

Chapter 1 : The Early History of Syria and Palestine

The Early History of Egypt From the Old Testament, Herodotus, Manetho, and the Hieroglyphical Incriptions by Samuel Sharpe Assyria From the Earliest Times to the Fall of Nineveh by George Smith A History of the Ancient World by George Stephen Goodspeed.

See Article History Alternative Titles: The term Palestine has been associated variously and sometimes controversially with this small region, which some have asserted also includes Jordan. Both the geographic area designated by the name and the political status of it have changed over the course of some three millennia. The region or at least a part of it is also known as the Holy Land and is held sacred among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Since the 20th century it has been the object of conflicting claims of Jewish and Arab national movements, and the conflict has led to prolonged violence and, in several instances, open warfare. The word Palestine derives from Philistia, the name given by Greek writers to the land of the Philistines, who in the 12th century bce occupied a small pocket of land on the southern coast, between modern Tel Aviv and Yafo and Gaza. After Roman times the name had no official status until after World War I and the end of rule by the Ottoman Empire, when it was adopted for one of the regions mandated to Great Britain; in addition to an area roughly comprising present-day Israel and the West Bank, the mandate included the territory east of the Jordan River now constituting the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, which Britain placed under an administration separate from that of Palestine immediately after receiving the mandate for the territory. The name Palestine has long been in popular use as a general term to denote a traditional region, but this usage does not imply precise boundaries. In contemporary understanding, however, Palestine is generally defined as a region bounded on the east by the Jordan River, on the north by the border between modern Israel and Lebanon, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea including the coast of Gaza, and on the south by the Negev, with its southernmost extension reaching the Gulf of Aqaba. The strategic importance of the area is immense: Settlement depends closely on water, which is almost never abundant. Precipitation, which arrives in the cool half of the year, decreases in amount in general from north to south and from the coast inland. Perennial rivers are few, and the shortage of water is aggravated by the porous nature of the limestone rocks over much of the country. For further reading on the political units most closely associated with Palestine, see the articles Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon. Land Coastal lowlands of varying widths front the Mediterranean. Farther southward the lowland opens out rapidly into the Plain of Sharon, about 8 miles 13 km wide and extending south to the latitude of Tel Aviv and Yafo. Once covered with marshes, the Sharon plain was reclaimed in the post-Exilic and Hellenistic period and is now a settled area. Fields and fruit groves are laid out between scattered sandstone ridges, on which villages have grown up. South of the spur of low hills that approaches the coast at about Yafo Jaffa, the plain widens into a fertile region known in biblical times as Philistia, a district of orange groves, irrigated orchards, and fields of grain. Covered with rich basaltic soils washed down from the Galilean hills, Esdraelon is important both for its fertility and for the great highway it opens from the Mediterranean to the lands across the Jordan. The hill country of Galilee is better-watered and more thickly wooded than that of Samaria or Judaea. North of the Bet Netofa Valley Plain of Asochis is Upper Galilee, with elevations of 4, feet 1, metres, a scrub-covered limestone plateau that is thinly populated. To the south, Lower Galilee with its highest peak, Mount Tabor 1, feet [metres] is a land of east-west ridges enclosing sheltered vales like that of Nazareth, with rich basaltic soils. Samaria, the region of the ancient kingdom of Israel, is a hilly district extending from the Plain of Esdraelon to the latitude of Ramallah. The city of Jerusalem has expanded rapidly along the mountain ridges. It is separated from the coastal plain by a longitudinal fosse and a belt of low hills of soft chalky limestone, about 5 to 8 miles 8 to 13 km wide, known as Ha-Shefela. The Judaeon plateau falls abruptly to the Jordan Valley, which is approached with difficulty along the wadis Kelt and Mukallik. The Jordan Valley is a deep rift valley that varies in width from 1. The Negev, a desertlike region, is triangular in shape with the apex at the south. It extends from Beersheba in the north, where 8 inches mm or more of precipitation falls annually and grain is grown, to the port city of Elat on the Red Sea, in the extremely arid south. It is bounded by the Sinai Peninsula on the west

and the northern extension of the Great Rift Valley on the east. William Charles Brice Rashid Ismail Khalidi

People The social geography of modern Palestine, especially the area west of the Jordan River, has been greatly affected by the dramatic political changes and wars that have brought this small region to the attention of the world. In the early 21st century, Israeli Jews constituted roughly half of the population west of the Jordan, while Arabs – Muslim, Christian, and Druze – and other smaller minorities accounted for the rest. The Jewish population is increasingly composed of persons born in Israel itself, although millions of immigrants have arrived since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. The Arab population is descended from Arabs who lived in the area during the mandate period and, in most cases, for centuries before that time. The majority of both Jews and Arabs are now urbanized. According to Jewish nationalists Zionists, Judaism constitutes a basis for both religious and national ethnic identity. Palestinian nationalists usually emphasize that their shared identity as Arabs transcends the religious diversity of their community: The Arab majority resident in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the still larger number of Arab Palestinians living outside the area many in nearby countries such as Lebanon have strongly opposed Israeli control and have feared an eventual annexation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel. Most Jewish Israeli settlers support such an annexation and think those lands properly belong to Israel. In Arab concerns were partially assuaged when Israel completed its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and handed over control of the territory to the Palestinians. Both Zionists and Palestinian Arab nationalists have at various times since the 19th century claimed rightful possession of the area west of the Jordan River. The rivalry between the two groups and their claims have been major causes of the numerous Arab-Israeli conflicts and the continuing crises in the region. Some members of each group still make such sweeping and mutually exclusive claims to complete control of the area, whereas others are now more willing to seek a peaceful compromise solution. The finds showed that at that stage Palestine was culturally linked with Europe, and human remains were recovered showing that the inhabitants were of the same group as the Neanderthal inhabitants of Europe. The Natufians lived in caves, as did their Paleolithic predecessors, but there is a possibility that they were experimenting in agriculture, for the importance to them of the collection of grain is shown by the artistic care that they lavished on the carving of the hafts of their sickles and in the provision of utensils for grinding. During the subsequent Neolithic Period New Stone Age humans gradually undertook the domestication of animals, the cultivation of crops, the production of pottery, and the building of towns etc. Excavations also have provided a picture of events in Palestine in the 5th – 4th millennium bce, during which the transition from the Stone Age to the Copper Age took place. It was probably in the 4th millennium that the Ghassulians immigrated to Palestine. There was a permanent village site with several successive layers of occupation, and the site probably was associated with reasonably efficient agriculture. At Beersheba there was a copper-working industry, which presumably imported ore from Sinai, and there was also evidence of an ivory-working industry, both proving the growth of a class of specialist craftsmen. The region in which the Ghassulian settlements have been found is mainly in the south of Palestine, with an extension up the coastal plain and its fringes. These settlements seem to have died out and disappeared in the last centuries of the 4th millennium, about the same time that a new population immigrated, probably from the north. Thereafter the composite elements in Palestine consisted of the indigenous Neolithic-Chalcolithic population, the Ghassulians, and these latest immigrants; in time the peoples were amalgamated into what was to become the sedentary urban population of the Early Bronze Age in the 3rd millennium. The growth of these towns can be approximately correlated chronologically with the development of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, Early Bronze I corresponding to the late Predynastic Period and Early Bronze II being cross-dated by finds to the time of the 1st dynasty, c. 3100. All these sites are in northern or central Palestine, and it was there that the Early Bronze Age towns seem to have developed. The town dwellers, identified as the original Semitic population, can, for the sake of convenience, be called Canaanites, although the term is not attested before the middle of the 2nd millennium bce. In the course of the 3rd millennium, therefore, walled towns began to appear throughout Palestine. By about the 23rd century bce the whole civilization had ceased to be urban. During the next phase it was pastoral and was influenced by the settlement of nomads probably from east of the Jordan River. Among the nomads, Amorites from the Syrian Desert may have predominated. It does seem reasonable, however, to associate the incursion of nomads from

the east with the invasions of Egypt by people from Asia that brought the Old Kingdom to an end. An initial date of 23rd–22nd century bce, depending on the interpretation of the Egyptian evidence, and a final date of the 20th century bce seem probable. The picture of Palestine at this period is thus unequivocally that of a region occupied by a number of allied tribes; although they had many features in common, there were also many differences. The most significant point is that, with the possible exception of the northern group, they made no contribution at all to town life. The different groups had tribal centres, but they were essentially seminomadic pastoralists. This description fits well that given in the Book of Joshua of the Amorites who lived in the hill country, as opposed to the Canaanites who lived in the plains and on the coast—areas favourable to agriculture. Middle Bronze Age It was, in fact, the next period—the Middle Bronze Age—that introduced the Canaanite culture as found by the Israelites on their entry into Palestine. The Middle Bronze Age c. The archaeological evidence for the period shows new types of pottery, weapons, and burial practices. Once more an urban civilization based on agriculture was established. It is not entirely clear whether the wave of urban development after the 20th century bce was the work of a new immigrant people accustomed to town dwelling or of the local inhabitants themselves, some of whom may have adopted a sedentary lifestyle and begun, as in Mesopotamia and Syria, to establish dynasties. But where they settled, towns of the widespread Middle Bronze Age civilization of Palestine emerged. This civilization was intimately connected with that of the towns of the Phoenician-Canaanite coast. Extant Egyptian documents provide valuable information about Palestine in the period of the Egyptian 12th dynasty—bce and argue for significant Egyptian interest and influence in Palestine at this time. The culture introduced at this stage was essentially the same as the culture found by the Israelites who moved into Palestine in the 14th and 13th centuries bce. A large repertory of new forms in pottery arose, and for the first time in Palestine the clay was turned entirely on a fast wheel. Comparisons of Palestinian early Middle Bronze pottery forms with metallic and ceramic forms at Byblos, dated by Egyptian contacts, suggest that these forms were brought to Palestine about the 19th century from coastal Syria. Town life in Palestine gradually expanded after the mid-th century bce, but the material culture was essentially a direct development from the preceding stage. Several towns of Middle Bronze Age Palestine were defended by plaster-faced ramparts clearly discernible at Jericho and many other sites, an imported method of fortification giving evidence of a new and alien influence superimposed on the existing Canaanite culture. These were probably introduced by the Asiatic Hyksos, possibly related to the Amorites, who secured control of northern Egypt about Under Queen Hatshepsut—58 Palestine revolted against Egyptian domination, but the rebellion was put down firmly by her successor, Thutmose III, who established a stable administration, maintained through the reigns of his immediate successors. Egyptian administrative documents excavated in both Egypt and Palestine show in considerable detail how the provincial government was organized and even how it operated during the century—bce. Documents show, for example, that the land of Retenu Syria-Palestine was divided into three administrative districts, each under an Egyptian governor. The third district Canaan included all of Palestine from the Egyptian border to Byblos. The unusual concern of the pharaohs with the affairs of Palestine was chiefly a result of the fact that control of it was necessary for the defense of Phoenicia and southern Syria, menaced by Mitanni until about and by the Hittite empire after that date. About bce the increasingly weak rule of the last pharaohs of the 18th dynasty was replaced by the strong arm of the second and third kings of the 19th dynasty, Seti I and Ramses II—13 bce. These kings blunted the southward thrust of the Hittites and consolidated the crumbling Egyptian empire. The exactions of foreign bureaucrats, however, combined with internal decay, had so enfeebled the Canaanite vassal princes of Palestine that it was comparatively easy for the incoming Israelites to occupy most of the hill country east of the Jordan River and in western Palestine during the closing decades of the 13th century bce. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Israelite settlement in Palestine was much more complex and disconnected than the biblical accounts indicate. During a short interlude of anarchy that followed the last weak kings of the 19th dynasty, Egyptian rule was completely extinguished, and the ephemeral victories of Ramses III in the early decades of the 12th century scarcely affected Palestinian history. Subsequent histories of the region have relied heavily on biblical narrative. Although this narrative has been augmented to a great extent by information derived from modern archaeological excavations—and, for some historical periods, by outside

written sources—it is frequently the major, or sole, source of historical information; however, its validity has often been disputed. The Iron Age The Israelites in Palestine Though the Israelite tribes entered Palestine before the end of the Late Bronze Age, they did not become firmly established in their new home until the early decades of the 12th century bce. Their number was increased greatly during the settling of Canaan by seminomadic Hebrew tribes already in Palestine, as well as by many settled Canaanites. Excavation has made it clear that the Israelites began building amid the ruins of their precursors and that new settlements sprang up rapidly all through the hill country. Had events followed their normal course, the resurgent Canaanites, who had not been driven from the coastal plain or the Plain of Esdraelon, might have overwhelmed the scattered and unorganized Israelite clans, but this was prevented by the great invasion of the Sea Peoples in the time of Ramses III, in the early decades of the 12th century bce. Among the invaders from the Aegean basin were the Philistines, who were to conquer much of the region within a century and a half after their settlement in the southern coastal plain. The Philistines have been identified with the so-called Peleset, who were used as garrison troops and mercenaries by Ramses III.

Chapter 2 : The Early History of Syria and Palestine by Lewis Bayles Paton

*The Early History of Syria and Palestine [Lewis Bayles Paton] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This is a comprehensive history of the Levant during antiquity, going as far back as the Mesopotamian civilizations and covering through the Romans.*

Enjoy the Famous Daily Syria and Palestine: In the late 6th century Darius makes Syria and Palestine, together with Cyprus, the fifth satrapy of his empire. During the Seleucid dynasty Syria and Palestine are under joint control in the 2nd century. Then, for some years from the 1st century BC, the Roman and Byzantine empires unite the region. The three main cities are the very ancient Damascus and the more recent Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem in Palestine. Of these it is Jerusalem which has a turbulent history in Roman times. The Jews of Palestine prove exceptionally hard to govern. The family are practising Jews, though not descended from one of the tribes of Israel, and they seem able to deliver the stability which the Roman empire requires in the region. He returns to the east with a Roman army, and by 37 BC is firmly in control of his new kingdom. He will rule it till his death in 4 BC, becoming known to history as Herod the Great. Herod and his successors: He founds new Roman cities, in particular Caesarea now Qesari, on the coast south of Haifa, which later becomes the capital of Roman Palestine. And he creates a spectacular new Temple on the holy mount in Jerusalem see the Temple in Jerusalem. But many of his actions are violent. In an outburst of jealousy he kills not only a favourite wife, Mariamne, but also her grandfather, mother, brother and two sons. He could well have been capable of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem if so in about 4 BC, the last year of his life, but the gospel account of this incident is inherently improbable as history - and no mention is made of the atrocity until Christian documents of a century later. In his will Herod divides his large kingdom between three of his sons. Their inability to control an increasingly turbulent Palestine prompts Rome to give more power to its provincial governors, or procurators. But they have no greater success in pacifying the Jewish people, resentful of Roman rule and horrified by any encroachment of Roman religious symbolism which by now includes the idolatrous theme of a divine emperor. This is the period when the Zealots emerge - a radical political group committed to the ending of Roman rule in Palestine, using terrorism as one of its main forms of argument. The impossibility of a working relationship between the Jewish and Roman authorities is well suggested in the New Testament account of the last days of Jesus Christ. The Jews of the Sanhedrin are determined that he shall die for blasphemy, but they want the Roman governor of Judaea Pontius Pilate to condemn him. The lack of effective government implicit in this story is now typical of Palestine, apart from a brief period starting in AD 41. In that year Herod Agrippa is appointed king of Judaea. He therefore has a direct link with a great Jewish dynasty. He also, like Herod the Great, has valuable contacts in Rome. He has been friendly since childhood with the family of Claudius, and Claudius - in his first year as emperor - appoints Agrippa to the kingdom of Judaea. For a while, under the rule of this devout Jew who has the confidence of Rome, Palestine seems set to enjoy again the stability associated with the long reign of Herod the Great. But Agrippa dies after only three years, in AD 44. The region returns to Roman governors and revolutionary ferment. AD 66 The violent creed of the Zealots now acquires growing support, reinforced by their assassination of Jews who collaborate with the Romans. The Zealots have an alarming habit of wandering among the crowd on public occasions, with short daggers under their garments, and stabbing opponents before melting away unseen among a populace increasingly supportive of their aims or else plain terrified. Zealots are prominent in a popular uprising which in AD 66 expels the Romans from Jerusalem, and in the revolutionary government which then briefly rules Palestine. Their violent behaviour in power outrages many of their previous supporters. But they remain at the heart of resistance to the Romans. AD 69 Nero sends a veteran general, Vespasian, to put down the rebellion in Judaea; and Vespasian involves his own son, Titus, in the campaign. The last of the four candidates, and the only survivor of that year, is Vespasian. Marching back to Rome, he leaves Titus in command of the campaign in Judaea. By the year 70 Titus is besieging Jerusalem. With an impressive array of battering rams and catapults, he succeeds in demolishing parts of the city wall against strong resistance from the Jews. The siege lasts six months. Josephus, a Jewish historian who is with the

Roman forces, provides vivid details of famine and cannibalism within the beleaguered city. Those who attempt to escape, as refugees, fare little better. Appalling horrors follow the discovery that one such fugitive has swallowed his wealth in the form of gold coins. He says that Jewish partisans first set fire to the Temple colonnade after enticing Roman soldiers into a trap. Whatever the truth, the great building with its golden trimmings is soon destroyed by fire and by looting Romans. So ends the central shrine of Judaism. The destruction of the Temple is another turning point in Jewish history see the Temple in Jerusalem. AD 73 For three years groups of Zealots hold out against Roman domination in a few rocky fortresses in Palestine. The last to fall, Masada, is the most dramatic site of all. Standing high and sheer on the western shore of the Dead Sea, Masada is a natural stronghold. Its top forms a large flat area of some 20 acres. Herod the Great has recently added to the defences of the summit, providing powerful walls, an administrative building, storehouses for grain and massive reservoirs for natural water. A Roman garrison here is massacred in the Jewish rebellion of AD 70. The Zealots, occupying the fortress, build a synagogue, ritual baths and family houses. In 72 the tenth legion arrives in the plain below, armed with elaborate siege engines. For several months they make little impact on the stone defences. But eventually flaming torches, catapulted against a temporary wall, succeed in starting a fire. Eleazar decides that the time has come to make a dramatic end. Without any sense of irony, Josephus - who has himself escaped deceitfully from a suicide pact urged upon his followers - describes with admiration the oratory by which Eleazar persuades the Jews of Masada to die, and the courageous discipline with which the deed is carried out. Each man, after final caresses and tears, kills his wife and children. He then lies down beside them, for his own throat to be cut by one of the ten men selected by lot for this task. Then the ten draw lots as to who among them shall die first. The final survivor kills himself - the only case of suicide in the death of men, women and children. Two women, who escape by hiding, live to tell the tale. The last Jewish rebellion: AD 132 For two generations an uneasy truce prevails between the Jews and their Roman conquerors. Although there is no Temple in Jerusalem and the city has been largely destroyed, the Jews continue to worship freely in their synagogues. But any suggestion of calm is shattered after the emperor Hadrian, visiting Jerusalem in AD 135, decides to rebuild it as a Roman city. On the ruined Temple mount there is to be a shrine to Jupiter, in which Hadrian himself will be honoured. Jewish opposition to this sacrilege is led by Simon Bar-Cochba, calling himself the prince of Israel. In his Jewish forces defeat a Roman legion and capture Jerusalem. Not till 136, after a large army has been sent to regain control, is Jerusalem recovered by the Romans. In a bitter campaign, fought village by village throughout the region, half a million lives are lost. The whole area of Palestine is devastated. Aelia Capitolina becomes, for the moment, an unimportant provincial town. They even seem to have been expelled from the surrounding region of Judaea. Only further north, in Galilee, do they retain a presence within their ancient kingdom of Israel. There is by now another significant community in Jerusalem - the Christians, who have played no part in the recent rebellion. They survive within the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina. Two centuries later these Christians in Jerusalem, and the city, benefit from a change of religious policy in the Roman empire.

Chapter 3 : blog.quintoapp.com: Customer reviews: The Early History of Syria and Palestine

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Ben-Sasson, had been the "administrative capital" of the region beginning in 6 CE. The Provinces of Judaea and Syria were key scenes of an increasing conflict between Judaeans and Hellenistic population, which exploded into full scale Jewish-Roman wars, beginning with the Great Jewish Revolt of 66 CE. Disturbances followed throughout the region during the Kito's War in 132 CE. Between 132 and 136 CE, Simon bar Kokhba led a revolt against the Roman Empire, controlling parts of Judaea but seemingly not Jerusalem, for three years. As a result, Hadrian sent Sextus Julius Severus to the region, who brutally crushed the revolt. Hadrian probably chose a name that revived the ancient name of Philistia Palestine, combining it with that of the neighboring province of Syria, in an attempt to suppress Jewish connection to the land, although the actual Philistines from which the name derives had disappeared from history during the Neo-Assyrian Empire 722 BC. The capital of the enlarged province remained in Antiochia. In the 3rd century, Syrians even reached for imperial power, with the Severan dynasty. Syria was of crucial strategic importance during the Crisis of the Third Century. In 272, the Syrian Legion rebelled against the Roman Empire, but the uprising went unsuccessful. After Valerian was captured by the Sassanids in 260, and died in captivity in Bishapur, Odaenathus campaigned as far as Ctesiphon near modern-day Baghdad for revenge, invading the city twice. When Odaenathus was assassinated by his nephew Maconius, his wife Septimia Zenobia took power, ruling Palmyra on behalf of her son, Vabalathus. Zenobia rebelled against Roman authority with the help of Cassius Longinus and took over Bosra and lands as far to the west as Egypt, establishing the short-lived Palmyrene Empire. Next, she took Antioch and large sections of Asia Minor to the north. In 272, the Roman Emperor Aurelian finally restored Roman control and Palmyra was besieged and sacked, never to recover her former glory. Aurelian captured Zenobia, bringing her back to Rome. He paraded her in golden chains in the presence of the senator Marcellus Petrus Nutenus, but allowed her to retire to a villa in Tibur, where she took an active part in society for years. A legionary fortress was established in Palmyra and although no longer an important trade center, it nevertheless remained an important junction of Roman roads in the Syrian desert. The Byzantine period following the Roman Empire only resulted in the building of a few churches; much of the city went to ruin. Palaestina Secunda consisted of the Galilee, the lower Jezreel Valley, the regions east of Galilee, and the western part of the former Decapolis, with the seat of government at Scythopolis. Palaestina Tertia included the Negev, southern Transjordan part of Arabia, and most of Sinai, with Petra as the usual residence of the governor. Palestina Tertia was also known as Palaestina Salutaris.

Chapter 4 : History of Palestine - Wikipedia

Although written before the modern discoveries that define Ancient Near Eastern studies today, Paton's historic foray into the history of Syria and Palestine served to start a continuing discussion that remains active today.

Rugged mountains contrast with flat, fertile valleys. The peak of Mt. The near impassibility of the desert regions lay in sharp contrast with the ports and harbors of the coastal regions. Ancient Palestine has seen blood throughout nearly every age of human existence, dating back to the earliest civilizations of the world. Palestine, or Canaan, or Israel, was described by God in Deuteronomy 8: This is the site of the End Times battle of Armageddon. It has seen bloodshed since before the Pharaohs of Egypt. Solomon built up and fortified the city during his reign as King of Israel - archaeological evidence of which remains today. The land of Palestine, or Canaan, was occupied by Canaanites long before Abraham arrived. These people traded openly and freely with the major powers of their day. Strangely enough, though, there is very scant textual evidence of Palestine history and Canaanite culture. Unlike the Egyptian, Syrian, and Mesopotamian civilizations, where there are wealthy archives of material, Palestine history did not leave behind an archive of texts from contemporary Canaan of old. As a result, a reconstruction of the life and culture of an ancient Canaanite from this period in Palestine history is difficult to accurately depict. The earliest portions of Palestine history have been discovered through archaeological finds and excavations throughout the land. Canaanite pottery is especially helpful when dating specific areas and cities, to specific times throughout history. An example of using pottery for dating would be, for instance; if a certain type of pottery found in Canaan was also found in Egypt, and if that type of pottery in Egypt dated to the reign of Seti I, then that would date the layer in Canaan as well. Palestine history is closely connected with Egyptian history. With the absence of textual data, other methods such as the one described above must be used to construct ancient Palestine. These people were often referred to as Ammonites, Moabites, Phoenicians, Hittites, Canaanites, Israelites, among other such Biblical names, and each achieved its own national identity. Yet, ethnically speaking, each nation was Canaanite. Thus, Palestine history is marked by a heterogeneous mix of people, each of their own cultural identity, yet ethnically the same. A type of sanctuary was found near the spring of Ain es-Sultan, or ancient Jericho. This sanctuary belonged to the Natufian hunters of the region. It was undoubtedly due to the spring that the Natufians chose to settle down and establish permanent roots in this particular location. Thus, the site of Jericho is, perhaps, one of the first attempts at a civilization attempting to transition from a lifestyle of nomadic wandering, to a lifestyle of settlement, or sedentism. This occurred, according to some scholars, as early as the 10 millennium B. This process did not occur overnight, however. It may encompass a period of up to one thousand years within Palestine history. The dates of the Neolithic Age vary as starting anywhere from B. It is widely agreed upon that this era breaks into subdivisions, mainly characteristic by subtle changes in pottery. Thus exact dates tend to vary, sometimes by hundreds of years, from scholar to scholar. However, it was during the Neolithic Age, that Palestine history began to show significant signs of development and sustained growth. Israel and Palestine history is closely tied to the land. At this point in its development, Canaan had advanced to an economy that was developing from a system of gathering food, to methods of producing food. Their chief source of meat was gazelle, either herded or hunted. Palestine history had not yet embraced animal domestication. Major breakthroughs occurred, however, in the area of plant domestication, specifically with barley and wheat. If these early inhabitants were, in fact, some of the earliest descendants of Noah and his offspring, then a tendency towards knowledge of plants would be natural. The pre-flood world was based on the premise of agriculture. One of the first acts of Noah after the Genesis Flood was to plant a vineyard. This knowledge would have been passed down through the generations. The people lived in well built mud brick houses, circular or oval in shape. Jericho, however, had developed into a town of sizable stature, with massive defense walls, and at least one tower. Many scholars agree that around B. The settlement at Jericho may have contained up to two thousand people at this time of Palestine history. However, between and B. Some historians say this gap covers up to five hundred years. This gap may be a result of drier climatic conditions. A drier climate would have had a severe effect on Canaanite

agriculture. Perhaps this led villagers to return to a lifestyle of herding and grazing in order to survive. Settlement did return to the area, however, towards the middle of the sixth millennium - BC. The settlements, though, were on a much smaller scale. In this period of Palestine history, Jericho was hardly the strongly fortified city of old. Rather, it, like most other sites of this era, was a small, simple, unwallled village. Towns and villages cropped up where there were ample supplies of water, food, defense, and transportation. Springs and small rivers were the usual suppliers of water. Later, the development of methods to transport water allowed settlement farther away from water sources. Palestine and Israel shared this dimorphic type of society. Some people settled down, establishing villages, and permanent roots. Others wandered with herds of cattle, sheep, donkeys, and other animals. People looked for natural barriers of defense, allowing for easy fortification of towns and villages, before settling in a spot. Good farmland was also a necessity for sustained growth and development. Oftentimes, settlers looked for prime locations along trade routes. This gave easy access to goods and supplies not available in the nearby areas. Locations that met these conditions were often occupied for centuries, oftentimes rebuilt and resettled after a war, or a natural disaster. Others took to herding sheep, goats, and cattle. These people lived off the land, and wandered wherever the grazing was best. The contrast between established villages, and semi-nomadic herdsmen, would implant itself firmly into the consciousness of ancient Palestine. Over the centuries, mounds of debris from these cities formed flat-topped hills that archaeologists call "Tells". What is known of Palestine history has been gathered from Tells which abound throughout all of Canaan. The majority of Tells in ancient Palestine were less than 10 acres. Ekron, a Philistine city, covered fifty acres, and was amongst the largest Tells in Palestine. Megiddo, Hazor, and Jerusalem were also prominent cities. Click on the link to share your thoughts, comments, and questions on the land, history, and people of Palestine! These settlements, however, were not well fortified, suggesting that this point in Palestine history was relatively peaceful. Mesopotamian sites from this period stand out above all others of the Chalcolithic Period in the Near East. In Northern Mesopotamia, cultures such as the Hassuna, Samarra, and Halafian, flourished artistically, evident by the sophisticated pottery found in the region. Starting around B. The Bible makes mention of Uruk, biblical Erech Gen. Excavations in Uruk attest to the importance and wealth the Bible places on this city. Mud brick temples, with geometric shapes and different colored cones, have been discovered in the ancient city. The Sumerians exploded onto the scene around B. A tablet inscribed with pictographs was discovered in Kish, dating back to B. Large temples were erected throughout southern Mesopotamia, referred to as Shinar, in the Bible Gen. Many important and innovative ideas, and cultural advances developed in this region. Cultural advances were not limited to southern Mesopotamia alone. Palestine was producing objects from copper to be used in temples. Highly skilled craftsmanship work, most notably with ivory, was discovered in and around Beer-sheba. The people of this area lived in well constructed rectangular shaped houses. Ghassul, situated east of the Jordan River, on the northern end of the Dead Sea, covered 60 acres. It was a large, open settlement, consisting of rectangular shaped mud bricked homes, very similar to those at Beersheba. These homes showed excellent levels of architectural skill. Teleilat Ghassul also possessed temples with wall paintings of bizarre and fanciful creatures, eight-pointed stars, and masks used in special rituals. This structure has been identified as an altar used for cultic ceremonies. An extensive Copper industry was in full operation during the Chalcolithic Age of Palestine history. Many settlements and camps have produced evidence of metalworking and mining, specifically with copper and turquoise. In the Sinai and Negev, especially, sites have been found to be associated with mining and the production of copper. At the Chalcolithic site of Abu Matar, one of the Beersheba sites, sophisticated metalworking activities were marked by the remains of raw malachite, flint anvils for crushing, ovens, and other such tools and equipment. Throughout Palestine history the land has acted as a buffer between Mesopotamian powers and Egyptian powers.

Chapter 5 : Syria-Palestine

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During the period of disruption after B. Thus, around B. As a result of these events, early-Iron-Age Syria-Palestine was not controlled by large imperial states. This power vacuum in the region allowed small states to develop and to make important contributions to the development of civilization. The peoples of Syria-Palestine lived in numerous separate city states and small kingdoms scattered through the coastal and river valleys and mountains of what is now Israel, Syria, and Lebanon. They were actually many different peoples, but they all spoke a small group of similar Semitic languages. They most likely wandered north across Arabia from what today is Yemen, and settled on and around the eastern coast of the Mediterranean in the late Bronze Age. They acquired iron technology and formed independent city states in the wake of the power vacuum created by the fall of the Hittites and the retreat of the Egyptians in the s B. They also acquired some religious ideas and political and social institutions from Mesopotamian culture. They were called Canaanites. The name means people of the purple; it comes from a purple dye made in the region. Some Canaanite city states along the coast of modern Lebanon began to trade by sea up and down the Mediterranean coast. As trade developed, they sailed farther and farther away to reach new markets. When they came into contact with the Greeks, the Greeks translated the name Canaanite into the Greek term. That term is Phoenician, which we still use for these traders. The Phoenicians were significant because their trading eventually took them all over the Mediterranean. They even set up trading posts in Africa, Spain, and other distant lands. This helped to spread civilization far more widely to backward lands all around the Mediterranean from to They also invented a new, simplified system of writing, the alphabet. Most modern alphabets are based on it, including our own. Another people who appeared in this region in the early Iron Age were the Hebrews. The word Hebrew means nomad or wanderer. In their earliest history, the Hebrews lived by herding flocks of sheep and goats through the deserts bordering Syria-Palestine. The Hebrews of later times had many stories about their life in this early period, which are preserved in the book of Genesis. We have no way of checking these stories historiographically. But there are still nomads today in this part of the world. Their general life and institutions are very similar to what is described in these early Hebrew writings. Nomads live in what are called extended families. An extended family is made up of a family head called a patriarch with his sons and their wives and children. The patriarch makes all the decisions for the family; he rules the family members and leads them as long as he lives. When the patriarch dies, his sons break apart and form extended families of their own, which go their own way. They have to keep in small groups because resources are limited. The families normally stayed apart; but sometimes in early history families descended from the same man would ally together in larger groups called tribes for the purpose of war. The Hebrews lived as nomads until about B. Then they began to leave the desert to invade the lands of the southern Canaanites. They were one of the many groups of migrant barbarians who plagued the civilized areas at the end of the Bronze Age. By this time, the Hebrew people had grown into a collection of twelve tribes, each of which was descended from one of the twelve sons of an original patriarch named Israel. Thus, they are sometimes called Hebrews and sometimes the children or descendants of Israel. They had a common ancestry, a common religion, and a common Semitic language. But at first, they did not have a common government or a single leader. Their organization was still loose and primitive. The main activity that the tribes cooperated in was religion. They had a high priest who was in charge of their worship. But he did not have any political power. Occasionally, a very capable military leader would appear and unite the tribes for war. These persons were followed because they were thought to have support of the Hebrew god. They were really only generals; they did not have any power or authority outside of war. Aside from fighting together, the individual tribes and even the individual families ran their own affairs. For two hundred years, the tribes fought to take land away from the Canaanites so that they could settle it themselves. But they did not gain control of the whole region at first. Many of the Canaanites had well organized city-states; these states were too strong for the

loosely organized Hebrews to conquer. During the long conflict with the more civilized Canaanites, many Hebrews began to see the need for a stronger government. They began to press for the creation of a Hebrew kingdom. Some conservative Hebrews fought to preserve the older tribal system; but by B. The Hebrews were influenced by the Mesopotamian idea that kings had to receive their authority from god. That determined the way the kingship was founded. The most widely recognized leader was the high priest named Samuel. He was thought to receive support and inspiration from the Hebrew god. Thus, he was called upon to choose a king with the help of god. He conferred the kingship on a man named Saul B. Saul is regarded as the first Hebrew king, but he was still mainly a military leader. The tribes followed him in war, but they resisted his efforts to govern them in other ways. He was the greatest political leader in Hebrew history. He was a great general. By military skill, he forced all the Hebrews to accept his rule; and he also conquered the remaining Canaanite states in Palestine. Thus, he made Israel a real country with definite lands and definite boundaries under his leadership. He set up a permanent capital for the country in Jerusalem, a city that he had captured in war. David also started the process of organizing a true royal government to rule his lands. He took a census of the country, levied taxes, and set up a bureaucracy to enforce his orders. Under him, the Hebrew kingdom reached the height of its power. He conquered extensive foreign lands to the north; for a while his kingdom reached all the way to upper Mesopotamia. At home, he perfected the machinery of government and carried out many extensive building projects. The most important was a huge temple at Jerusalem for the Hebrew god. Solomon succeeded in making Israel a strong, sophisticated state not unlike the great kingdom of Mesopotamia in earlier times. But in doing so, he angered many Hebrews. He had to tax the people heavily to pay for his building and his wars. His policies also offended conservative Hebrews. They were afraid that Hebrews were beginning to live too much like other peoples of the Syria-Palestine region. As a result of this conflict, the Hebrews became divided into two separate kingdoms with separate governments. The larger of the two was the kingdom of Israel in the north; the smaller was the kingdom of Judah, centered around Jerusalem in the south. The split between them was never healed. After , the high point in the political history of the Hebrews was passed. They were never strong again. Although the Hebrew nation was small and short lived, the Hebrews made a major contribution to the West in their religion.

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From about 638 to 1918, the Ottoman Empire ruled much of the region. The League of Nations issued a British mandate for Palestine—a document that gave Britain the responsibility of establishing a Jewish national homeland in Palestine—which went into effect in 1920. Jewish leaders accepted the plan, but many Palestinian Arabs vehemently opposed it. Arab groups argued that they represented the majority of the population in certain regions and should be granted more territory. They began to form volunteer armies throughout Palestine. Israel Becomes a State In May 1948, less than a year after the Partition of Palestine was introduced, Britain withdrew from Palestine and Israel became an independent state. Estimates suggest between 700,000 and 1,000,000 Palestinians fled or were forced to leave their homes. Almost immediately, war broke out between Jews and Arabs in the region. This conflict marked the beginning of years of violent conflict between Arabs and Israelis. In the years after its inception, the PLO became associated with extremism and violence. This brief conflict, which became known as The Six-Day War in 1967, resulted in major land gains for Israel. The outcome of this war led to more fighting that continued for decades. This conflict was fueled by Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinian militia groups revolted, and hundreds of people were killed. A subsequent peace process, known as the Oslo Peace Accords, was proposed to end the ongoing violence. Arafat returned to Gaza in 1994 after being exiled for 27 years. He headed up the newly-formed Palestinian Authority. It also set a schedule for Palestinian Legislative Council elections. Many Palestinians felt this was an offensive move, and they protested. Riots, suicide bombings and other attacks subsequently broke out, putting an end to the promising peace process. This period of violence between Palestinians and Israelis lasted nearly five years. In 2005, the Israeli army withdrew from Gaza. That same year, fighting between Hamas and Fatah, the political group that controlled the PLO, ensued. In 2006, Hamas defeated Fatah in a battle for Gaza. Many countries consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization. The group has carried out suicide bombings and repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel. In April 2008, Hamas and Fatah agreed to a deal that would form a unified national Palestinian government. Although Palestinians occupy key areas of land, including the West Bank and the Gaza strip, large populations of Israelis continue to settle in these locations. In May 2008, leaders of Hamas presented a document that proposed the formation of a Palestinian state using the defined borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. However, the group refused to recognize Israel as a state, and the Israeli government promptly rejected the plan. What is Palestine and Palestinians? Israel Science and Technology Directory. Everything you need to know about Israel-Palestine. The countries that recognize Palestine as a state. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation. The History Learning Site. History of a Revolution. Hamas accepts Palestinian state with borders.

Chapter 7 : Full text of "The Early History of Syria and Palestine"

The history of Palestine is the study of the past in the region of Palestine, generally defined as a geographic region in the Southern Levant between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River (where Israel and Palestine are today), and various adjoining lands.

Early History of Palestine The Early History of Palestine Before World War I The origin of some of the earliest known civilizations is traced back in the Middle East where the land of Palestine comprised of a human habitation existing even before the biblical times. With the name of Palestine so prominent in the news, it is important that we know where its roots lies. Where did the name Palestine come from? The land area of Palestine refers to the region which lies between the Syrian interior and southern Mediterranean coastal plains. But in the Old Testament, the land is not called Palestine but Canaan. What was the extent of Palestine in Biblical Times? The start of the Biblical period brings Palestine in Christian significance; however, the region was inhabited even long before Abrahamic religions. The region was referred to as the land of Israel or Eretz Yisrael in the Old Testament as it was not called Palestine in those times. Around 13th century BC, the Exodus from Egypt brought the Children of Israel in the land of Canaan where they first settled as a tribe and then established their separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In Genesis, God address Jacob: The trace of the original populace of Palestine is rather difficult but the ancient inhabitants of Palestine are known to be ancient Greeks hailed from Asia Minor and not Arabs or Semites. The location of Palestine at the crossroads to some chief civilizations like Egyptians, Babylonians and Romans made it a frequently invaded land with several people living here through the ages. The highland zone was occupied by two separate kingdoms, the Kingdom of Israel situated in the north while the Kingdom of Judah to the south. Judea and Samaria are the biblical names for the area that is now known as the West Bank. The area holds importance for the Arabs as a large population of them is living there while conflicts arise with Israel trying to take over the territory. Historically, the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel are known to have corresponding to Judea and Samaria roughly. After the fall of the two kingdoms, the name Judah was Hellenized to Judea and Israel was renamed Samaria from Shomron. The origin of Arabs is intermingled with several races and ethnic groups instead of a more singular line. The tradition says that Arabs come from the line of Abraham and his son Ishmael. There are other ethnic Arab groups as well that spread in the land and existed for millennia. Before modern Arab nationalism which developed in 19th and 20th century, Arab speaking people identified themselves with a particular tribe, a village or a family. The land of Palestine has been populated by the nation known as Palestinians since historical times. These people are known to have been religiously diverse always with Muslim as its majority, living peacefully with fellow Jews, Christians and Druze people. However, with the Zionist movement of 20th century, a large number of Jews immigrated to Palestine from many parts of the Europe which increased the Jewish population drastically, leading to conflicts between Arabs and Jews. Jerusalem is probably the only city in the world which has gained continuous attention and controversies, especially among the followers of the three biggest religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. For Muslims, Jerusalem is the third most holy city after Mecca and Medina. This is the place where Prophet Muhammad SAW made his ascent to the heaven, an event which holds a huge religious significance for Muslims. The turn of the 20th century saw a Jewish nationalist movement springing up with Theodor Herzl as its founder. This ideology was named Zionism and its supporters are called Zionists , the name derived from Zion, Jewish synonym for the land of Israel. The goal of this movement was to gain Eretz Yisrael back and to create a Jewish homeland in the country of Palestine. There are a large number of Jews who do not support the Zionist views, stating it to be completely different from the traditional Jewish beliefs, laws and the teachings of Torah. Aliyah is one of the three major components of Judaism and in Hebrew its means ascent, immigration of Jews to The Land of Israel. The term holds a high importance for the religious Jews and has become an aspiration since the Babylonian exile. Jews hold the view that travelling to Israel is going up the level both metaphysically and geographically as anyone moving to Jerusalem from Egypt, Mediterranean basin or Babylonia climbs to a higher altitude, 2, feet above sea level. Zionists found their support in some Christian,

Hindu as well as Muslim people where the Shah of Persia met with the Jewish leaders from British in and suggested that Jews should buy a land and establish their home. The historical figures show a substantial Arab population in Palestine till until Jews started pouring from across Europe as a result of the Zionist movement. Due to the emigration that led from the Six-Day War in and War, many of the Palestinian Christians now live outside of the Mandate Palestine but a lot of them still live in the Palestinian territories nonetheless. How did the Zionists acquire land in Palestine? Aims of the Zionist movement failed to compliment the positive approach with which Palestinian Arabs thought of gaining independence. From the very beginning, Zionist movement has made efforts to achieve Jewish majority in Palestine with immigration as their tool and establishing Jewish property on as much as land as they could. All this necessitated the displacement of Palestinians from their homes and conflicting with their interests.

Chapter 8 : Syria Palaestina - Wikipedia

Early History The region of Palestine is among the earliest sites of human habitation in the world. Archaeological evidence suggests a hunter-gatherer community living a nomadic existence in the region pre, BCE.

The remains are dated to the Pleistocene , c. These are traces of the earliest migration of Homo erectus out of Africa. The site yielded hand axes of the Acheulean type. These anatomically modern humans , both adult and infant, are now dated to about 90,000 years old, and many of the bones are stained with red ochre , which is conjectured to have been used in the burial process, a significant indicator of ritual behavior and thereby symbolic thought and intelligence. Mount Carmel has yielded several important findings, among them Kebara Cave that was inhabited between 60,000-48,000 BP and where the most complete Neanderthal skeleton found to date. The Tabun cave was occupied intermittently during the Lower and Middle Paleolithic ages , to around 40,000 years ago. Excavations suggest that it features one of the longest sequences of human occupation in the Levant. In the nearby Es Skhul cave excavations revealed the first evidence of the late Epipalaeolithic Natufian culture, characterized by the presence of abundant microliths , human burials and ground stone tools. This also represents one area where Neanderthals were present in the region from 45,000 years ago lived alongside modern humans dating to 12,000 years ago. Evidence of such settlements were found at Tel es-Sultan in Jericho and consisted of a number of walls, a religious shrine, and a foot 7. The Canaanite city-states held trade and diplomatic relations with Egypt and Syria. Parts of the Canaanite urban civilization were destroyed around 1550 BCE, though there is no consensus as to why. Incursions by nomads from the east of the Jordan River who settled in the hills followed soon thereafter. Diverse commercial ties and an agriculturally based economy led to the development of new pottery forms, the cultivation of grapes, and the extensive use of bronze. Political, commercial and military events towards the end of this period around 1550 BCE were recorded by ambassadors and Canaanite proxy rulers for Egypt in cuneiform tablets known as the Amarna Letters. In the first year of his reign pharaoh Seti I ca. 1470 BCE. The Philistines are credited with introducing iron weapons and chariots to the local population. Since then the traditional territories of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh have been covered by intensive surveys. These surveys have revealed the sudden emergence of a new culture contrasting with the Philistine and Canaanite societies existing in Palestine during Iron Age I. Faust Avraham of Bar-Ilan University , the Israelite ethnic identity had been created, not from the Exodus and a subsequent conquest, but from a transformation of the existing Canaanite-Philistine cultures. The discovery of the remains of a dense network of highland villages apparently established within the span of few generations indicated that a dramatic social transformation had taken place in the central hill country of Canaan around 1200 BCE. There was no sign of violent invasion or even the infiltration of a clearly defined ethnic group. Instead, it seemed to be a revolution in lifestyle. In the formerly sparsely populated highlands from the Judean hills in the south to the hills of Samaria in the north, far from the Canaanite cities that were in the process of collapse and disintegration, about two-hundred fifty hilltop communities suddenly sprang up. Here were the first Israelites. The first use of grapheme -based writing originated in the area , probably among Canaanite peoples resident in Egypt. All modern alphabets are descended from this writing. It was written using the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet. There was an at least partial Egyptian withdrawal from Palestine in this period, though it is likely that Bet Shean was an Egyptian garrison as late as the beginning of the 10th century BCE. The Mesha Stele, from c. 840 BCE. The Bible records the Israelite cities becoming vassals to the Neo-Assyrian Empire during this period. At around this time, the Siege of Gezer c. 720 BCE. Further military expeditions into the region are recorded in the annals of Sargon and Sennacherib , as well as in the bible. According to the bible, between 722 and 586 BCE the northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire and the Israelite tribes thereafter known as the Lost Tribes were exiled.

Syria Palaestina was a Roman province between AD and about It was established by the merger of Roman Syria and Roman Judaea, following the defeat of the Bar Kokhba revolt in CE.

Palestine in the later Roman Empire Introduction By the 3rd millennium BCE, the southern Levant was a land of small, fortified towns and villages, ruled over by petty kings and chiefs. Indeed, by this time, most modern towns in the area had come into existence. Urbanism, along with Bronze Age technology, had presumably arrived in this region via trade links with Mesopotamia. In any event, urban civilization began to flourish here not long after it had begun in Egypt. Nomadism had also made its appearance, with pastoralist clans grazing their sheep on the eastern hill country and in the grasslands between the settled areas. The Land of Canaan In the later 3rd millennium, the towns of Canaan declined, many vanishing altogether. Pastoral nomadism became the dominant economy. This was at around the same time as the Amorites were moving into northern Syria, and it may well be that their close relatives, the Canaanites, who were either newcomers to the area or who had already lived in the eastern highlands for centuries, now expanded westward to the coast. Some indeed probably migrated further, bringing the Nile Delta in northern Egypt under their control. In time, urban settlements reappeared amongst the Canaanites, and numerous small kingdoms. These fell under the dominance of Egypt during the early 2nd millennium BCE. Sometime during this period the Canaanites developed a proto- alphabetic script. This may well have occurred as a result of Egyptian cultural influences, with the Canaanites using Egyptian-style hieroglyphs to represent consonants. Only a few examples of this early script have been found, and it was probably not in common use. However, in centuries to come it would be taken over by the Phoenicians, refined and passed on to many other peoples. This early Canaanite script was thus the ancestor of all alphabets in the world today. Egyptian power in Canaan was later contested as major states arose in northern Syria: However, the dynamic pharaohs of New Kingdom Egypt successfully asserted their dominance in the area. The Amarna letters, a royal archive of Egypt containing over diplomatic letters between the Egyptian king and foreign rulers, make clear that, to the many petty chiefs and kings of Canaan, the Pharaoh of Egypt was their overlord. These small states were constantly quarrelling amongst themselves, appealing to their Egyptian government to settle their disputes. The Canaanite city-states on the coast were subject to destructive attacks from the Sea Peoples , who had previously devastated the coasts of Asia Minor and other eastern Mediterranean. The northern Canaanite seaboard cities, for example Byblos, Tyre and Sidon, survived these attacks, and were soon flourished as never before as dynamic centres of maritime trade. These cities became known to history as the Phoenicians. To their south, however, the Canaanite cities were destroyed, allowing one group of the Sea Peoples to settle the area. These were the Philistines, and their five coastal cities, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashkelon, Ekron and Gath, were to form a formidable confederacy in the area. The Philistines were the people in this part of the world with whom the Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples were most familiar. The Israelites appear in history In the eastern hill country, a group of other peoples closely related to the Canaanites had by now established themselves. These were from north to south the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. A fourth group, just to the west, were also establishing themselves in the eastern hill country. Closely related to the other groups, they had quite distinct cultural practices. One striking aspect of the archaeological record is their lack of pork remains, in marked contrast with finds from other parts of Palestine; and there are also indications that circumcision was being practised. Clearly, here was a population practising at least some elements of the later Israelite religious culture. Some modern scholars regard the monotheistic religion of the Israelites as having evolved gradually out of the beliefs and practices of the earlier peoples of Canaan. The fact that the Israelites were not strangers to the area is clear from their Hebrew language, which is a Canaanite dialect. Given the radical gulf between Israelite practices for example, circumcision and prohibitions against eating pork, sexualized worship and the sacrifice of babies , and those of other peoples of the area, it is hard not to give the Israelite account serious credence. As time went by, and over a period of centuries, Israelite culture gradually spread from the eastern hill country into the coastal plains, as their population expanded. From then on, over a period of hundreds of

years until the 6th century BCE, the Canaanites were progressively absorbed by the Israelites. This process of absorption had religious and cultural ramifications, and the Biblical records point to the continuing influence of the Canaanite polytheistic cults over several centuries. The tensions this created helped give rise to a major element within Israelite religious culture. This was the prophetic tradition, whereby religious figures called prophets continually called their people back to the worship of Yahweh alone. These threats of course came from the other peoples of the region. The Israelites were caught between, on the one hand, the Philistine city-states on the coastal plain, and on the other, the kingdoms of Edom, Moab and Ammon in the eastern hill country. According to the Bible, it was to deal more effectively with these peoples that the Israelites adopted a more centralised form of state structure when they transformed their tribal confederacy into a monarchy. The Bible records that the first king was Saul. He struggled to unite the tribes under his rule, and failing in this, was replaced traditionally in by a new king, David. He forged close alliances with powerful states such as the wealthy Phoenician city-state of Tyre. Within the span of two generations, therefore, the Israelites had become a significant regional power. Probably at about this time, the Israelites adopted a version of the Phoenician alphabet for their own use; this was ancestral to the modern Hebrew script. The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

A centralised, unified state did not sit easily with the several Israelite tribes, however. The bulk of the tribes continued the kingdom of Israel under a different line of kings, and with a different capital, Samaria. The family of David continued to reign in Judah until the end of its existence as an independent state; the northern Kingdom of Israel experienced much greater political instability, under a succession of short-lived dynasties. Prosperity and Prophets Archaeological evidence shows that the first centuries of the 1st millennium BCE were times of prosperity for the region. Some modern scholars have ascribed this to an unusually benign period of climate. The people of both Israel and Judah continued to worship the one God, but, especially in the northern kingdom, this monotheistic faith came increasingly under pressure from the polytheistic religions of the region. In reaction to this, prophets in both kingdoms called on the people and their rulers to remain faithful to their monotheistic faith. In so doing they developed a teaching which emphasised that the worship of God was inextricably intertwined with treating fellow human beings " especially the weaker members of society such as the poor, widows, orphans and foreigners " with justice and mercy. This kind of moral behaviour was emphasised to a degree never before recorded in human thought. The northern kingdom of Israel starts appearing in non-Biblical records from at least by the second half of the 10th century, the southern kingdom of Judah somewhat later, from the mid-8th century onwards. The Philistine city-states and the kingdoms of Edom, Moab and Ammon also regained their independence. From the mid-8th century all the kingdoms of the region came under increasing threat from the expanding Assyrian empire. This culminated in the later 8th century: Their capitals were destroyed, and both Biblical and Assyrian sources speak of massive deportations of people from Damascus and Israel. Replacement settlers were brought in from other parts of the empire. Such population exchanges were an integral part of Assyrian imperial policy, as a way of breaking old centres of power. According to an Assyrian inscription, the number of Israelites transported from their homeland amounted to just over 27, Even taking into account a large-scale emigration to the southern kingdom, the majority of the population were still presumably left in place. However, groups from other parts of the Assyrian empire were settled in the area by the Assyrian authorities. These apparently soon adopted the Israelite worship of Yahweh, perhaps modified in some details. They intermarried with the native inhabitants and became the ancestors of the Samaritans. The territory of the old kingdom of Israel became the Assyrian province of Samaria. It seems to have been under a line of governors drawn from local families. The other states of the area " the Philistine city-states and the kingdoms of Judah, Edom, Moab and Ammon " escaped the fate of Israel by becoming tributary states of Assyria. The Assyrian records show that these kingdoms were sometimes loyal, sometimes disloyal, to their Assyrian overlords. All these kingdoms rebelled against Assyria in about BCE, but the anti-Assyrian alliance soon seems to have fallen apart in the face of a massive invasion by the Assyrian army under king Sennacherib. Most of the kingdoms hurriedly resumed their submission to Assyria, but Judah was slower to do so, and the Assyrians lay siege to Jerusalem. Judah survived the assault miraculously, according to the Bible, but not without large-scale destruction round about, as the archaeological evidence shows. After this, the kings of Judah became vassals of the Assyrian king

again, and were left in peace. The destruction of the kingdom of Israel had a deep impact on the kingdom of Judah. A stream of refugees from Israel flooded into the kingdom, boosting its population. In the 7th century, Jerusalem expanded dramatically. However, Judah was now the only Israelite kingdom left, surrounded entirely by pagan peoples. Perhaps because of this, the rulers of Judah tended to emphasise the worship of Yahweh as a central part of their political programme. The Fall of the Kingdom of Judah By this time, however, large-scale geopolitical developments were reshaping the political situation in the whole of the Middle East. For a brief period, the kingdom of Judah benefited from the resulting vacuum of power in the Middle East by expanding its own borders to take in much of the old territory of Israel. However, a new regional superpower rapidly emerged, that of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The struggle between the Babylonian empire and a resurgent Egypt for control of Syria and Palestine led, as a by-product, to the conquest of all the kingdoms of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar in a series of campaigns between and The Babylonian period Under the Babylonians, most Palestinian rulers remained in place, now as vassals of the king of Babylon. The exception was Judah, which, thanks to its repeated resistance to the Babylonians, experienced catastrophe. The kingdom was extinguished; its political and religious elite were taken off to exile in Babylon; the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and much of the city with it; and the territory of the former kingdom, shorn of outlying districts hived off to neighbouring kingdoms, was turned into the province of Judea, under governors appointed by the Babylonians. Jerusalem was stripped of any administrative status, with the town of Mizpah, to the north, being made the provincial capital. Only a minority of the population were taken into exile in Babylon. Thousands more emigrated to Egypt, and from this time on communities of Jews began appearing in cities throughout the Middle East and beyond. For those who remained in Judea, life was tough. The violent cycle of Jewish rebellion and Babylonian counter-measures had devastated many towns and villages, and had led to a significant drop in population and prosperity. The Fall of the Kingdom of Israel Sennacherib during his Babylonian war, relief from his palace in Nineveh The towns and cities of Judah were now unwallled by Babylonian decree, and this made them vulnerable to attack from neighbours. The peoples of Edom, Moab and Ammon, themselves under pressure from Arab tribes migrating in from the eastern desert, settled territories previously belonging to the old kingdom of Judah. Here, the leaders of the Jews for that is now what we can properly call the people of Judah had to come to terms with an immense trauma. The loss of their political independence was nothing compared to the challenge to their dearly-held beliefs. Rather than let go of these, the Jews interpreted this catastrophe in the light of their faith.