



Israel



A Statistical, Historical and Prophetic Guide

Produced by
Prayer for Israel.

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Israel is first of all a people descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the great Patriarchs and pioneers of true faith in God. We call their physical descendants today "the Jewish people".

Secondly it is a small sliver of land at the far end of the Mediterranean, at its widest only 60 miles, at its longest 260 miles.

The Land of Israel

The land of Israel is surrounded by Arab states: to the south, Egypt; to the east, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq; to the north, Lebanon and Syria.

Comparative Size and Population of Middle East Countries (Stats collected Sept 2014)
Please note these statistics are different according to different sources and should be treated as indicative only.

1. Members of the Arab League:

(a) Immediate neighbours	Area (miles²)	Population	Jews in 1940's	Jews Today
Syria	71,479	22,850,000	35,000	0
Lebanon	4,036	4,467,390	20,000	50
Jordan	35,637	7,329,643	No Jews since the Middle Ages	
Egypt	387,048	82,056,378	100,000	150
SUBTOTAL:	498,200	116,703,411	155,000	200

(b) Arabian Peninsular	Area (miles²)	Population	Jews in 1940's	Jews Today
Iraq	169,234	34,776,000	150,000	0
Kuwait	6,880	3,368,572		Not Known
Bahrain	295	1,332,171	600	37
Saudi Arabia	870,000	28,830,000	No Jews since the Middle Ages	28
Qatar	4,416	1,903,447		Not Known
UAE	32,278	9,346,129	No Jews since the Middle Ages	
Oman	119,498	4,000,345		Not Known
Yemen	203,796	24,407,381	63,000	100
SUBTOTAL:	1,406,397	107,964,045	213,600	137

(c) North Africa	Area (miles²)	Population	Jews in 1940's	Jews Today
Mauritania	397,954	3,889,880	No Jews in recorded History	
Morocco	172,487	3,285,300	285,000	6,500
Algeria	919,595	39,087,701	140,000	28
Tunisia	63,170	10,886,500	110,000	1,700
Libya	679,359	6,201,521	32,000	0
Sudan	782,215	37,964,306	350	0
Somalia	246,200	10,557,017	No Jews in recorded History	
SUBTOTAL:	3,500,265	111,872,225	567,350	8,228

2. Moslem non-Arab declared enemy state:

Iran	636,372	77,447,168	100,000	10,200
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3. Comparison with Israel:

	Area (miles²)	Population	Jews in 1940's	Jews Today
Arab League States plus Iran	6,041,235	413,986,849	1,035,350	18,765
		In Israel	Arabs in 1948	Arabs Today
Israel (incl. Samaria, Judea and Gaza area only)	10,840	8,157,300	150,000	1,640,000

The map gives an idea of the size of Israel compared to that of Great Britain. Its area is about the same as Wales, and its population somewhat more than that of Scotland. Since so many spiritually important things have occurred within Israel's borders we have a tendency to think of it as far larger than it really is. The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Herod's temple were foretold by Jesus the Messiah (see Luke 21 :24) and fulfilled in AD70. From that time onwards, the "Diaspora" or dispersion of the Jewish people to the ends of the earth began. The false Messiah Bar Cochba led a revolt in 132 AD and set up a brief regime in Jerusalem.

This was put down by the Emperor Hadrian (the one who built the Wall!). Jerusalem was renamed "Ælia Capitolina", and Israel "Palestina", meaning "Land of the Philistines". This was a calculated slight on the Jewish people, for it was well known that the Philistines were their historic enemies.

Over the next 1900 years, the Jews always kept a resident community in Palestine, especially in the five holy cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, Tzfat, and Yavne.

The Jewish people were at first exiled mainly within the Roman Empire. After the Empire became nominally Christian, the official Church, both Eastern (centred on Constantinople) and Western (centred on Rome), became like a political body, with officials similar to those belonging to the Empire.

The Church became the implacable enemy of Israel and began to persecute the Jews. This varied in severity, but involved such "saints" of the Church as John Chrysostom in Antioch and Ambrose, Bishop of Milan in Italy. The horrors of the Roman Catholic "Holy Inquisition", especially in Spain, are remembered both by Jews and Christian dissidents. The bitter hatred at the heart of the medieval Church was passed on to Martin Luther, the Reformer and via him to some of his spiritual descendants.

From the time of the Puritans onwards, there was a growing love towards the Jews among some Bible believing Christians. Sadly, there are today many evangelical Christians, who although they would not wish to persecute and would not see themselves as anti-Semitic still believe the Jews to be rejected, and themselves to be the New Israel, which has replaced the old.



The Restoration of Israel in stages

1840 - Remarkable revival in central Europe, resulting in the salvation of many thousands of Jews, through Scottish Presbyterians.

1880's - Israel. The "olim" were mostly Russian, and non-religious.

Eliza Ben Yehuda - born in 1858 in Lithuania, educated in the Sorbonne, Paris, moved to Palestine in the 1880s. He was used under God to restore the Hebrew language as a spoken tongue. He was excommunicated by orthodox rabbis. When his wife died they refused to bury her.

Quotations from Ben Yehuda

"In those days it was as if the heavens had suddenly opened and a clear incandescent light flashed before my eyes, and a mighty inner voice suddenly sounded in my ears - the renaissance of Israel on its own ancestral soil."

"I have decided that in order to have our own land and political life, it is also necessary that we have a language to hold us together. That language is Hebrew, but not the Hebrew of the rabbis and scholars. We must have a Hebrew language in which we can conduct the business of life. It will not be easy to revive a language dead for so long a time."

When he moved to Palestine, his home was the one place in all the earth, where only Hebrew was spoken. When he died, there was a well-established Modern Hebrew press and literature. This achievement is unique in the history of the world.

1897 - The first Zionist congress was held in Basel under the leadership of Theodor Herzl. The note in his diary for 3rd September 1897 reads: "In Basel habe ich den Judenstaat gegründet" – "I founded the Jewish state in Basel". He predicted that within 50 years it would be seen by all. 50 years later, in 1947 the UN voted for the Jews to have their own state.

1917 - November 2nd, The Balfour Declaration was published and on the first day of the Jewish feast of Hanukkah (11th December 1917), Jerusalem was peacefully surrendered to General Allenby, a Christian, who had prayed the previous night that he would not have to shell the holy city.

1920 - The League of Nations gave Great Britain the Mandate for Palestine. Part of this Mandate was to fulfil the Balfour declaration by providing a Jewish homeland.

1922 - Great Britain ceded the Golan Heights to the French Protectorate of Syria and recognized Abdullah's Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, thus taking a stroke two thirds of the original mandated territory away from the Jews. In the 20s and 30s

Palestine (now only the west bank of Jordan) was ruled by “Arabists”, who found the Jews an embarrassment. During this time Jewish immigration was restricted, while Arab immigration was ignored.

1922 - 1938 - Many attacks on Jewish settlements by Arab extremists. The Jewish community in Hebron was evacuated by Britain. since the time of Joshua.

1938 - 1945 - Nazi Germans reign of terror there had been a continual Jewish presence there in Europe, under the “antichrist” Hitler, ushered in the destruction of 6 million Jews. This was the worst disaster up to now to hit Jewry.

1947 - The newly formed United Nations General Assembly voted with a clear majority for the "Partition of Palestine", which meant that the remaining third of Britain's mandate would be divided between the Arabs and the Jews. The Jews were offered 12.5 % of the original land area promised them! It was the votes of the Soviet Bloc which ensured a Jewish State. Nobody can explain why they voted for Partition. But neither they, nor any expert believed that the Jewish State would survive for more than a few weeks.

1948 - May 14th Israel came into being by UN consent. The Arabs, who could have formed their own state, refused on the grounds that they wanted all the territory, not just a part. Many Arabs fled their homes because of propaganda from Egypt about Jewish atrocities at the Arab village of Deir Yassin. Civilians were killed in a military attack, but Cairo exaggerated the story. The Arab refugees have been kept ever after in camps in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, and denied the right to naturalize in the lands they fled to. Israel was not allowed by the UN to improve the camps in the Gaza and West Bank.

1948-1956 - The war of attrition against Israel finished with the Suez Crisis. Great Britain and France attacked and captured the Suez Canal Zone, involving the Israelis, who took the whole of the Sinai. This was immediately reversed owing to the firm opposition of the USA.

1956-1967 - The West Bank and Gaza used to launch attacks on Israel.

1967 - Military build-up, the closing of the Straits of Tiran and vocal threats to “push Israel into the sea” led Israel to take pre-emptive action. The Six Day War followed. Israel was left in possession of the Sinai, up to the Suez Canal, including the Sinai Oil Fields. The Golan Heights, from which the Syrians had regularly strafed Galilean settlements, were captured, and all of the “West Bank”, including the Old City of Jerusalem, from which the Jews had been excluded since 1948. This area is called by Israel, “Judea, Samaria & Gaza”.

1973 - Egypt and Syria simultaneously attacked Israel on Yom Kippur, the most sacred day on the Jewish calendar. Israel narrowly escaped utter ruin and defeat.

Afterwards, the Sinai, with its oilfields, was given back to Egypt in return for a peace treaty. President Sadat of Egypt paid the price of being killed by his own soldiers because he had made peace with Israel, the arch-enemy of the whole Islamic world.

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formed before the “6-Day War”. It could not therefore have had the aim of recovering “The West Bank”, because at that time Israel did not control it. The goal of the PLO is to “liberate all of Palestine”, i.e. to destroy the Jewish State and set up an Arab State in its place.

The PLO became recognised internationally With the election victory of a radical and humanist Israeli Labour Government in 1992, the Oslo Accords were agreed on, whereby Israel recognized the PLO, and agreed on a “Land for Peace” formula, gradually handing territory over to the political control of the PLO. This began with the “Gaza Strip” and the area round Jericho.

No public agreement was made at that time to create or to recognise a Palestinian Arab State, but merely to allow self-rule within the Palestinian area. However, secret accords were agreed to, which would have issued in the formation of a Palestinian state with its capital at Jerusalem. If implemented, this would lead to a concerted attack on Israel with a view to her destruction.

Since then, we have seen various areas placed back into Palestinian hands and the results in blood and destruction are apparent.

Why should Christians pray for Israel?

- 1.** Out of gratefulness and esteem for the people whom God chose. Through them came the Ten Commandments (the basis of all civilized law). The whole Bible, both OT and NT was written, humanly speaking, by Jewish men.
- 2.** The Messiah, Jesus, the Saviour of Gentiles as well as Jews, was and is in his human nature, a Jew.
- 3.** Because of the New Covenant. Both the original mention of The New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34, and the quotation in Hebrews 8, make it clear that the New Covenant was for “The house of Israel and the house of Judah”. The fact that Gentiles can share in this covenant by faith in the Jewish Messiah is a mark of God's unmerited favour. Every time we eat the Lord's Supper, we remember that Jesus said “This cup is the New Testament [covenant] in my blood” (Luke 22:20 & 1 Cor 11:25).
- 4.** Because God wills it. This is implied in that God has declared his promises to Israel, and we should pray “Thy will be done”. One purpose for which Jesus came was to ensure the fulfilment of God's promises to the Jews. This being so, Christ's followers should pray for the people he so loved. “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision [the Jews] to confirm the promises made unto the fathers [Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob]" (Romans 15:8).

5. Because their salvation heralds the return of the Messiah. Paul says the Gospel is to the Jew first (Romans 1:16) and So all Israel shall be saved. (Romans 11:26). Jesus says "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39).

6. Because they will have a special place in world evangelisation. Revelation 7 speaks of many from the 12 tribes of Israel, "sealed" [with the Spirit] to bring a "multitude which no man could number" to salvation.

By Keith Parker spring 1998, revised 2011 / 2012 / 2014

The Balfour Declaration

