some fifteen miles to the northeast of Jerusalem. In 1996, Jerusalem celebrated its 3000th anniversary.

Samaria

The province of Samaria lay between Judea on the South and Galilee on the north. That part lying on the Mediterranean Sea was the Plain of Sharon. To the east was the Jordan River. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the Assyrians evacuated the inhabitants and colonized the territory with non-Israelites (**2 Kings 17:1-2**). These colonists intermarried with the remnant of the Jews left in the land, producing a hybrid race with a hybrid religion. The race became known as the Samaritans.

At the time of the restoration, when the Samaritans wished to join the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, they were rejected from participating (**Ezra 4:1-3**). Instead, they built their own temple on Mt. Gerazim near Shechem, and it was to this spot that the Samaritan woman was referring when she told Jesus, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain . . ." (**John 4:20**). The feud between the two races still persisted at the time of Jesus, and the Orthodox Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans (**John 14:9**). Presently, there are only a few hundred Samaritans remaining. Due to their practice of intermarriage between family members and other relatives, there is a high rate of restricted mental development among present-day Samaritans.

Galilee

Galilee was the most northern of the three provinces in the western part of Palestine. It lay between the upper part of Jordan and the Sea of Galilee on the east and Phoenicia on the west. Familiar towns in Galilee are: Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, and Nain. In Jesus' time there were many more Gentiles (non-Jews) in this district than in Judea, and the Jewish people themselves were more liberal in their religious thinking. For this reason Jesus had greater success in His ministry in Galilee than in Judea where the strict orthodoxy of the Jews prevailed, And because the Jews in Galilee had so much contact with Gentiles, the Judean Jews regarded them as being corrupted. Perhaps this would explain in part the attitude of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus, as well as the basis of Nathaniel's question to Philip: ". . . Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, 'Come and see'" (**John 1:46**).

Concerning the Names Palestine and Israel . . .

- Palestine is from a translation of a Hebrew word “Philistia” which means “Land of the philistines.”
- Israel is the name given to Jacob after wrestling with the angel. **Genesis 32:38**

Historical Background

Before the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land, the land was occupied by the:

1. Hittites
2. Girgashites
3. Amorites
4. Canaanites
5. Perizzites
6. Hivites
7. Jebusites
 - According to Deuteronomy 7:1 all seven nations were mightier than Israel.
 - 427 years after the great flood God called Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees.

Four great promises:

1. Great nation promise
 2. Great name promise
 3. All nations to be blessed
 4. Land promise
- At age 75 Abraham entered Canaan
 - Jacob was the father of twelve sons. His name was changed to from Jacob to Israel. Descendants were Israelites.
 - Joseph, at age 17, was sold into slavery and taken into Egypt.
 - At age 130, Jacob and his family entered Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen. He died 13 years later at age 147.
 - After Joseph’s death at age 110, time saw the Israelites placed into Egyptian bondage for 400+ years.
 - God raised up Moses to deliver the Israelites from bondage.
 - Israel’s lack of faith in God led them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, one year for each day the spies had spied out Canaan.

- After Moses' death at age 120, Joshua (age 85) became Israel's leader and led them into the Promised Land and through the conquest of it.
- After the death of Joshua at age 125, a new generation arose that did not respect what God had done for Israel.
- The period of the Judges lasted some 355 years. A total of 17 Judges (13 mentioned in Judges and 4 mentioned in 1 Samuel). Then Israel cried out for a king so that they could be like the nations around them.
- The United Kingdom lasted some 120 years, from 1053-933 B.C.
 1. Saul reigned 40 years.
 2. David reigned some 40 years.
 3. Solomon reigned some 40 years.
- The United kingdom ended in 933 B.C.
 1. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) – 10 tribes – Jereboam – Samaria as its capital
 2. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) – 2 tribes – Rehoboam – Jerusalem as its capital.
- The Divided Kingdom lasted from 931 to 722 B.C.
 1. Northern Kingdom
 - Lasted some 209 years.
 - Was served by 19 different kings representing 19 different families. All were evil.
 - Fell to Assyria in 722 B.C.
 2. The Southern Kingdom lasted from 931 to 605 B.C.
 - Lasted a total of 326 years.
 - Lasted 117 years longer than the Northern Kingdom.
 - Served by 20 kings. Some were good.
 - One dynasty. All were from the lineage of David.
 - Fell to Babylon in 605 A.D. and began a seventyyear period of captivity.
 - 3 deportations from Jerusalem to Babylon.
 - 3 Returns from Babylon back to Jerusalem.
 - On an October night in 539 B.C. the Babylonian Empire fell to the Medes and the Persians
 - Cyrus, the Persian king allowed the Jews to return home. A remnant did, but most remained in Persia.
 - In 330 B.C. the Medo-Persian kingdom fell to the Greeks and the Macedonia Kingdom.

In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Judea. After his death, Judea was controlled by the Ptolemies of Egypt and then in 198 B.C. by the Greek influenced Seleucid kingdom of Syria. In 168 B.C. the Syrian King, Antiochus IV Epiphanes plundered the temple and placed his god Zeus there. This infuriated the Jews. Led by the priestly family, the Hasmoneans, the Jews rebelled against Syrian persecution with Judas Maccabee as the leader. The Maccabeans ruled until 63 B.C. when the Romans took over. Herod the Great was made King over Judea in 40 B.C. In 6 A.D. Rome annexed Judea and made it a sub-province of Syria.

Byzantine Rule

At the beginning of the 4th century A.D., the Roman Emperor made Christianity the official religion of the state. In 324 A.D. the empire split. The western part was ruled from Rome and the eastern part was ruled from Byzantium (Constantinople). Constantine was the emperor of Byzantium, or the eastern empire. He and his mother Helena built scores of churches, including the church of the Holy Sepulchre. In 614 A.D. the Persians captured Jerusalem and held it for 13 years. Byzantine rule ended in 640 A.D. when Caesarea fell to the Arabs.

Palestine was then under Moslem rule for 400 years. The order was given to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. That order instigated the beginning of the "Holy Wars" (crusader period). The first crusade was from 1096-1099 when 2,000 crusaders captured Jerusalem and converted the Dome of the Rock to "Christian" use. Other crusades were from 1189-1192 and from 1202-1291. The Dome of the Rock was built in 691 A.D. by Moslems, and was used as a Mosque. The Turks cut down the trees to use for fire wood while they were occupying Israel. Trees are being replanted.

World Empires

The four major world empires Isaiah foretold about in Isaiah 2:37-45 were:

1. Babylonian Empire (612 - 536 B.C.)
2. Medo-Persian Empire (536 - 330 B.C.)
3. Macedonian Empire (Greek—Grecian: 330 - 43 B.C.)
 - a. Macedonian (330-321 B.C.)
 - b. Egyptian (321 - 198 B.C.)
 - c. Syrian (198-166B.C.)
 - d. Maccabean (166-438.C.)

4. Roman Empire (43 B.C.) - 476 A.D.) The eastern part, with Constantinople as its capitol, lasted until 1453 A.D.

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Daniel 2:44

Pharisees & Sadducees

When the Jews returned to Palestine from their Babylonian captivity, they needed two groups of people:

1. A group to read and interpret the law.
 2. A group to officiate at the temple.
- The group who read and interpreted the Law became known as the **Hasidems**, later called the **Pharisees**.
 - The group that officiated at the temple became known as the Hellenized Party, later called the **Sadducees**.