

Introduction to Israel

Location – Southeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea. Bounded by Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon.

Size – Land area 7849 sq-miles (about size of New Jersey), not quite half of that is desert with very little population.

Terrain – Maritime plains, foot-hills (shephelah), mountains, rift valley, desert

Population – State of Israel - 7,233,000

Jerusalem – 700,000, Tel Aviv – 365,000, Haifa – 280,000

Natural Resources –

- Rainfall – mostly on northern and western half
- Rivers, lakes - The Jordan is the only significant river. It is fed by natural springs north of Lake Hule, flows from Lake Hule into Lake Kinneret / Sea of Galilee / Sea of Tiberius. Israel draws most of its fresh water from Lake Kinneret, so no water flows from it into the Jordan. Water from the Arnon River in Jordan flows into the Jordan south of the lake, and ends up in the Dead Sea (1349 ft below seal level, lowest point on earth) .
- Fresh water usage rates (from the CIA information site) – 2.05 cu-km/year
- Fresh water natural restoration rates – 1.7 cu-km/yr
- Arable land – 15%
- Irrigation – Approx. 1900 sq-km
- Minerals – Small mines in the Negev, some from the Dead Sea

History –

- Prior to 1200 BCE – A variety of groups. Mentioned in the OT, Hittites, Girgasites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, Anakites, Philistines. Evidence in Jericho of building ~6000 BCE. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob lived in the area, but never claimed any one area as their own.
- ~ 1200 BCE, Israel invaded Canaan 40 years after the Exodus from Egypt
- ~ 1200 – 970, Period of Judges began after they divided up the land and settled in.
- 970 – 1090 BCE – United kingdom under Saul, David, Solomon
- 1090 – 587 BCE – Divided kingdom, northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721 BCE, southern kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon in 587 BCE
- ~ 600 – 400 BCE - Persians
- ~ 400 – 200 BCE - Greeks
- ~ 200 – 630 CE – Romans, Byzantines
- 630 – 1435, Muslims, intermittent Crusader control in the 11th-13th centuries
- 1435 – 1917 – Ottoman Empire
- 1897 – 1948 – Intentional flow of Jewish immigrants into Palestine
- 1917 – 1948 – Under British Mandate set up by the League of Nations
- May 14, 1948 – State of Israel established by United Nations
 - Wars with neighboring states – 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973
 - Peace treaty with Egypt - 1977
 - Oslo Peace Accords signed 1993