

ISRAEL - THE LAND OF THE BIBLE

Orientation Week Four

10/30/16

6:30 - Opening Prayer & Greetings

Circulate around and introduce yourself to someone you don't know as well.

Important Dates and People in Israel's History

132-135 - The Bar Kokhba revolt against Rome was the second major rebellion by the Jews of Judea Province and the last of the Jewish-Roman Wars.

Most of the Jewish population of central Judea was killed, sold into slavery, or forced to flee. Banished from Jerusalem, the Jewish population now centered on Galilee.

The Emperor Hadrian attempted to root out Judaism. He replaced the name Judea with Syria Palaestina, after the Philistines. Since then, the land has been referred to as "Palestine." Similarly, he re-established Jerusalem as the Roman pagan city of Aelia Capitolina, and Jews were forbidden from entering it.

Judea would not be a center of Jewish religious, cultural, or political life again until the modern era, though Jews continued to live there and important religious developments still occurred there.

200 - The Mishnah is first compiled. The Mishnah is the written form of the oral tradition of the rabbis dating from 70-200 and is one of the foundational documents of Rabbinic Judaism.

300-500 (*late Roman early Byzantine period*) - Constantine I allowed Jews to mourn their defeat and humiliation once a year on Tisha B'Av (late July) at the Western Wall.

325 - Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, journeyed to Israel and Jerusalem to search for holy relics at the behest of her son. Helena and another Roman noblewoman who traveled with her consulted Jewish Christian guides who shared with them the sites Jewish Christians living in Israel had preserved as authentic.

351 - The Jews revolt against the added pressures of their Governor, Gallus. Gallus destroys the major cities in the Galilee where the revolt had started.

About the same time, the Jewish academy at Tiberius began to collate the combined Mishnah, explanations, and interpretations developed by generations of scholars. The text was organized according to the order of the Mishnah. This text is called the Jerusalem Talmud (350-400).

610 - Mohammed receives the first revelation of the Qur'an from the angel Gabriel in a cave outside Mecca.

620 - Mohammed experiences the *Isra and Miraj*, a miraculous journey in one night along with the angel Gabriel. In the *Isra*, he traveled from Mecca to "the farthest mosque" (in Arabic: *masjid al-aqsa*), which Muslims identify with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. In the second part, the *Miraj*, Muhammad toured heaven and hell, and spoke with earlier prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslim teachings say he ascended into heaven on the rock of Abraham now inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

June 8, 632 - Mohammed dies after having united the Arab tribes and the Arabian Peninsula under Islam.

Disagreement breaks out over who will succeed him as leader of Islam or caliph. Abu Bakr, who was Muhammad's friend, was nominated, gained wide support and was made the first caliph. This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, should be caliph. This led to the great schism in Islam. Those who became the Sunnis followed Abu Bakr, and those who were called the Shia's followed Ali ibn Abi Talib.

637 - The Muslim Caliphate ejects the Byzantines from the Holy Land (defined as modern Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) and takes Jerusalem.

691 - The Dome of the Rock is completed on the Temple Mount to rival the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and other Christian sites in

Jerusalem. The golden dome was restored by King Hussein of Jordan in 1998. It is often mistakenly called the Mosque of Omar. It is not a mosque but a shrine.

July 1099 - Jerusalem captured from the Seljuk Turks in the 1st Crusade. Crusaders slaughter Muslims, Jews and even some Eastern Christians in the capture of the city. The Kingdom of Jerusalem, is founded in 1099 and lasts until 1291, when the city of Acre (near modern Haifa) fell.

During the Crusader times Jews were persecuted but some communities in Palestine continued to survive and thrive.

1187 - Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, recaptures Jerusalem. After taking Jerusalem back from the Christians, the Muslims spare civilians and for the most part left churches and shrines untouched.

The reports of Saladin's victories shock Europe. Pope Gregory VIII called for a crusade, which was led by several of Europe's most important leaders: Philip II of France, Richard I of England (aka Richard the Lionheart), and Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor.

Frederick drowned in 1190, Philip left in 1191, leaving Richard in charge. After the Crusaders had recaptured Acre from the Muslims the Crusader army headed south along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. However, Richard did not believe he would be able to hold Jerusalem once it was captured, and the crusade ended without the taking of Jerusalem. Richard left the following year after negotiating a treaty with Saladin. The treaty allowed unarmed Christian pilgrims to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Jerusalem), while it remained under Muslim control.

1276 - Rabbi Nahmanides settles in the Old City of Jerusalem and begins a continuous Jewish settlement there until the Arab-Israeli war in 1948.

1200-1500, The Middle Ages - Several major pogroms were carried out and Jews were expelled from England (1290), France (1391), Austria (1421), Spain (the Alhambra decree 1492), and Portugal (1497). Each expulsion and wave of religious persecution led to movement of Jews to Israel.

1516 - The Ottoman Turks capture Jerusalem and Palestine. The city and countryside remain Ottoman territory until the end of World War I.

During the Ottoman period, Safed (north of the Sea of Galilee, built on a high hill) became known as a center of Jewish learning, especially the Kabbalah, a mystical offshoot of Judaism.

1897 - The World Zionist Congress was formed which started the struggle to get the world superpowers to establish a state for the Jews.

1917 - The British occupy the Holy Land name it Palestine and set its borders. The Jews receive a promise for a "national home" from the British in the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

1920-1936 - Due to Arab violence the British gradually backtrack from the idea of a Jewish state and start to propose a bi-national solution of an Arab state which would have a Jewish minority.

1939-1945 - The Holocaust. 6 million Jews are murdered in Nazi death camps all over Europe, including 1.5 million children under the age of 18. The Yad Vashem Memorial commemorates those who died.

May 14 1948 - The Jewish Agency, led by David Ben-Gurion, declares the creation of the State of Israel, in accordance with the 1947 UN Partition Plan. U.S. President Harry S. Truman immediately recognizes the new state, followed hours later by Soviet premier Joseph Stalin. Arab League members Egypt, TransJordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declare war and announce their rejection of the UN partition decision. They claim the right of self-determination for the Arabs of Palestine over the whole of Palestine. Saudi-Arabia and Sudan also send forces to participate in the invasion.

March 1949 - After many months of battle, a permanent ceasefire goes into effect and Israel's interim borders, later known as the Green Line, are established. Israel had conquered the Galilee and Negev, however the Syrians remained in control of a strip of

territory along the Sea of Galilee, and the Egyptians held the Gaza strip. The Jordanian Arab Legion held the West Bank and East Jerusalem (the Old City, including the Temple Mount). They forbid the Jews from going to the Wailing Wall and living in the Old City.

1950 - The Knesset passes the Law of Return which grants all Jews the right to immigrate to Israel. From 1948 to 1958, the population rises from 800,000 to two million. Today Israel's population is about 7.5 million, with 6 million of those being Jews.

1967 - Syria, Egypt and Jordan amass troops along the Israeli borders. Nasser demands that the UNEF leave Sinai, threatening escalation to a full war. Israel responds by calling up its civilian reserves, bringing much of the Israeli economy to a halt.

The Six Day War - On the morning of June 5, the Israeli air force launches pre-emptive attacks destroying first the Egyptian air force and then later the same day the air forces of Jordan and Syria. Israel then defeats Egypt, Jordan and Syria. By June 11 the Arab forces are routed and all parties accept the cease-fire called for by UN Security Council.

Israel gains control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem. On November 22 1967, the Security Council adopts Resolution 242, the "land for peace" formula, which called for the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency, respect for the sovereignty of all states in the area, and the right to live in peace within secure, recognized boundaries.

For the first time since the end of the British Mandate, Jews could visit the Old City of Jerusalem and pray at the Western Wall to which they had been denied access by the Jordanians (in contravention of the 1949 Armistice agreement). In Hebron, Jews gain access to the Cave of the Patriarchs (the second most holy site in Judaism) for the first time since the 14th Century. A third Jewish holy site, Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem also becomes accessible.

October 6 1973 (the Jewish Day of Atonement) - The Yom Kippur War begins, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar and a day when

adult Jews are required to fast. The Syrian and Egyptian armies launch a surprise attack against the unprepared Israeli Defense Forces. For the first few days there was a great deal of uncertainty about Israel's capacity to repel the invaders, however the Syrians are repulsed and, although the Egyptians captured some territory in Sinai, Israeli forces cross the Suez Canal and are heading towards Cairo when a cease fire is agreed. Following the war, both Israelis and Egyptians showed greater willingness to negotiate.

March 31, 2009 - Benjamin Netanyahu is sworn in for the second time as Prime Minister of Israel. He was Prime Minister once before from 1996-1999. He is head of the Likud Party, the chief opposition party to the Labor Party.

Decades of conflict preceded his election, including the Lebanese War, the Intifada, the invasion of Gaza and the Camp David Accords with Egypt and the Oslo Accords with the PLO, plus the first Gulf War and the SCUD missile attacks from Iraq.

As we are in Israel they are once again beginning to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority over issues involving the West Bank and Gaza and a permanent peace agreement and Palestinian state. The issue of continued Jewish settlements in the West Bank is an important part of these negotiations as is the renouncing of violence and terrorism by the Palestinian Authority. You will experience the security barrier when we cross into Bethlehem which is part of the West Bank and under the Palestinian Authority. You will also see the barrier on the hills to the East of Jerusalem.

Also know that Egypt after the ouster of President Mubariik and the election of Mohammed Mursi as President has stated that they will keep the peace treaty with Israel they signed under Anwar Sadat in 1979 after the Camp David Accords. However, the Egyptians have said they want to re-evaluate that treaty because the Muslim Brotherhood which is Mursi's party objects to the existence of Israel. The whole situation is very fluid!

Next Week: Trip Itinerary, Tips & Details!

8:00 - Closing Prayer

