



The Investigator's Gospel

An Eyewitness Journey Through Luke

Session 7 – Chapter 7 – The Politics and People of Israel and Palestine – An Overview

20th - 17th Century BC – The Patriarchal Period

The Patriarchs of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bring the belief in One God to the Promised Land where they settle. Famine forces the Israelites to migrate to Egypt.

The Book of Genesis relates how Abraham was summoned from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan to bring about the formation of a people with belief in the One God. When a famine spread through Canaan, Jacob (Israel), his twelve sons and their families settled in Egypt, where their descendants were reduced to slavery and pressed into forced labor.

13th Century BC – The Exodus

430 years after the arrival in Egypt, Moses leads the Israelites from Egypt, followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert. The Torah, including the Ten Commandments received at Mount Sinai.

Moses was chosen by God to take his people out of Egypt and back to the Land of Israel promised to their forefathers. They wandered for 40 years in the Sinai desert, where they were forged into a nation and received the Torah (Pentateuch), which included the Ten Commandments and gave form and content to their monotheistic faith.

13th - 11th Century BC – The Land Consolidated

During the next two centuries, the Israelites conquered most of the Land of Israel and relinquished their nomadic ways to become farmers and craftsmen; a degree of economic and social consolidation followed. Periods of relative peace alternated with times of war during which the people rallied behind leaders known as 'judges,' chosen for their political and military skills as well as for their leadership qualities.

1020 BC - Jewish Monarchy established.

The first king, Saul (c. 1020 BC), bridged the period between loose tribal organization and the setting up of a full monarchy under his successor, David. King David (c.1004-965 BC) established Israel as a major power in the region by successful military expeditions, including the final defeat of the Philistines, as well as by constructing a network of friendly alliances with nearby kingdoms.

David was succeeded by his son Solomon (c.965-930 BC) who further strengthened the kingdom politically. Crowning his achievements was the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, which became the center of the Jewish people's national and religious life.

1000 BC - Jerusalem made capital of David's Kingdom.

960 BC - First Temple, the national and spiritual center of the Jewish people, built in Jerusalem by King Solomon

930 BC - Kingdom divided into Judah and Israel. After Solomon's death (930 BC), open insurrection due to Solomon's taxation policies led to the breaking away of the ten northern tribes and division of the country into a northern kingdom, Israel, and a southern kingdom, Judah, so named due to being on the territory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The Kingdom of Israel, with its capital Samaria, lasted more than 200 years under 19 kings, while the Kingdom of Judah was ruled from Jerusalem for 350 years by an equal number of kings of the lineage of David. The expansion of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires brought first Israel and later Judah under foreign control.

722 - 720 BC - Israel crushed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled (Ten Lost Tribes).

586 BC - Judah conquered by Babylonia; Jerusalem and First Temple destroyed; most Jews exiled to Babylonia.

The Babylonian conquest brought an end to the First Jewish Commonwealth (First Temple period) but did not sever the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel. The exile to Babylonia, which followed the destruction of the First Temple (586 BC), marked the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. There, Judaism began to develop a religious framework and way of life outside the Land, ultimately ensuring the people's national survival and spiritual identity and imbuing it with sufficient vitality to safeguard its future as a nation.

536-142 BC - PERSIAN AND HELLENISTIC PERIODS

538-515 BC - Many Jews return from Babylonia; the Temple is rebuilt. Following a decree by the Persian King Cyrus, conqueror of the Babylonian empire (538 BC), some 50,000 Jews set out on the First Return to the Land of Israel, led by Zerubabel. Less than a century later, the Second Return was led by Ezra the Scribe. The repatriation of the Jews under Ezra's inspired leadership, construction of the Second Temple on the site of the First Temple, refortification of Jerusalem's walls under Nehemiah and the establishment of the Knesset Hagedolah (Great Assembly) as the supreme religious and judicial body of the Jewish people marked the beginning of the Second Jewish Commonwealth (Second Temple period).

332 BC - Land conquered by Alexander the Great; Hellenistic rule. As part of the ancient world conquered by Alexander the Great of Greece (332 BC), the Land remained a Jewish theocracy under Syrian-based Seleucid rulers.

166-160 BC - Maccabean (Hasmonean) revolt against restrictions on practice of Judaism and desecration of the Temple. When the Jews were prohibited from practicing Judaism and their Temple was desecrated as part of an effort to impose Greek-oriented culture and customs on the entire population, the Jews rose in revolt (166 BC) led by Mattathias of the priestly Hasmonean family and then by his son Judah the Maccabee, the Jews subsequently entered Jerusalem and purified the Temple (164 BC).

142-129 BC - Jewish autonomy under Hasmoneans. Following further Hasmonean victories (147 BC), the Seleucids restored autonomy to Judea and, with the collapse of the Seleucid kingdom (129 BC), Jewish independence was again achieved.

129-63 BC - Under the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted about 80 years, the kingdom regained boundaries not far short of Solomon's realm, political consolidation under Jewish rule was attained and Jewish life flourished.

63 BC-313 AD - ROMAN RULE

63 BC - Jerusalem captured by Roman general, Pompey.

37 BC-4 AD - Herod, Roman vassal king, rules the Land of Israel; Temple in Jerusalem refurbished; High Priests appointed by Rome

30-33 AD - Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE AT THE TIME OF JESUS

***Pharisees** - They were known for their emphasis on personal piety (the word Pharisee comes from a Hebrew word meaning “separated”), their acceptance of oral tradition in addition to the written Law, and their teaching that all Jews should observe all 600-plus laws in the Torah, including the rituals concerning ceremonial purification. The Pharisees were mostly middle-class businessmen and leaders of the synagogues. They were concerned that Jesus was not sufficiently strict in his observation of ritual laws, and were upset by his associations with non-Jews and with “sinners.”*

***Sadducees** - The Sadducees were elitists who wanted to maintain the priestly caste, but they were also liberal in their willingness to incorporate Greek and Roman culture into their lives, something the Pharisees opposed. The Sadducees did not believe in an afterlife, since it is not mentioned in the Torah. The main focus of Sadducee life was rituals associated with the Temple – the Romans appointed the High Priest from the ranks of the Sadducees. They were concerned that Jesus would upset the relationship with the Romans through fomenting uprisings of the people, perhaps leading to a Roman crackdown on religious freedom. The Sadducees disappeared around 70 A.D., after the destruction of the Second Temple.*

***Essenes** – While the New Testament does not speak of them directly, the Essenes may have played a large behind-the-scenes role. Many of their teachings are reflected in the words and practices of John the Baptist, and of Jesus.*

***Scribes** - The scribes were scholars of the Old Testament Law. They seem to be associated with the Pharisees, but are closely tied to the life of the Temple. They persecuted Jesus and were responsible for bringing Him to trial. Their persecution of Christians continued after the ascension of Jesus. We find the scribes persecuting Peter and John as well as being directly involved in the death of Stephen.*

***Zealots** – a Jewish political organization dedicated to the expulsion of the Romans from traditional Jewish territory. The Zealots instigated the Civil War which led to the destruction of Jerusalem.*

66 - Jewish revolt against the Romans. In the year 66, Florus, the last Roman procurator, stole vast quantities of silver from the Temple. The outraged Jewish masses rioted and wiped out the small Roman garrison stationed in Jerusalem. War immediately ensued. Following some initial minor victories, the Jews were utterly defeated by overwhelming Roman force under Titus Flavius.

70 - Destruction of Jerusalem and Second Temple. The Temple was utterly destroyed, with only the foundation walls of the Temple Mount, the platform upon which the Temple was built, remaining. The last Zealot stronghold of Masada was captured in 72 AD.

132-135 - Bar Kokhba uprising against Rome. A second rebellion was launched under supposed Messiah Bar Kokhba, and was completely crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. Jerusalem is largely razed, and rebuilt as a Roman city, renamed Aelia Capitolina. Judea is renamed Palestine, after Israel's traditional enemies the Philistines, to limit Jewish identification with the conquered land.

313-636 - BYZANTINE RULE

By the end of the 4th century, following Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christianity (313) and the founding of the Byzantine Empire, the Land of Israel had become a predominantly Christian country. Churches were built on Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Galilee, and monasteries were established in many parts of the country. The Jews were deprived of their former relative autonomy, as well as of their right to hold public positions, and were forbidden to enter Jerusalem except on one day of the year to mourn the destruction of the Temple.

The Persian invasion of 614 was welcomed and aided by the Jews, who were inspired by messianic hopes of deliverance. In gratitude for their help, they were granted the administration of Jerusalem, an interlude which lasted about three years. Subsequently, the Byzantine army regained the city (629) and again expelled its Jewish population.

636-1099 - ARAB RULE

The Arab conquest of the Land came four years after the death of Muhammad (632) and lasted more than four centuries, with caliphs ruling first from Damascus, then from Baghdad

and Egypt. At the outset of Islamic rule, Jewish settlement in Jerusalem was resumed, and the Jewish community was granted permission to live under "protection," the customary status of non-Muslims under Islamic rule, which safeguarded their lives, property and freedom of worship in return for payment of special poll and land taxes.

However, the subsequent introduction of restrictions against non-Muslims (717) affected the Jews' public conduct as well as their religious observances and legal status. The imposition of heavy taxes on agricultural land compelled many to move from rural areas to towns, where their circumstances greatly declined, while increasing social and economic discrimination forced many Jews to leave the country. By the end of the 11th century, the Jewish community in the Land had diminished considerably and had lost some of its organizational and religious cohesiveness.

691 - On site of First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock is built

1099-1291 - CRUSADER DOMINATION

Caliph al-Hakim ordered the destruction of all churches in Israel. Restrictions were placed upon Christian pilgrimage and worship. In response, Pope Urban II appealed for a Holy Crusade to reconquer the area for Christendom. In July 1099, after a five-week siege, the knights of the First Crusade and their army captured Jerusalem, massacring most of the city's non-Christian inhabitants.

When the Crusaders opened up transportation routes from Europe, pilgrimages to the Holy Land became popular and, at the same time, increasing numbers of Jews sought to return to their homeland. Documents of the period indicate that 300 rabbis from France and England arrived in a group, with some settling in Acro (Akko), others in Jerusalem.

After the overthrow of the Crusaders by a Muslim army under Saladin (1187), the Jews were again accorded a certain measure of freedom, including the right to live in Jerusalem. Although the Crusaders regained a foothold in the country after Saladin's death (1193), their presence was limited to a network of fortified castles. Crusader authority in the Land ended after a final defeat (1291) by the Mamluks, a Muslim military class which had come to power in Egypt.

1291-1516 - MAMLUK RULE

The Land under the Mamluks became a backwater province ruled from Damascus. Akko, Jaffa (Yafo) and other ports were destroyed for fear of new crusades, and maritime as well as overland commerce was interrupted. By the end of the Middle Ages, the country's urban centers were virtually in ruins, most of Jerusalem was abandoned and the small Jewish community was poverty-stricken. The period of Mamluk decline was darkened by political and economic upheavals, plagues, locust invasions and devastating earthquakes.

1517-1917 - OTTOMAN RULE

Following the Ottoman conquest in 1517, the Land was divided into four districts and attached administratively to the province of Damascus and ruled from Istanbul.

Orderly government, until the death (1566) of Sultan Suleiman the Magificent, brought improvements and stimulated Jewish immigration. Some newcomers settled in Jerusalem, but the majority went to Safad where, by mid-16th century, the Jewish population had risen to about 10,000, and the town had become a thriving textile center as well as the focus of intense intellectual activity.

1882-1903 - First Aliya (large-scale immigration), mainly from Russia, which had been experiencing severe persecution against Jews. Other Aliyas, from Poland, Germany and elsewhere, would follow.

1897 - First Zionist Congress convened by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland to promote the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people.

1909 - First kibbutz, Degania, and first modern all-Jewish city, Tel Aviv, founded.

1917 - 400 years of Ottoman rule ended by British conquest; British Foreign Minister Balfour pledges support for establishment of a "Jewish national home in Palestine".

1918-1948 - BRITISH RULE



1922 - Britain granted Mandate for Palestine (Land of Israel) by League of Nations. The "Hashemite Kingdom of the Transjordan" is set up on three-fourths of the area, leaving one-fourth for the Jewish national home.

1924 - Technion, first institute of technology, founded in Haifa, Hebrew University of Jerusalem opened on Mt. Scopus soon after.

1936-1939 - Anti-Jewish riots instigated by Arab militants; Jewish immigration severely limited by British White Paper.

1939-1945 - World War II; Holocaust in Europe.

1947 - UN proposes the establishment of Arab and Jewish states in the Land. Boundaries between areas of Israeli and Arab control are drawn (see illustration). This plan is rejected by the Arab states.

1948 - STATE OF ISRAEL ESTABLISHED

End of British Mandate (14 May); State of Israel proclaimed; Israel invaded by five Arab states (15 May); War of Independence (May 1948-July 1949)

1949 - Armistice agreements signed with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon. Jerusalem divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule; First Knesset (parliament) elected; Israel admitted to United Nations as 59th member.

1948-1952 - Mass immigration from Europe and Arab countries.

1967 - Six-Day War, Jerusalem reunited. At the end of six days of fighting, previous cease-fire lines were replaced by new ones, with Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Sinai peninsula and the Golan Heights under Israel's control. As a result, the northern villages were freed from 19 years of recurrent Syrian shelling; the passage of Israeli and Israel-bound shipping through the Straits of Tiran was ensured; and Jerusalem, which had been divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule since 1949, was reunified under Israel's authority.

1973 - Yom Kippur War - Three years of relative calm along the borders were shattered on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), when Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise assault against Israel (6 October 1973), with the Egyptian army crossing the Suez Canal and Syrian troops penetrating the Golan Heights. After significant initial losses, Israeli forces proved victorious. Two years of difficult negotiations between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Syria resulted in disengagement agreements, according to which Israel withdrew from parts of the territories captured. Israel ultimately annexed the Golan Heights.

1977-78 - Visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem. An Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty is ultimately signed. Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Anwar Sadat awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

1982 – Lebanon War - Responding to terrorist incursions into Northern Israel by heavily armed PLO and Syrian militia based in Lebanon, Israel invades, and controls Southern Lebanon. A “security zone” is established, leading to Israeli withdrawal in 1985, and ultimately complete withdrawal in 2000.

1984 - Operation Moses, (and Solomon, 1991) immigration of Jews from Ethiopia. Approx 121,000 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and airlifted from famine-stricken Ethiopia.

1985 – Establishment of Hezbollah - conceived by Muslim clerics and funded by Iran primarily to harass Israel. Its leaders were followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, and its forces were trained and organized by 1,500 Revolutionary Guards that arrived from Iran with permission from the Syrian government, which was in occupation of Lebanon at the time.

1987 - Widespread violence (intifada) starts in Israeli-administered areas.

1989 - Start of mass immigration (1,000,000) of Jews from former Soviet Union.

1993 - Implementation of Palestinian self-government in Gaza Strip and Jericho area.
Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty signed.

2001-02 - Renewed violence (Second Intifada). Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield in response to massive Palestinian terrorist attacks. Israel begins building the anti-terrorist fence to stop West Bank terrorists from killing Israeli citizens.

2005 – Disengagement from Gaza Strip – In a “land for peace” bid, The Knesset approved a unilateral disengagement plan began removing Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005. All Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip were dismantled, and 9,000 Israelis forcibly evicted.

2006 – Second Lebanon War – Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah forces fire 5000 rockets from Lebanon into Northern Israel, displacing 500,000 Israelis. The resulting 34 day conflict is viewed as the first major Iranian step into the region, followed by the Syrian civil war.

Today: Palestinian areas of self government

As of 2016, 4.88 million Palestinians live in the territories – 2.97 million in the West Bank and 1.91 million in the Gaza Strip. 1.8 million Arabs live in Israel proper. The Jerusalem Municipality alone has 316,000 Palestinian with "resident" status in the city in 2016. They are not Israeli citizens but have the right to vote in municipal elections. Arab citizens of Israel, comprising 20 percent of the total population, have been elected to every Knesset, and currently hold 17 of its 120 seats.

