

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

Middle East**ISRAEL**

Medinat Yisra'el, Yisra'el

Basic Facts

Name: State of Israel; Israel; *Medinat Yisra'el, Yisra'el*

Population: The population is 6.3 million with an estimated Annual growth rate 1.58% (2001 est.). The life expectancy is 78.71 yrs (76.69M/ 80.84F). The population density is 251 per sq km (650 per sq mi). The average household size is 3.7 and the average floor space per person is 28 sq m.

The population includes 4,700,000 Jewish (1997), 805,000 Muslim, 160,000 Christians, 95,000 Druze, and 600 Samaritans. (1995 Central Statistics Dept. Israel). Some 63% of the Jewish people in Israel are *Sabras* (born in Israel).

The blind population is 5,285. The deaf population is 4,500 to 6,242 (1998). Deaf institutions: 31.

<http://www.jewishpost.com/jp0606/jpn0606e.htm>. <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~adamgosp/ilpop.htm>.

Land

Located in the Middle East next to the Mediterranean Sea on the east and bordered by the following countries north to south *Lebanon, Syria, Jordan* and *Egypt*. Israel also borders the disputed territories of the *Gaza Strip* and the *West Bank*. The land area is 20,770 sq km, which is slightly smaller than New Jersey.

Only 2% of the total area is water. The elevation runs from the highest point at *Mar Meron* 1,208 m to – 408 m at the *Dead Sea*. The terrain of the country includes the Negev Desert in the south, a low coastal plain, central mountains and the Jordan rift valley. The climate is temperate on the coast and in the mountains and hot and dry in the desert areas. <http://www.infotour.co.il/TourismGeneralInfo/2402.html>.

The natural resources include timber, potash, copper ore, natural gas, phosphate rock, magnesium bromide, clays, sand, and oil. The 17% of the land that is arable is divided up 4% permanent crops, 6% forests and woodland and 7% is permanent pastures. Water is a critical issue in Israel. The limited arable land and fresh water places extreme limitations on what the country is able to do. Added to this critical issue is pollution of the air and ground water from industrial and domestic waste.

Economics

GDP is \$110.2 billion (2000 est) with an average per capita of \$18,900 (2000 est). The growth rate for 2000 was 5.9%, however with the events of 2001 a very low growth rate is predicted for 2002. Israel imports crude oil, grains, and raw materials, such as ruff diamonds and consumer goods, and military equipment. They export machinery and equipment, cut diamonds, software, chemicals, textiles, apparel, and agricultural products. Israel is active in high-technology projects, communications, computer-aided design and manufacturing, medical electronics, potash and phosphates, diamond cutting, and tourism. Three areas of concern for the immediate future of Israeli economics are the

security situation, which affects not only the homeland but also the tourist trade, the economic growth in other countries, especially the United States, and the third area of concern is the global high-tech market.

<http://www.cbs.gov.il/engindex.htm>.

<http://www.israel-embassy.org.uk/london/web/pages/press3.htm>.

Government

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. There is no formal written constitution but nine Basic Laws that were established by the *Knesset*. The government is a mixture of Western European parliamentary democracies, Eastern and Central European institutions and traditions and some Middle Eastern sociopolitical patterns. Israeli Independence Day was 14 May 1948, granted from the League of Nations under British administration.

The Capital has been *Jerusalem* since 1950, but almost all countries have their embassies in *Tel Aviv*. Suffrage is age 18. Israel has a multiparty political system. It is composed of four main divisions. They are left of center parties, right of center parties, right wing religious parties and Arab parties. Since 1984 no one party has been strong enough to establish a dominant party on its own and has had to try to form coalition governments.

<http://www.israel-embassy.org.uk/london/web/pages/press3.htm>.

The president, who is a titular head of state, leads the Executive branch. The Prime Minister and the cabinet members carry the most political power. The legislative branch is called the *Knesset*, which is a unicameral parliament of 120 members elected at large every four years. The Judicial branch is independent and is composed of secular, religious and military courts.

gopher://israel-info.gov.il/11/facts/econ. http://www.israstop.com/link/Israel_business.htm.

Culture

Jewish traditions and customs dominate the culture of Israel. Islam also plays a prominent part (77% of the non-Jews in Israel), as does Christianity. A prime mover is the *Kibbutz Institute for Festivals and Holidays*, began in the 1940's by *Aryeh Ben Gurion*, a nephew of the first Prime Minister of Israel. He also founded the *Kibbutz Bet Hashita*. This movement combines the *Zionist* and agricultural elements with traditional Jewish and biblical connections. An underlying response to the institute is its pluralistic nature, with an inclusive approach to Judaism as a culture.

Israel is a largely immigrant and second-generation society. As immigrants move into Israel, they bring about a mixture of tradition and innovation. The objective appears to be a middle ground between Israeli particularism and universalism. The people continue an ongoing search to discover Israel's cultural identity. The chief interpreter of local cultural trends and activities is the magazine *Ariel*. Founded in 1962, it is published quarterly in several languages. There is also the bi-monthly publication *PANIM: Faces of Art and Culture in Israel*.

Fine arts in Israel are a curious and creative mixture of East, West, land and religion. An organized art school began with the *Bezalel Academy of Arts* founded by *Boris Schatz* in 1906. The vision from the beginning was to establish an "original Jewish art." *Tel Aviv* is the center of the artistic community.

Photography is another important media of expression in Israel. For the last 120 years photographers have captured and documented the Jewish community in Palestine.

Sculpture has been employed to provide a living testimony to those who have lost their

lives in Israel's wars. There are over 120 museums that record over 12 million visits a year in Israel.

Music also occupies an important place in Israeli culture. Events include a large range of styles including symphonies, choral societies, folk music, opera and several dance companies. There is a developing cinema industry and many theater groups. There are a dozen newspapers and more than 1,000 periodicals, eight radio networks, three television channels, and one cable network.

Society

Israeli society is divided ethnically, religiously, and politically. The society is becoming more divisive and secular. It is interesting that the Israeli website under the topic of society begins by quoting Psalm 133:1 "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity.*" The site describes Israel as in the midst of evolving and coalescing. It is a young society with the median age of 27 years. In this new developing society, women's lobbies are more active and visible than ever.

The Jewish community is a mixture of early Zionist movement and the waves of immigration from the different nations. The early group was composed of *Holocaust* survivors and a large group of Jewish immigrants from Islamic countries of North Africa and the Middle East. The immigration continues to impact the make up of society.

There are two divisions in Jewish society: *observant* and *non-observant*. The division is 20% who fulfill all religious principles, 60 % who observe some of the religious and ethnic traditions and 20% who are essentially non-observant. The *Sabbath* and *Jewish holidays* and holy days are national holidays and observed by all. The majority of the population is basically secular. A lack of a clear-cut division between church and state in Israel has led to controversy as to how one defines a Jew in Israeli society.

Influential in society is the *Kibbutz Society*, which is based on a social and economic model. The primary emphasis in the beginning centered in agricultural but has shifted toward industrial and service enterprises. These emphases were also at the forefront of settlement, immigration, and defense in early years. Recently the movement has become more directed toward individual achievement and economic growth. The kibbutz dining hall is the center of all social and communal activity.

Israeli society reflects several *sectarian groups*. The *Karaites*, a Jewish sect began back in the 8th century, accepts *The Torah* as their sole source of religious law. The *Samaritans* see themselves as being true Jews and believe that *Mount Gerizim* in *Samaria* is the center of religious worship. The some 600 remaining Samaritans trace their ancestry back to the ten lost tribes of Israel, use Arabic in daily conversation, and an archaic form of Hebrew for their worship liturgy.

A minority group of people numbering over one million or 20% of the population is described generically as Arabs but have different characteristics. 75% (870,000) of the non-Jewish population follows *Sunni Islam*. The majority of these people live in the northern section of the country where they reside primarily in small towns and villages. The *Bedouin Arabs*, about thirty tribes, are located in the southern area of Israel. These people are in the midst of transition from a nomadic people to participating in the labor force of the country and becoming more permanently settled. The second largest minority group are the *Christian Arabs* (130,000) most of whom reside in the urban areas--primarily in *Nazareth*, *Shfar'am*, and *Haifa*.

Many denominations serve in Israel--the majority being: *Greek Catholic* (42%), *Greek Orthodox* (32%), and *Roman Catholic* (16%). The *Druze*, a minority group of 100,000 Arabic speaking people, live in 22 villages in the north. They are a secretive group with their own cultural, religious, social traditions. A part of their faith is the principle of *taqiyya* that calls for complete loyalty of the believers to the nation they live in. A small group of people (3,000) called the *Circassians* (*Sunni Muslims*) lives in two villages in northern Israel. They are neither Arab nor similar in cultural background to larger Islam. They are a part of the economic and national affairs of Israel but have resisted assimilation in either Jewish or the general Muslim community.

Arab community life is in a state of constant change.

An ongoing stream of migrants in and out, dependent upon the current economic conditions, reside mainly in self-contained towns and communities. These communities are located in four main areas of the country: *Galilee*, area between *Hadera* and *Petah Tikva*, the *Negev*, and the mixed urban areas of the larger cities of *Jerusalem*, *Akko*, *Haifa*, *Lod*, *Ramle*, and *Yafa*.

The Arab communities are composed of mainly working class in a largely middle class society. Existing politically on the periphery, this Arab-speaking minority basically constitutes an un-assimilated people. This situation is intensified by their use of Arabic as a second language, the Arab/Druze separate school system, Arab mass media, literature and theater, and the existence of independent Muslim, Druze, and Christian denominational court systems.

The patriarchal and tribal authority systems have gradually declined. An important factor in this has been liberalization of legislation that has given women equal rights, banned polygamy, and prohibited child marriage. Since Israel became a country, Arab citizens have been exempt from military service due to concern of family connections with opposing countries and possible divided loyalties. Druze and Circassian men do serve and there is an increase in Bedouin men becoming career army.

Cultural life among the Arabs is a slice of the Arab world as a whole and another part as a minority people within Israel. The music, art, theater, and dance are a creative mixture of popular folk traditions and various Islamic and Western art forms. There are also presentations by mixed Arab and Israeli folk dance and music groups that are exceptionally supported and enjoyed. Arab cultural activities and preservation are encouraged by assistance from grants and other support for museums and cultural centers.

The tensions run high between the Arab citizens who make up one-seventh of Israel's population and one-seventh of the Palestinian people. Because of this tension these groups exist on the fringes of both societies. The question of identity, culture, and even the legal existence of Israel is questioned by some, while at the same time the Arabs try to integrate into the life and politics of Israel. Deep-rooted, long-standing differences in religion, values, and political beliefs greatly hinder progress. An interesting dichotomy exists between pluralism and segregation in Israel. Israel is more a mosaic than a melting pot.

<http://www.israstop.com/link/Israel%20culture.htm#top%20of%20page>.

<http://www.jpost.com/>. <http://www.en.monde-diplomatique.fr/focus/mideast/israel-5-1-en>.

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/israel/>. <http://www.jewishpost.com/>.

<http://www.infotour.co.il/index.html>. <http://www.iguide.co.il/english/175.html>.

<http://www.jcpa.org/dje/index-rs.htm>. <http://www.partner.org.il/news/0112-otzma.html>.

Health and Welfare

Israel enjoys excellent health care, with one of highest physician-patient ratios in the world. The infant mortality rates have experienced a steady decline. The extensive system of public health and comprehensive insurance coverage has contributed to abolition and prevention of disease. Many voluntary and charitable organizations, some funded substantially from abroad, contribute to health care.

Literacy

Total population – 95% (97%M/ 93%F), Arab 70%.

Language

The official language is *Hebrew*. The second accepted language is *Standard Arabic*, with *English* also used.

Other languages include *Egyptian Spoken Arabic* 25,000, *Levantine Bedawi Spoken Arabic* 50,000, *North Levantine Spoken Arabic* 100,000, *Bulgarian*, *Czech*, *Dutch* 1,680, *Western Farsi*, *French* 40,000, *Italian* 5,435, *Malayalam* 8,000, *Marathi* 8,000, *Samaritan*, *Samaritan Aramaic*, *Spanish* 60,000, *Turkish* 30,000, *Northern Uzbek*, and many other languages. The number of languages listed for Israel is 36. Of those, 33 are living languages and 3 are extinct. The Diversity index is 0.65.

Urbanization

Urban dwellers number 91.17% with an annual growth rate of 1.7%. The three main urban population areas are *Jerusalem* (573, 000 - 1994), *Tel Aviv-Yafo* (357,100 city proper/ 1,880,200 urban area), and *Haifa* (248,200 city proper/ 448,800 urban area). Nine other cities number less than 200,000 but more than 100,000. There is a population explosion of urban growth on the West Bank This tension of growth and available land and resources has a direct impact on land availability and resource usage such as water.

Religion

Jewish

Around 80.65% of the population is Jewish in Religion but many do not practice the religion they officially hold. In 1970 as many as 6000 synagogues existed, served by over 400 rabbis. The Orthodox branch of Judaism has more influence in Israel than either the Reformed or the Conservative branches.

Non-Religious

As high as 75% of the population is estimated to be secular/humanistic in religious practice and the non-religious groups are increasing rapidly.

Islam

Islam claims over 14.60 % of the population or some 747,766 persons. Islam is increasing by + 2.7 % annually—more than Judaism that increases at only + 2.4 %. Israel has over 150 mosques. In 1971 over 200 Jewish persons converted to Islam. Of this number most (190) were women in Haifa who were married to Muslim men.

Christians

While some claim up to 2.25 % of the people as Christians, this figure includes Catholic, Orthodox, and other marginal groups. A more realistic figure would be just over 1 % Christian but with a + 2.8% annual growth rate.

Karaism

The *Karaism* religion emerged out of Judaism in Babylon in the 8th Century. The *Karaites* (Readers of the Scriptures) recognize only the Books of the Bible (not the Jewish oral tradition of the Talmud. They are the spiritual decedents of the Sadducees. Today in Israel some 10,000 continue mostly in the region of *Ramia*.

Samaritan Religion

The *Samaritan* religion arose around the Assyrian period in the 8th Century BC. The Samaritans accept only the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. Some 500 live in Israel. Almost one-half of these live near the city of *Nablus* which is in the region of *Mt. Gerizim*, where the ruins of their ancient temple are located.

Druze Religion

Druze Religion arose out of Islam in the 11th Century. The religion today includes elements from Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The Druze live in *Galilee*, the *West Bank*, and on *Mt. Carmel*. As many as 99,000 persons in Israel follow the Druze Religion.

Baha'i Religion

The *Baha'i Religion* arose in Persia claiming to synthesize all religions. The *World Center* for this religion and the *Universal House of Justice* are located in Haifa. The 400 followers of this religion live primarily in *Haifa* and *Acre*.

The Historical Perspective

Beginnings

The *shofar* was blown and Leviticus 25:20 was recited as the *State of Israel* was re-established on May 14, 1948. The nation was reunited after nearly 2,000 years of exile. Despite the ritual ceremony of biblical Israel, however, the new state was more similar to 19th and 20th Century Europe than the biblical nation. The connections to Israel were more spiritual than physical during the 1900 years since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. It is in this context that one look back on the history of Israel.

Ancient Palestine

Palestine has been settled continuously for tens of thousands of years. Archeologists have found hybrid Emer wheat at Jericho dating from before 8,000 B.C., making it one of the oldest sites of agricultural activity in the world. *Amorites*, *Canaanites*, and *other Semitic* peoples related to the *Phoenicians of Tyre* entered the area about 2000 B.C. The area became known as the *Land of Canaan*.

Ancient Israel

The Book of Genesis, a book of beginnings, commences with the appearance of *Abram*, and from this family the history of Israel begins to take shape. God calls Abram and changes his name to Abraham, enters into a covenant relationship with him, and promises the land of which later became known as Israel to him and his descendants. The promise is passed through his son *Isaac* and grandson *Jacob*, who becomes the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob's family flees to Egypt to avoid famine. After 430 years God, through *Moses*, liberated the Hebrews from the bondage of *Egypt* and led them back to the *Promise Land*. After wandering in the desert for 40 years and after Moses' death,

Joshua led the twelve tribes into the Promised Land. The conquered land was divided among the tribes.

After many years of being governed by *judges*, the people desired a king to be like the rest of the nations. *Saul*, the first king, was succeeded by *David* after Saul's death in battle at *Mt. Gilboa*. David consolidated the tribes and kingdom and expanded the boundaries of Israel. He also conquered Jerusalem from the *Jebusites* and made it the capital of the nation and home of the *Ark of the Covenant*. David's son *Solomon* built the Temple and solidified the kingdom economically and politically.

After the death of Solomon, the ten Northern tribes rebelled against *Rehoboam*, Solomon's son, because of the harsh rule of his father. The Northern Kingdom became known as Israel and the Southern was called Judah. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed and sent into exile in 722 BC by the *Assyrian Empire*. The Southern Kingdom remained until 586 BC when *Babylon* and *Nebuchadnezzar* conquered it.

The First Temple was also destroyed at this time and the people taken into exile. The Hebrews remained in Babylon for 70 years until *Cyrus* the Great of Persia defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. The majority of the Jews, however, remained in Babylon and did not return.

Periods of Greek and Roman Rule

Alexander the Great defeated the Persian Empire in 332 BC. Israel did not, however, draw much of his attention. It was not until after the death of Alexander, when his generals divided his kingdom, that Israel became a center of controversy. *Ptolemy I* began his family rule in 301 BC and controlled Israel until 200 BC. It was at this time that *The Seleucids* came into control. At first the Seleucids allowed the Jews to worship as they pleased. In 168-67 *Antiochus IV* sought to destroy the Jews. He sacked Jerusalem and desecrated the Temple. A rebellion, led by *Judas Maccabaeus*, gained freedom from the Seleucids.

Simon Maccabaeus established the *Hasmonean dynasty* in 140 BC. Israel became a mixture of Jewish and Hellenistic cultures without compromising their monotheism. During the *Hasmonean* rule the boundaries were extended to those of the time of David. However, it was a time of political and religious intrigue for power. Two chief parties to the conflict were the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*.

These two contending parties for the control of the dynasty appealed to Rome in 64 BC. A year later Jerusalem was seized by the Roman legions and *Pompey* established one of the contenders as high priest, but not king. This initiated the Roman rule and ended 80 years of Jewish independence. The Romans installed *Herod* as King of Judah in 37 BC and he ruled until his death in 4 BC. During this period of Roman rule the Jews enjoyed religious and some judicial autonomy. Partial freedom did not satisfy and a fanatical group called the *Zealots* sought to overthrow the Roman rule in 66 AD. This conflict led to a long siege begun by *Vespasian* and completed by his son *Titus* in 70 when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. The last of the Zealots were destroyed at *Massada* in 73. During the siege of Jerusalem, one rabbi, *Yohanan Ben-Zakki* was granted permission to leave and set up an academic study center in *Yibna*. *Hadrian* (117-38) sought to make the Roman culture uniform throughout the Empire. Many of the edicts were repressive and led to another round of rebellions. After putting down the *Bar-Kochba Rebellion* of 132-35, Hadrian closed the school at *Yibna*, renamed Jerusalem *Aelia*, and forbade Jews to come within sight of the city.

One exception to this edict was allowed. Once a year the Jews were permitted to go to the western wall of the destroyed Temple, now referred to as the *Wailing Wall*. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation, the Jews turned inward for the source of their identity. Their identity was found in the Torah and the community. It became a life of reflection, intellectualism, the law and rituals, and separateness of the Jewish people. The Romans named the area *Palaestina*, at about this time. The name *Palaestina*, which became Palestine in English, is derived from *Herodotus*, who used the term *Palaistine Syria* to refer to the entire southern part of Syria, meaning "Philistine Syria." Most of the Jews who continued to practice their religion fled or were forcibly exiled from Palestine, eventually forming a second *Jewish Diaspora*. However, Jewish communities continued to exist in Galilee, the northernmost part of Palestine. Palestine was governed by the Roman Empire until the A.D. 300's and then by the Byzantine Empire.

Between Roman and Modern Times

Jewish communities continued emphasizing scholarly studies in the Galilee area until the Arab-Muslim conquest in 638 AD. *Umar, the Arab Caliph*, made Jerusalem the third holiest place of Islam. The *Dome of the Rock* was completed in 691. *Umar II* increased the restrictions and persecutions and forced many to convert to Islam. The rulers allowed Christians and Jews to keep their religions. However, most of the local population gradually accepted Islam and the Arab-Islamic culture of their rulers. Jerusalem became holy to Muslims as the site where, according to the *Qur'an*, *Muhammed* ascended to heaven after a miraculous overnight ride on his horse *Al-Buraq*. The *al-Aqsa Mosque* was built on the site generally regarded as the area of the Jewish temple. When the *Abbasids* came into power, they imposed even more harsh restrictions on non-Muslims.

The *Seljuk Turks* gained control of Jerusalem in 1071. Seljuk rule of Palestine lasted less than 30 years. Christian crusaders from Europe captured Jerusalem in 1099. A great slaughter of the Jewish and Muslim defenders followed, and no Jews were allowed to live in Jerusalem. The crusaders held the city until 1187, when the Muslim ruler *Saladin* attacked Palestine and took control of Jerusalem.

In the mid-1200's, *Mamelukes* based in Egypt established an empire that in time included the area of Palestine. Arab-speaking Muslims made up most of Palestine's population. Beginning in the late 1300's, Jews from Spain and other Mediterranean lands settled in Jerusalem and other parts of the land. The Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamelukes in 1517, and Palestine became part of the *Ottoman Empire*. The Turkish Sultan invited Jews fleeing the Catholic inquisition to settle in the Turkish Empire, including several cities in Palestine.

Palestine was comparatively isolated for the first three hundred years of Ottoman rule. Two events helped change the situation. One was *Napoleon's* failed bid to establish a Middle East Empire. The other was a brief reign of Palestine by an *Egyptian Viceroy Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim* (1831-1840). These two factors accelerated the Western influence in Palestine. The Ottoman's regain power in 1840 and except for the rise in Christian missionary school; Palestine remained a poor, isolated country. The population was overwhelmingly Arab, mostly Muslim, with an important mixture of Christian merchants and professional classes. The Jewish population before 1880 was less than 25,000 Jews.

Zionism

In the nineteenth century, the emancipation of Jews in Europe and nationalist ideas were blended with traditional Jewish ideas about Israel and *Zionism*. The marriage of "love of *Zion*" with modern nationalism took place first among the *Sephardic* (Spanish and Eastern) *Jewish* community of Europe, where the tradition of living in the land of the Jews and return to *Zion* had remained practical goals rather than messianic aspirations, and where Hebrew was a living language.

Rabbi Yehuda Alcalay, who lived in what is now Yugoslavia, published the first Zionist writings in the 1840s. Though practically forgotten, these ideas took root among a few European Jews. Beginning in the late 1800's, oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe catalyzed emigration of Jews to Palestine. The Zionist movement became a formal organization in 1897 with the *First Zionist Congress in Basel*, organized by *Theodore Herzl*. *Theodor Herzl*, a journalist in Vienna, Austria, led the founding of a Zionist organization. He came to the conviction of the necessity of a Jewish state to combat anti-Semitism after the 1894 Paris trial of *Alfred Dreyfus*. Dreyfus was a Jewish officer in the French army accused of selling military secrets to Germany. In 1897 the first *Zionist Congress* was held in *Basel, Switzerland*. Herzl's grandfather was acquainted with the writings of Alcalay, and it is very probable that Herzl was influenced by them. The Zionists wished to establish a "Jewish Homeland" in Palestine under Turkish or German rule. They were not concerned about the Arab population, which they ignored, or thought would agree to voluntary transfer to other Arab countries.

In any case, the Zionists envisioned the population of Palestine by millions of European Jews who would soon form a decisive majority in the land. They established farm communities in Palestine at *Petah Tikva*, *Zichron Jacob*, *Rishon*, *Letzion* and elsewhere. Later they established the new city of *Tel Aviv*, north of *Jaffa*. Zionism became a major movement that has impacted Israel and the Middle East.

The movement was almost exclusively the work of *Ashkenazim* – Jews of European descent. In 1990 there were about 10.5 million Jews in the world. The *Ashkenazim* accounted for 9.5 million and 5.2 million of them lived in the *Pale Settlement in Russia*. The origins can be traced back to the liberation of the Jews in France in 1791. Liberated from menial jobs and professions they quickly advanced in the areas of medicine, academia, the arts, journalism, and other professions.

Their rapid advance and economic growth of Jewish people was not well received by non-Jews who saw them as an economic and political threat. Added to the mix in the nineteenth century was the growth of ethnically based nationalism. This did not leave much room for the Jews who were seen as a separate people who were not a part of the ethnic heritage of the countries. The greater majority of Jews sought to become more assimilated in to the societies to combat the anti-Semitism. A small minority did not think this approach would work and saw their lack of a nation of their own as the problem for anti-Semitism.

The majority of Jews in Europe lived in the Pale Settlement on the Western fringe of Russia between the Baltic and Black seas. After years of harsh anti-Semitic policies many Jews migrated out of Russia. Between 1881 and 1914 approximately 2.5 million Jews left, 2 million moved to America. Those who remained, disillusioned with their faith in God, were drawn to the socialist and communist movements. A small group was drawn to the ancient but newly formed, Palestine.

Four main expressions of Zionism, *political, cultural, labor, and revisionists* sought leadership of the Jewish causes. The objective of political Zionism was to establish a Jewish homeland (not necessarily Palestine) through cooperation with the Great Powers. It was a small group called *Hibbat Tziyyon (Lovers of Zion)* who pressed for the return to the Holy Land. *Leo Pinkster*, a Russian physician from Odessa, with the help of a grant from *Baron Edmond de Rothschild*, established an agricultural settlement in Palestine. By 1891 there were only 10,000 Jewish settlers. This settlement was important because it established a beachhead in Palestine for their political agenda. This entrance is called the *First Aliyah (1882-1903)*.

Asher Ginsberg led cultural Zionism expression under the pen name of *Ahad HaAm (One of the People)*. He was concerned about the nature of Judaism in Western Europe. He viewed the solution as establishing small settlements in Palestine to revive Jewish spirit and culture. There was also an underlying distrust of gentiles by *Ahad HaAm*. His ideas of piecemeal settlement of Palestine and setting up a Zionist infrastructure became an integral part of the Zionist platform. This became evident at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903 when the congress rejected plans to settle in the Sinai Peninsula and in Uganda. *Ahad HaAm*, after the death of *Herzl* became the leader of the Zionist movement. One inherent problem that neither the political Zionism of *Herzl* nor the cultural Zionism of *Ahad HaAm* could answer related to how the Jews could practically settle Palestine. Into this void came *Labor Zionism*. *Nachman Syrkin* and *Ber Borochov* were the intellectual founders of the *Poalei Tziyyon (Workers of Zion)*, which was the first Labor Zionist Party. They believed that a political and economic foundation was essential for a viable nation of Israel. On the practical side was *Aaron David Gordon* who believed that only by physical labor and returning to the land could the Jewish people attain to national salvation in Palestine. His political party was the *HaPoel HaTzair (The Young Workers)*. Gordon was also the founder of the first *Kibbutz* at *Deganya* in eastern Galilee. Prior to the arrival of Gordon in Palestine all the major theorists had never been to Palestine. Gordon gave impetus to the *Second Aliyah (1904-1914)*. By the end of the *Second Aliyah* the Jewish population in Palestine was about 85,000 or 12% of the total population. It was also at this time when the first Jewish self-defense organization, *HaShomer (The Watchmen)* was established. It is from the *Second Aliyah* that the future leadership of Israel would come.

The first Prime Minister of Israel, *David Ben-Gurion* assumed leadership in 1906. It was his vision of a Hebrew speaking working class and a highly centralized Jewish economic structure that would make for a strong Israel. Although Labor Zionist was the largest group, they were not without detractors. The largest group of dissenters was the Russian born intelligentsia from Odessa, Russia. The main emphasis was full-scale immediate immigration of Jews to Palestine and declaration of the Jewish statehood for all of biblical Palestine. They criticized socialism and Jewish self-defense.

Palestine 1908-48

With the increase of Jewish immigrants, especially after the Second Aliyah, came an increase in Arab hostility. The Western categories of nationalism and nation state were not common forms of Arab thought. A small group of Arab military officers and intellectuals were pushing for autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. By 1908 it was evident to both Arabs and Jews that Palestine was not going to receive independence but

pressure to be become more like Turkey. This realization led to the formation of groups seeking independence. The Arabs, however, lacked support from the Arab masses. With the approach of World War I and the decline of the Ottoman Empire, hopes for independence rose among the Jews and Arabs. *Chaim Weizmann*, the Zionists spokesman in England, was astute in European diplomacy. During this period British Middle East policy was inconsistent. The first discussions were with the *Hashimite family* about possible revolt against Turkey. Britain agreed to support Arab independence after the war. During this same time period the British were also talking with the French about dividing the territory between them.

After much discussion, an agreement was formally approved by the British. This agreement, the *Balfour Declaration of November 1917* led to increased hostilities between the Arabs and the Jews. Britain saw control over Palestine as being more beneficial than sharing with the French. This direction saw the Zionist as possible allies. The Balfour Declaration gave legitimacy to the Zionist movement. However, it contained two conflicting statements. One statement favored establishing a Jewish State in Palestine and the other preservation of the rights of non-Jewish peoples - the Arabs. This difference would be the point of contention from that time on.

After much negotiation the *British Mandate* was approved by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922. The United States, not a member of the League of Nations, in a separate resolution, 30 June 1922, affirmed the concept of a Jewish state. English, Arabic, and Hebrew were the official languages. The Arabs were opposed to the mandate because they represented the majority of the Palestian population.

The mandate system created an identity crisis among Arab nationalists that led to the growth of nationalism: Arab verses Islamic verses the more parochial nationalisms of the newly created states. The aim of the mandate was to facilitate a peaceful development of Palestine by Arabs and Jews under the watchful eye of the British. Between 1919 and 1923 open immigration for Jews, called the *Third Aliyah*, resulted in the entrance of many well-trained, highly committed socialist Zionists into Palestine. In 1922, the Jews only represented 11% of the population of Palestine. The Arabs did not participate in setting up the mandate councils and agencies because they thought that would be an act of affirmation of the mandate and Balfour Declaration. *This ended any possibilities of joint consultations between the two groups.*

Patronage was the basis of British policy in Palestine. There was much contention between the Arab elites and appointed but not elected officials. The outcome of the in fighting was a very fragmented Arab leadership with no clear vision or policy to deal with the rising Zionist movement. The other major problem during this period was land ownership. There was no clear policy under the Ottoman rule.

When Jews began buying land, the price of property began to increase greatly. Arab landowners, many absentee landlords, seeking to make a quick profit sold off the land. Because of the depression of the 1930's many Arab peasants were forced to sell their land to pay their Arab landowners or government taxes.

The Zionist's greatest asset at this time was the organizational abilities that allowed institutionalization of the movement in spite of great ideological differences. This facilitated the beginning of the *Asefat Hanivharim* (Elected Assembly) and the *Vaad Leumi* (National Council). These organizations were key in the development religious, educational and welfare services, chief *rabbonate*, centralized Hebrew school system,

opening of *Technion* (Institute of Technology) and *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*, and to the continued purchase of land. The chief player in the organization was *Ben-Gurion*. His vision was to have a tightly controlled autonomous Jewish economic state within the Palestinian economy. He oversaw the development of the economic and defense systems. Ben-Gurion did not go unchallenged.

The Revisionist Zionist wanted to see more liberal economic policies and stronger defenses. The Revisionist party grew between 1924-1930 with the immigration of many Jews from Poland and the rising conflict with the Arabs. This time period is called the *Fourth Aliyah* and over 80,000 Jews came to Palestine from Central Europe.

These new arrivals were unlike the previous wave as they were primarily petty merchants and small time industrialists. There had been a confrontation in 1929 at the Wailing Wall that had ended in violence. 133 Jews were killed and 339 wounded. The inability of the Labor Party to protect the Jewish people led to the formation of the *Betar*, an activist Zionist movement in 1923 and a more militant armed underground organization, *the Irgun*, sometimes known as *Etzel*.

A more extreme group broke off from them and formed the *Stern Gang*, who were formally known as *Lohamei Herut Israel (Fighters for Israel's Freedom)* or *Lehi*. Both Labor and Revisionist knew that the separation was not going to be healed and they needed to be prepared. Timing was to be the key and Labor understood this better than the Revisionists. There was also a growing dissatisfaction with the British and the Mandate authority and the *Yishu*. With the economic crisis in Germany, the political career of *Adolph Hitler* began. By 1939 the Jewish population of Palestine was 400,000 or about 31% of the total.

In 1936 a series of incidents led to the *Arab Higher Committee (AHC)* declaring a national strike with three basic demands: ending of Jewish immigration; stopping all further land sales to Jews; and establishing a Arab national government. The War changed Britain's policy in the Middle East. Jews had little reason to resist and support Britain instead of Germany. Because of the Palestinian revolt, the Jews became more resolved in their affirmation in the firm conviction of the need for a strong defense. In May 1939 the British published a *White Paper* that ended the policy of the Balfour Declaration. The White Paper set a goal of a *Palestinian (Arab) State* in ten years, appointment of Palestinian ministers to take over the government, immigration of 75,000 Jews in the next five years, after that at the discretion of the Arab government, and all further land sales greatly restricted.

Ben-Gurion set the tone with his statement "We shall fight the war against Hitler as if there was no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there was no war." It is ironic that the British trained Jewish commando units, which would later become the *Palmach (Pelugot Mahatz)*. The training would later be used against the British in the fight for independence. The British, in order not to antagonize the Arabs, rigidly enforced the immigration laws. This event came at the worst time with the atrocities being committed by Hitler. Still, in the midst of the tensions between the British and Jews the Jewish Brigade was established 14 September 1944.

The turning event of this period was the *Struma* affair. The ship loaded with Jewish refugees from Romania was denied entry into Palestine and later sunk in the Black Sea with only two survivors. Shortly after a young Polish immigrant *Menachem Begin* came to Palestine committed to drawing all of the underground together to prepare for a Jewish

war of liberation from the British. In 1943, with the increase in Nazi persecution of Jews in Europe, the *Irgun* and *Stern Gang* increased their harassment of the British to increase immigration. The *Lehi* assassinated the British minister resident in Cairo in November 1944. This alienated Churchill and led the Jewish Agency the *Haganah* to cooperate with the British against the *Irgun*. With the separation from the British the *Yishu* began to depend on the United States.

Holocaust

In 1939 approximately 10 million of the 16 million Jews in the world lived in Europe. By 1945, almost 6 million of these Jews had been killed. To make the tragedy worse, the Allies by 1944 could have easily disrupted the operation of the death camps, but did not. The only positive outcome of the *Holocaust* was Zionism uniting the Jewish people. It became a part of their identity and religious experience.

Period Before Statehood

The British rule in Palestine grew less effective and chaotic. The Empire was experiencing the independence of many colonies and the threat of Communism. In May 1946, the *Anglo-American Committee* of inquiry declared unanimous opposition to the White Paper of 1939 and called for the immediate immigration of 100,000 European Jews. October 1945 Ben-Gurion chose to unite with the dissident groups in a focused rebellion against the British in Palestine. As the British focused on the *Haganah*, this allowed the *Irgun* and *Lehi* to carry out terrorist attacks against British troops. However, when they bombed the *King David Hotel* in Jerusalem in July 1946, Ben-Gurion broke off ties with the *Irgun* and *Lehi*.

The situation became a financial and manpower drain on Britain. In 1947 the United Nations appointed a special committee to address the situation in Palestine. Their report on 31 August 1947 called for a *complex partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, special international status for Jerusalem, and an economic union linking the three members*. The resolution was passed 29 November 1947 after intense debate. *Zionist General Council* was willing to accept the resolution but the *League of Arab states* refused adamantly. The immediate response was a general strike and hostility between Arabs and Jews escalated.

President Harry Truman reversed himself and agreed to postpone the partition. The British sided with the Arabs and tried to keep the Jews from being armed. Then the *Yishuv's Weizmann* convinced Truman to reverse himself again and support the establishment of a Jewish state. When the Jewish groups received heavy arms from Czechoslovakia, they immediately went on the offensive. In April 1948, Begin's *Irgun* killed 250 Arab civilians in the village of *Dar Yasin* near Jerusalem. On 14 May 1948, Ben-Gurion led in the establishing of the *State of Israel*. The United States and Russia recognized Israel within days and by April 1949 the list of recognizing States included 53 nations. May of 1949, Israel was admitted to the United Nations.

On 15 May 1948, the Arabs began their invasion. Their forces numbered 25,000 and quickly grew to 55,000. The Israeli army began at 35,000 and grew to 100,000. The key was approximately 20-25,000 of the Israeli forces were WWII veterans. By January 1949, Israel occupied a territory larger than was originally partitioned. Armistice talks began in January 1949 and were signed by the different countries beginning with Egypt in February and the last one signing in July. *Iraq* never signed but withdrew their troops.

Problems Faced by the New Nation (1948-67)

The war waged for independence was costly for Israel in lives of soldiers and civilians. The new nation faced many difficult situations and questions such as: how to assimilate the thousands of new immigrants; what to do with the growing refugees on their borders; how to maintain an effective military in the face of a hostile and numerically superior enemy which surrounds you; how to keep a war-torn economy functioning; and how to effectively manage foreign policy alignments.

A provisional government was set up with *Ben-Gurion* as Prime Minister and *Weizmann* as president of the council. *Ben-Gurion* made sure that the president was a ceremonial role. A Constitutional Assembly was elected and drew up a constitution but it was never ratified. 16 February 1949, the Constitutional Assembly became Israel's first parliament or *Knesset*. 28 May 1948 the *Israeli Defense Force (IDF)* was established. The Hebrew name is *Zvah Haganah Le Yisrael (Zahal)*. With the formation of the IDF also came the elimination of any other armed forces. The *Irgun* did not appreciate this law. They challenged the law by sailing the arms ship *Altalena* into the Tel Aviv harbor. *Ben-Gurion* ordered the ship fired on and it burnt on the beach. Civil war was imminent when *Begin*, leader of the *Irgun*, ordered his people not to fire on the *Haganah* troops. This united the IDF, but left a bitter taste in *Begin* and the *Irgun*. *Begin* turned the armed movement into a political party, the *Herut (or Freedom Movement)*.

The first act of the provisional government in 1948 was to cancel the immigration restrictions for Jewish people. In 1950, they passed the *Law of Return*. It said, "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *olah* (new immigrant). In 1939 there were about 445,000 Jews in Palestine. By 15 May 1948 the number had risen to about 650,000. Between May 1948 and 31 December 1951, about 684,000 Jews immigrated to the new state.

Ben-Gurion's highly-organized system worked well in establishing the nation but was not prepared to address the issues involved with the mass immigration. The new arrivals ranged from highly educated to the poorly educated and impoverished. The total immigration for the first twelve years of existence was 1.2 million; at least two-thirds were *Sephardic* extraction. *Sephardim* are basically Jews of Spanish or Portuguese origin and tend to speak *Ladino* or *Arabic*. By 1961, 45% of the Jewish population in Israel was *Sephardic* descent. The *Ashkenazim* (European Jewish extraction) have historically dominated the economy, while the *Sephardic* make up the work force.

Israeli/Arab Tensions

The joy of independence for the Jews brought scars and bitterness for the Arabs. Over fifty years has not softened the view that the two diametrically opposed groups have for one another. The Arabs who remained in Israel after independence was declared became Israeli citizens with all constitutional rights. However, the constitution has never been ratified, so the rights are tenuous at best.

All of the new institutions began were for the express purpose of improving the growth of the Jewish state. The Arabs felt left out and marginalized. Soon after independence, Israel put the territories where 90% of the Arabs lived under military government. They imposed resolutions that were very restrictive. They could declare an area as "off limits" and control access in and out. 93 of 104 Arab villages were designated closed areas and no one allowed entrance or exit without military permit. Another policy allowed the military to designate an area as a "protected zone." This allowed the military to evict people from these areas.

Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands) Ordinance allowed for the transfer to Kibbutzim or other Jewish settlements land lying fallow or property not being used by people evicted from the “protected zones.” Another common procedure was for the military to seize up to forty percent of the land of an area for security purposes. They would then deed it to a *Kibbutz* or *moshav*.

By 1954, more than one third of Israel’s Jewish population lived on confiscated or abandoned land or homes of Arabs. What was even harder for the Israeli Arabs was the realization that nothing could be done to reverse the situation. Israel also passed legislation that prohibited the selling of Jewish land to a non-Jew. This meant that 95% of the land was inaccessible to non-Jews, mostly Arabs.

Ben-Gurion wanted the IDF to be a centerpiece and rallying point for the nation. He saw the military as being a means to cultivate unity in the new nation and serve as a useful vehicle to aid in assimilation of diverse people from the rapid growth of immigration. During this time period Ben-Gurion also was encouraging and growing up a new generation of leadership, led by *General Moshe Dayan* and technocrat *Shimon Peres*. In 1955 Egyptian President *Nasser* sought arms from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. The United States refused to supply Israel. Fearful of the ramifications, Israel worked a secret deal with Britain and France to allow Israel to attack Egypt. Britain and France were allowed to take control of the Suez Canal. October 1955, Israel routed the Egyptian Army and Britain and France took control of the canal. After pressure from *President Dwight Eisenhower* a cease-fire was declared. March 1957, Israel withdrew its troops from occupied territory. The military’s near perfect performance vindicated Ben-Gurion’s vision of the centrality of the IDF.

The spring of 1967 witnessed intense times for the region. 6 April 1967, Israeli jet fighters shot down six Syrian planes over the *Golan Heights*, which increased tensions even more. The Soviet Union became a player as they misinformed *Nasser* to help protect Syria. *Nasser* decided to terminate the United Nations peacekeeping force on United Arab Republic Soil and in the Gaza Strip. To keep confidence with the people *Moshe Dayan* was appointed Minister of Defense and formed a *National Unity Government* that included for the first time *Begin’s Herut Party*.

Israel’s victory was swift and decisive. June 5 the Israeli Air Force nearly destroyed the Egyptian Air Force before they ever got off the ground. Syrian and Jordanian forces were quickly defeated. In six days of confrontation the map of the Middle East was altered. The area captured by Israel more than doubled and one million Palestinian Arabs came under Israeli control. *Nassar’s* influence was considerably weakened and the PLO became a major player in the Middle East as the representative of the Palestinian people. November 1967 *UN Security Council Resolution 242* called for Israel to withdraw from occupied land from the war in exchange for Arab nations recognizing Israel as a state.

The Arab nations rejected an attempt to negotiate and in the summer of 1967 at *Khartoum, Sudan* issued their “three no” policy: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiation with Israel concerning a Palestinian territory. Egypt and the other Arab nations began focusing on more pressing needs in their own country and the PLO, led by *Yasir Arafat’s Al Fatah* became the leader of Arab resistance against Israel.

The next major conflict is labeled as the “*War of Attrition*.” This conflict occurred from February 1969 until August 1970 during the *Golda Meir* government. The Israeli leaders adopted the policy of “*asymmetrical response*.” The policy called for retaliation that far

exceeded any individual attack. Tension was high on the Egypt/Israel border. *The Roger's Plan* called for a secure frontier between the two countries. Israel rejected the plan and began to send jets into Egyptian air space.

The Soviets were helping Egypt modernize their military and this threatened Israel. July 1970 Israeli's shot down four Egyptian jets flown by Soviet pilots. Afraid the Soviets would retaliate and not sure of American support, Israel accepted a cease-fire and accepted resolution 242. After the June 1967 War the PLO set up base in Jordan. After a series of attacks by PLO and counterattacks by Israel, Jordan decided to drive the PLO out of their country.

As *Nassar* was negotiating a cease-fire in Jordan, he died of a heart attack. His successor *Anwar as Sadat* quickly came to the same conclusion that *Nassar* had come to late in life. Egypt's economic and social problems were more critical to the nation than their conflict with Israel. Sadat gave a peace initiative to Israel, but it was rejected. The hawks of Israel saw no reason to trade occupied land they had won in battle for peace. Israel believed that their military was superior and the Arabs were incapable of launching a successful attack against Israel.

The October War of 1973 was a surprise attack launched by Egypt and Syria on Israel. October 6, 1973, *Yom Kippur*, the Jewish Day of Atonement, Egypt crossed the Suez Canal and Syria from the north and for the first few days had the Israeli's on the run. Israel had great casualties and lost 150 planes. On 10 October the fortunes changed for Israel. The Syrians were driven out and Israel advanced in Syria, about 20 kilometers from Damascus. Egyptians were driven back across the canal and were surrounded by the Israeli Army. The Soviet Union asked America to negotiate a cease-fire arrangement. Under US pressure a cease-fire was arranged on October 25. The war had a devastating affect on Israel's confidence as a military force—the image of invincible Israel was forever destroyed. Israel's vulnerability was seen in several ways. One was their dependence of American support grew. Second, the improved Arab military meant Israel had to spend more for defense and this hindered their economy. Third, the emergence of the Arab's wealth of oil became a political weapon to use on the world nations. Several attempts at peace talks failed. Syria and Egypt recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, but the PLO would not recognize Israel. Because of this stance, Israel would not recognize the PLO and developed a very hard line against the PLO. Also following the October 1973 War the power and influence of Israel's Labor Party diminished greatly. The poor performance during the war, the declining economy and internal dissension were all factors.

The 70's also brought tension between the *Labor elite* and *Oriental Jews (African or Asian origin)*. This rift resulted in changes in voting patterns. Labor's social-secular ideology contrasted with the religious, free market orientation of the Oriental Jews. Labor tried to close the socioeconomic gap but was not successful as the gap even widened. The Oriental Jews perceiving themselves as being outside the circle of influence with Labor saw their position deteriorating. The majority of Oriental Jews occupied the urban slums while new immigrants from Europe were given generous loans and new housing.

The May 77 elections marked the end of Labor's dominance. The *Likud Bloc*, an alliance with *Herut Party of Begin*, formed a coalition government for the first time. Begin's

vision for Israel was influenced by Revisionist policies. This included Israel sovereignty over all of *Eretz Yisrael*, including Jerusalem and the West Bank, but not Sinai. In May of 1977, the Soviet Union and the United States committed to find peace in the Middle East. They supported a Geneva Conference. However, the proposal was rejected by Israel, the Arab Nations, and powerful private American interests. Fearing an international conference and interference, *Sadat* offered to address the *Knesset* and *Begin* accepted. After a year of ineffective talks *Begin*, *Sadat*, and *President Jimmy Carter* meet at Camp David in September 1978. These leaders agreed on a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The agreement set out broad principles to guide negotiations between Israel and the Arab states. It also established guidelines for a West Bank-Gaza transitional regime of full autonomy for the Palestinians residing in the occupied territories and for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. *Begin* and *Sadat*, with *President Carter* as witness, signed the Treaty on March 26, 1979.

Under the treaty, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt in April 1982. In 1989, the Governments of Israel and Egypt concluded an agreement that resolved the status of *Taba*, a resort area on the *Gulf of Aqab*. *Begin* consented to dismantle the Sinai settlements and the *Knesset* ratified. Another part of the agreement that dealt with the West Bank was most ambiguous. When *Begin* indicated his intent on retaining sovereignty in the West Bank, *Sadat* did not protest for fear of losing the commitment in the Sinai.

Tension between Israel and the PLO escalated into the invasion of *Lebanon* in 1978 to drive out terrorists. Israel sent a larger army into Lebanon in June of 1982 in response to attacks in northern Israel by the PLO. This forced the PLO to remove their troops from Lebanon in August of 1982. Israel withdrew all their forces except a small security zone along the border in 1985.

When *Begin* stepped down as Prime Minister in September 1983, *Yitzhak Shamir* of the *Likud Party* replaced him. Because there was not a majority winner the Labor and *Likud* parties formed a unity party for fifty months. For the first two years, *Shimon Peres* of the Labor Party was the Prime Minister and *Shamir* as vice prime minister and foreign minister. For the last twenty-five months they switched positions. The unity government was composed of both parties in the cabinet level. They were successful in reducing the inflation but were unable to agree on how to achieve peace with the Arabs.

Near the end of 1987, Arabs living in the *Gaza Strip* and the *West Bank* began often violent demonstrations in opposition to the Israeli occupation. People on both sides were killed. After the Parliamentary elections in 1988, another coalition government was formed because there was no clear winner. *Shamir* remained prime minister but could not keep the coalition together when the Labor party withdrew and another coalition was formed in 1990. Again *Shamir* remained as prime minister as the *Likud* and small conservative parties took control.

A major challenge to Israel has been the mass immigration of *Ethiopian* and *Soviet Jews* in the 80's and 90's. This caused a crisis in the areas of housing and employment. Israel addressed the problems by more settlements in occupied territories. *Shamir* and the *Likud* party ignored the protests of the Palestinians. In August of 1990, *Iraq* invaded *Kuwait* inciting the *Gulf War* in January of 1991. During this war the Iraqi's fired scud missiles at Israel.

Peace talks began between Israel, Syria, Lebanon and joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegations in October 1991. In 1992 The Labor Party returned to power and *Yitzhak Rabin* became prime minister in the place of Shamir. Rabin agreed to limit new Jewish settlements in the occupied lands. This did not sit well with some Israeli's. The PLO was not a part of the original talks in October 1991, but was recognized in September 1993. October 1994 Israel and Jordan signed a formal peace agreement between each other that ceased the unstated war between the two countries that had existed since 1948. In 1996, Israel removed troops from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. On 4 November 1995, a right-wing Israeli university student who disagreed with Rabin's policies assassinated Rabin. *Peres* became the new prime minister.

Israel conducted its first popular election for the prime minister in 1996. *Benjamin Netanyahu*, a member of the *Likud* party and a critic of the Israeli-PLO peace agreements, was elected prime minister. He held strongly to the concept of the security of the nation and right to make allowances with the treaties for population growth. Tension escalated after his election as the plans to enlarge the settlements on the West Bank and East Jerusalem incited intense and violent protests by the Palestinians. To help still this disquiet, the Israelis finished pulling out their troops from *Hebron*.

The *Wye River Agreement* between Israel and the Palestinians was signed in October 1998. In this agreement the Israelis promised to return more land back to the Palestinians and allow a Palestinian airport to be created on the Gaza Strip. However in December of 1998, *Netanyahu* accused the *PLO* of not keeping their security agreements and stopped the Israeli withdrawals. This effort caused a lack of confidence in the ruling government and new elections were called for.

Ehud Barak was elected the new prime minister in May 1999. He reopened negotiations with the PLO. In September he signed a renewed *Wye River Agreement* with *Yasir Arafat*. After this agreement, the Israelis renewed their troop withdrawals. By May 2000, Israel had withdrawn from the security zone in Southern Lebanon.

Negotiations for a final settlement ended in deadlock in July, 2000. Palestinians insisted that refugees should have the right to return to Israel, which would produce an Arab majority in Israel. Israel insisted on annexing key portions of the Palestinian areas and on leaving most settlements intact, and offered only a limited form of Palestinian statehood. Palestinian violence erupted on September 28, 2000, triggered by a visit of *Ariel Sharon* to the temple mount in Jerusalem, which is also the site of the *Al-Aqsa Mosque* holy to Muslims. In negotiations at *Taba*, Palestinians rejected a settlement offer mediated by *President Clinton*, and shortly thereafter, *Israeli PM Barak*, who had supported the peace process, was voted out of office and replaced by a right wing government headed by *Ariel Sharon*.

Violence continued into 2001 and 2002, despite attempts by the *Mitchell Commission* and others to restore calm. The terror attack on the World Trade Center in the US on September 11, 2001, had direct repercussions for the Israel-Palestine conflict. On the one hand, Arab and Islamic countries tried to leverage on the need for their cooperation in the war against terror to win concessions against Palestine. On the other, many Americans began to view terrorist actions in a new light, as organizations such as *Hamas* and *Hizbulla* came to be linked with the *Al-Qaeda* group of *Osama Bin-Laden*.

Particularly damaging for the Palestinians were the demonstrations held in favor of *Bin*

Laden, and evidence linking a boatload of illegal arms intercepted by Israel with Iranian support for the PNA. The boat was intercepted on 3 January 2002, on the day that US envoy *Anthony Zinni* arrived to attempt to arrive at a settlement. Against this background, the US and EU seemed to give Israel wider latitude for action against the Palestinians. Israel made increasing incursions into Palestinian areas, and confined PNA Chairman Arafat to his compound in *Ramallah*. The Palestinians stepped up attacks on soldiers as well as suicide bombings. On 12 March 2002 the UN Security Council passed *Resolution 1397*, calling on the sides to stop the violence once again, mentioning the peace plan of *Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah*, and for the first time calling for creation of a Palestinian State alongside Israel.

Yasser Arafat declared a cessation of violence several times, but this did not seem to affect the frequency or severity of suicide bombings and ambushes. The Israelis, for their part, continued with their policy of assassinating wanted men in the Palestinian areas. During the last week in March, as *General Zinni* was returning to the Middle East, the Palestinians launched a successful suicide attack almost every day, in addition to many unsuccessful ones.

A blast at the *Park Hotel* in *Nethanya* killed 27 people as they were celebrating Passover. Israel launched a massive raid intended to root out terror infrastructure, including reoccupation of *Ramallah*, *Nablus*, *Jenin*, *Tulkarm* and other towns. Hundreds of Palestinians may have been killed, including many reported civilian casualties. Israel declared that only about 50 were killed in *Jenin*, mostly members of the *Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs* suicide brigades. These figures appear to be borne out by independent sources, but they are not accepted or believed in the Arab world.

Suicide attacks abated, but did not stop. During the course of the fighting, Israel captured numerous documents demonstrating that *Yasser Arafat* had personally approved the organization of terror cells, and that the PNA treasury had approved payments for suicide-bomber explosive belts. The Israelis captured or killed numerous persons suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. The IDF also destroyed records, buildings, roads, and other innocent civilian organizations clearly not involved in terror. Later in the fighting, the IDF managed to locate *Marwan Barghouti*, head of the *Fatah Tanzeem*, and to capture him. Israel claims it has evidence of complicity by *Barghouti* in numerous terrorist acts, and it plans to put him on trial. Critics of the Israeli military operation, called "*Defensive Wall*," argued that it would be impossible to put an end to terror by military activity in the absence of progress toward a peaceful solution.

The violence continued despite the arrival of *US Secretary of State Colin Powell*, who needed quiet in Israel and Palestine to leave the US a free hand to organize an alliance against *Iraq*. Powell's mission accomplished nothing. He was not unable to get the Israelis to withdraw completely from the reoccupied areas, nor could he get the Palestinians to agree to a cease fire. Demonstrations and public outrage in Arab countries, fueled by charges of a massacre, prompted UN action.

UN Resolution 1402 directed that Israel withdraw from the territories immediately. By the time Powell had left, Israel had withdrawn from some towns, but *Yasser Arafat* was still imprisoned in *Ramallah*, and the Israelis were besieging the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where armed Palestinians had sought refuge from the IDF. The UN Security Council adopted *Resolution 1403*, expressing dismay that resolution 1402 had

not been implemented. Palestinians charged that the Israelis had committed a massacre in the *Jenin Refugee Camp*.

On April 19, the Security Council adopted *Resolution 1405*, calling for an impartial investigative team to be sent to determine the truth of Palestinian allegations. Israel objected to the composition of the team. Israel at first agreed to the investigation, but later backtracked and blocked it, claiming that the composition and procedures of the investigation would be unfair to Israel, and that the UN had reneged on initial agreements about the investigation. Opposition to the investigation was fueled by Israeli memories of the recent *Durban Conference* as well as by the infamous *Zionism is Racism Resolution* of the UN, which was recalled repeatedly in public debate.

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon visited the US in May of 2002, under pressure from the US administration to advance a peace program that could be acceptable to Palestinians and the Arab states. The two discussed plans for a regional summit to be held later in 2002, and the Israelis presented documents that they claim prove the involvement of Yasser Arafat and the PNA in terrorist activities. News of a suicide bombing committed by the *Hamas* came while Bush and Sharon were meeting, causing the Israeli PM to cut the visit short and return to Israel.

The sieges of *Muqata* and *The Church of the Nativity* were also resolved in May. Militants in *The Church of the Nativity* were exiled to Cyprus and Europe. The wanted men in the *Muqata* compound in *Ramalah* were jailed in Jericho. The head of the *PFLP* allegedly coordinated a suicide attack from his cell in Jericho. At the end of May, under pressure for democratic reform, Yasser Arafat signed into law the *Basic Law or Constitution of the Palestinian Transitional State*. The law states that Palestinian law will be based on the principles of Islamic law (*Sha'ariyeh*).

In June, following another wave of Palestinian suicide attacks, Israeli forces essentially reoccupied all of the West Bank, though the Israeli government was quick to claim that the re-occupation would not continue indefinitely, but later indicated otherwise. *President Bush* made a long awaited speech on Middle East policy calling for a Palestinian state, but insisting on democratic reform of the *Palestine National Authority*. In August and September, several attempts at Palestinian cease fire initiatives were foiled by refusal of extremist groups to participate and by Israeli acts such as the killing of *Salah Shehadeh*, head of the military wing of the *Hamas* in a missile attack on *Gaza* that cost the lives of 13 civilians.

Shehadeh was replaced by *Mohamed Deif*. August and September witnessed a six week respite from major suicide and terror attacks, facilitating an Israeli-Palestinian plan to return full Palestinian authority in *Gaza* and *Bethlehem* first. However, this failed after several violent attacks in *Gaza*. At the beginning of September, Israeli security forces foiled several suicide attack attempts and detected a truck laden with 1300 pounds of explosives and gas tanks that were to be used by Palestinians in a suicide attack.

The PLC convened in September to approve the new cabinet chosen in line with reform efforts. PLC cabinet members refused to ratify the cabinet until Yasser Arafat would allow a Prime Minister to share power. Instead, Arafat agreed to elections in January, 2003, despite Israeli occupation. Arafat's popularity was at a high. The period of relative calm came to an end with suicide bombings in *Umm El Fahm* and in a *Tel-Aviv* bus. The Israeli government proceeded with an attack on *Gaza* including entry into *Gaza* city and besieged Yasser Arafat and an estimated 200 others in the *Muqata* compound in *Ramala*.

Israel demanded that Palestinians give up wanted persons who had taken refuge in the Muqata including Palestinian preventive security boss *Tawfiq Tirawi*. Arafat remained defiant. Israel destroyed all buildings in the compound except the main one, promising not to harm Arafat. After a rumor was spread that Israel was about to blow up the Muqata, widespread demonstrations took place in the West Bank and Gaza, resulting in four deaths.

The USA pressured Israel to stop destroying buildings in the Muqata and to withdraw. Despite a UN resolution, Israel continued the siege. Arafat's popularity with Palestinians soared. In April of 2002, the US government initiated a series of consultations with a group of diplomats that became known as the "*Quartet*." The quartet evolved a roadmap for a settlement including Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and establishment of a Palestinian state. In October of 2002, the Labor party withdrew from the Israel unity government. PM *Ariel Sharon* initiated immediate elections, to be held January 28.

Sharon handily won these elections.

Israeli Prime Minister *Ariel Sharon* vowed to press ahead with an assault on Hamas, and the Islamic militant group rebuffed Egyptian mediators' proposals for a truce with Israel. With the peace effort stumbling, Palestinian prime minister *Mahmoud Abbas* traveled to the Gaza Strip for a desperate push to persuade militants to lay down their arms. After a week of violence highlighted by Israeli air strikes aimed at killing *Hamas* militants and a *Hamas* suicide bombing in Jerusalem, with dozens of casualties on both sides, there were concerns that any further delays and violence could bury the U.S.-backed "road map" to peace and a proposed Palestinian state by 2005.

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Christianity in Israel

History of Christianity

The church was formed at **Pentecost** and quickly began to spread throughout Israel and beyond. With the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the dispersion of the Jews in 132 AD, the Christians were also dispersed. With the conversion of *Constantine*, Jerusalem became one of the four major Patriarchates. After the Crusades and the split between the East and the West in 1054, Rome set up a separate patriarchate in Jerusalem in 1099. This remained until 1291 when the Romans were stopped by the *Mamluks*. It was not re-activated until 1847 when the Roman clergy was allowed to return. The Franciscans were permitted to enter in 1333 to be caretakers of the Christian Holy Places. While the Turks ruled from the 16th to 19th Century, Constantinople was the ruling religious power. The only exception was the *Greek Melkites* in Palestine who were still allowed a relationship with Rome.

Current Stresses Among Christians in Israel

The vast majority of Christians in Israel and Palestine are Arabs. 85% live in Galilee (61% in cities, 35% are rural) in 25 villages. They are more urban than the Muslims. Because of political, social and religious issues the rate of emigration of Arab Christians has continued to increase. There is the danger that the Christian influence in this area will disappear. Many Christians, especially the better educated have already migrated. The majority of the non-Arab Christians are either married to Jews or are from a mixed marriage. There is a small group who are called Jewish Christians, who are children of

mixed marriages with either mother or father who is an ethnic Jew. There is a small group of 200-300 members who use Hebrew in their liturgy and whose group is called the work of *St. James the Apostle*. The small group of believers among the dominant Jewish population is reminiscent of the day of the birth of the church.

An area of special concern is the religious holy places. The situation is intensified by the fact that the three great monotheistic religions have holy places within one kilometer radius of each other. These sites are the *Wailing Wall (Judaism)*, two mosques (Islam) and the *Holy Sepulcher, the Cenacle of the Last Supper, Tomb of the Virgin and the Chapel of Ascension (Christian)*. The Christian Holy places have been the center of controversy throughout the ages. The control over the different sites have been at the discretion of the ruling power of Palestine. This has led to the perception of a divided Christianity.

Marginal Christian Groups

Catholic Church

The Catholic Church composes the largest majority of “Christian adherents” in Israel. They are divided in three different sects: the *Melkites, Latin Catholics*, and the *Maronites*. The Vatican has diplomatic relations with Israel. Catholics in Israel claim some 56 congregations with 47,500 members and over 80,000 adherents.

Orthodox Church

The second largest denomination is the Greek Orthodox, however their influence and size is decreasing. This loss has been dramatic, for in the early 19th century they composed 80% of the Christian population. Many factors have contributed to the rapid decline including a shortage of priests and finances, emigration and conversion to other denominations, and an ongoing tension between the Church hierarchy (mostly Greek) and the laity (mostly Arabic). They still claim precedence over the other Christian communities.

The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church has centered on caring for pilgrims to the holy land. This has taken the form of churches, convents, schools and hostels. The Orthodox Church is currently under the Patriarch of Moscow.

Four Oriental or Monophysite churches, *Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches*, report some 23,000 members.

Jehovah Witnesses

The Jehovah’s Witnesses began in Palestine and Israel in 1920 and 1926 respectively. They now report some 4 congregations, 100 members and 500 adherents.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints (Mormons)

The Mormon Church has 1 congregation with 35 members

Protestant Churches

Ancient Church of the East

This Church reports 4 congregations with over 900 members.

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God report 1 congregation with some 280 members.

The Association of Baptist Churches in Israel

This group is loosely linked to Baptists in America. It began in 1965 and works with some 9 congregations and 250 members—largely among Arabic peoples.

Anglican Church

The London Church's Ministry to Jews began in Jerusalem in 1820. The early ministries were directed into the areas of worship, education, social ministries and a book store. The Church Missionary Society in the areas of reaching the Arabs and hospitals and orphanages expanded the ministry in 1851. The Arab ministry grew quickly especially during the British mandate. However, the Anglican Church lost approximately three-fourths of its membership during the mass exodus of Christians (mostly Arabs) in 1948.

The Baptist Convention

The Association of Baptist Churches traces its beginnings back to the Southern Baptist mission work in 1911. The period of greatest growth came after 1948. Their main areas of emphasis are evangelism, education and social work.

In 1965 the different Baptist groups formed the Baptist Convention of Israel. There has been a concern by the Jewish media over the issue of proselytism efforts by these groups. The Baptist Association reports some 13 congregations with over 1000 members.

The Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland has the longest active Protestant church in Israel, dating back to 1839. The St. Andrews Scots Memorial Church reports 2 congregations with a total membership of just over 20.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance

The C & M A began ministry in Israel in 1890. It has reported 3 congregations and 25 members.

Churches of Christ

The Churches of Christ in Israel number some 3 congregations with just over 200 members.

The Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene began work in Israel in 1921. It now ministers to 2 congregations with 70 members—primarily Arabic people.

The Christian Brethren

This Church group serves through 3 congregations with some 125 members.

The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church began in Israel in 1820 and now has 2 congregations with some 300 members.

The Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church has 2 congregations with 46 members.

The New Apostolic Church

This church has 1 congregation and 187 members.

The Messianic Assemblies Church

This Church reports over 60 congregations and some 3300 members.

The Seventh Day Adventist

The Seventh Day Adventists have 9 congregations with over 420 members but report over 800 attending

The United Pentecostal Church

The United Pentecostals report 3 congregations but only a total of 30 members.

The Scandinavian Seaman's Church

This church, which began in 1949, serves in Haifa and Ashdod, where it is visited by as many as 6000 sailors each year. The Church reports 2 congregations with some 100 members.

Renewal Movements

The Pentecostal/ Charismatic renewal movement had great impact in Israel during the 90's. It also crossed over into the older church. It is estimated to have over 100,000 adherents (3% Pentecostals, 16% Charismatic and 81% Independents).

Indigenous Missions

From the creation of the Church in the 1st Century, the church sent out missionaries all over the world. This trend has reversed radically. Now very few are sent out. Israel has become the recipient of a great many mission organizations and churches.

Johnstone, Barrett, <http://members.tripod.com/local-baptist-church/index1.htm>

People Groups

Over 57 people groups reside in Israel. Thirty six languages are spoken by these groups (33 living and 3 extinct). Arriving at an accurate number of people within each group plus differences of opinion on which people groups are present in Israel represents a difficult if not impossible task. In an effort to present a concise overall picture, the people groups will be divided into the separate divisions: Jewish, Arabic, and others. Unless otherwise noted, all numbers come from www.peoplegroups.org website. Other notations refer to the following: OW—Operation World; JP II—Joshua Project II; and WCE—World Christian Encyclopedia.

Jewish Peoples

4,847,000/ 5,150,000 (Ethnologue)

Jews, Israeli

1,000,000/ 1,350,383 (WCE)/ 3,350,932 (OW)

The difference in range of population demonstrates the lack of a standard in counting and dividing the Jewish people groups. This group is composed of people who speak the standard Hebrew and are the largest Jewish people group in Israel. They are native born (*Sabras*). 94% are Orthodox Jews but only 30% are practicing. 2% are non-religious and .4% are *Karaites*. There are approximately 6,000 evangelicals in Israel from this people group. They have a complete Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. There are a multitude of agencies, organizations, churches and individuals ministering in Israel with the Jewish people.

Russian Jew

750,000 (JP II)/ 458,903 (WCE)/ 212,857 (OW)

They are Ashkenazi's from Russia. Most of them are practicing religious Jews but 25% are non-religious. The International Mission Board of the SBC is very active along with many other churches, agencies and organizations seeking to reach this group. They have a complete Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film.

Arabic, Jewish

297,999 (JP II)/ 286,814 (WCE)

These are Safardi and Oriental Jewish immigrants from North Africa, Yemen et al. They speak standard Arabic. They have a complete Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film.

Yiddish, Jewish

265,947 (JP II)/ 256,804 (WCE)/ 265,947 (OW)

About .05% are adherents to Christianity. Judeo-Germans. Ashkenazi's speaking Yiddish, primarily from Europe, but also from Latin America, Australia and South Africa.

Romanian Jew **250,000/ 299,618 (WCE)**

There are three different dialects used by this group, Hebrew, Transylvanian, and Zagundzi. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. This is an unreached people group. Ashkenazi's from Romania. They are religious Jews. There are several groups and agencies working with this group.

Maghrebi Jew **282,000**

Judeo-Moroccan, the youth are fluent in Arabic and Hebrew. The language is a mixture of Spanish, French, and Ladino. They are practicing Sefardi Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film in Hebrew.

German Jews, Yiddish **215,000 (JP11)**

They have a Bible and audio Gospel recordings. Have several different dialects and usually use Hebrew script.

Spanish Jew, Ladino **135,000 (JP11)/ 144,942 (WCE)/ 150,596 (OW)**

Total all countries are around 188,000. Ladino was formally the language of Sefardic Jewry. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. About .01% is Christian.

Polish Jews **100,000/ 293,626 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

They use Hebrew as a second language and prefer Polish as their main language. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. About .08% are Christian.

Yahudic, Judeo-Iraqi **100,000 / 128,042 (WCE)**

Approximately 105,000 in the world. "Yahudic" is used by some scholars to describe all Judeo-Arabic languages. They have audio Gospel recordings.

Israelis, English Speaking **100,000 (JP11)**

Israeli's whose primary language is English. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film.

German Jew **71,000 (JP11)/ 66,582 (WCE)/ 69,178 (OW)**

Very few are Christians (50). Several agencies and groups are working with them. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. They are Ashkenazi's from Germany, many are practicing religious Jews.

Black Israelite, Hebrew **68,000 (JP11)/ 71,704 (WCE)/ 74,500 (OW)**

Falasha (Black Jew) is a group within. About 3% are Christian. Black immigrants from the USA that affirm Judaism.

Dzhidi, Judeo-Persian **3,500**

See Persian Jews.

Hungarian Jews **60,000 (JP11)/ 71,704 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

About .08% is Christians. They are Ashkenazi's from Hungary, 100% are practicing religious Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film.

Yemenite Jews **50,000 (JP11)/ 56,339 (WCE)**

Immigrants from Yemen, with a majority of the speakers are over the age of 50. They are religious Jews.

Bukharic Jews **50,000**

The population worldwide is 60,000. Similar to Farsi and Tajiki.

Amhara, Beta Israel **50,000 / 1,537 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

Jews of Ethiopian origin speak the language. They are bilingual in Hebrew. They refer to themselves as “Beta Israel.” Most are refugees or migrants from Ethiopia.

Approximately 200 are evangelical. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. SIM International and United World Mission are ministering and planting churches among this people group.

Tunisian Jews **45,000 / 8,707 (WCE)/ 9,046 (OW)**

Immigrants from Tunisia from 1965 – 1990. They are practicing Sefardi Jews. They have Bible portions. Older speakers, younger generation has only a passing knowledge.

Judeo-Georgian **40,000 / 50,705 (WCE)/ 3,193 (OW)**

Total world population is 60,000 to 70,000. The Judeo-Georgian speakers live separately from non-Jewish Georgian speakers. They are Ashkenazi’s from Georgia (ex-USSR), they are practicing religious Jews.

Bik, Tat **40,000 (JPII)/ 45,071 (WCE)/ 9,467 (OW)**

The population total for the whole world is about 100,000. They are immigrants from the Caucasus Mountains. Their alternate names are Caucasian Mountain Jews, Judeo-Tatic, Juhuri, and Mountain Jews. Tradition says they have lived there since 722 BC. They are different from the *Takestani* of Iran. Speakers of the Judeo-Tat are called “Bik.” They are primarily agriculturalists, growing *marena* grass for dying and merchants. They have Bible portions.

French Jews **40,000/ 61,460 (WCE)/ 63,857 (OW)**

They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. They have several groups and agencies involved in evangelistic activity and church planting. They are Ashkenazis from France and Sefardis from North Africa, they are practicing Jews but 20% are non-religious.

Yudi, Tripolita’it **30,000 (JPII)**

There are 35,000 speakers in the world. They were originally in Libya, though there are none there now. They are bi-lingual in Hebrew.

Tigrinya, Beta Israel **10,000 / 16,236 (WCE)**

They are called “*Falashas*,” which they consider a pejorative term. They also refer to themselves as “Beta Israel.” Their liturgy is written in *Geez*, an Ethiopian script. They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. They are Oriental Jews from Ethiopia and Eritrea. They are practicing religious Jews.

Kurdistani Jew, Kurdim **3,725 (JPII)/ 30,730 (WCE)**

They have Bible portions. They are Judeo-Aramaic immigrants from persecution in Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. They are a 100% practicing Jews. Many are married to non-speakers and most of the speakers are over 50 with very few below 40.

Persian Jew **3,500 (JPII)/ 66,582 (WCE)/ 3,725 (OW)**

They have a Bible, radio, literature, student work and the Jesus film. They speak Farsi and Shirazi. They are Sefardis from Iran and are practicing religious Jews. Only .03% is Christians.

Asian Jew, Central **2,859 (JPII)/ 55,826 (WCE)/ 2,859 (OW)**

Also known as Tajiki. They are related to Bukharian, Judeo-Tajik. They are located in Russia, Central Asia and USA. They are Sefardis from Central Asia. They have a Bible, radio, and the Jesus film. Only .02% is Christians.

- Marathi** **8,000 (JP11)/ 9,219 (WCE)**
 Are primarily located in India. There are over 65,000,000 speakers in the world. They are immigrants from India and religious Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- USA Jew** **2,129 (JP11)/ 2,049 (WCE)/ 2,129 (OW)**
 They are Ashkenazi's: immigrants, residents, settlers, many are now Israeli citizens. 7.9% are Christian Messianic Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- Judeo-Berber** **2,000 (JP11)/ 2,561 (WCE)/ 2,661 (OW)**
 They are immigrants from Morocco, mostly between 1950-60. Jews who are bi-lingual in Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew and French. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- Portuguese Jew** **1,500 (JP11)/ 1,537 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**
 Ashkenazi's from Portugal, they are religious Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- Turkish Jew** **35,852 (WCE)**
 They are immigrants from Turkey and are religious Jews. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- Libyan Jew** **34,315 (WCE)**
 They are immigrants from Libya and are religious Jews. Most of the speakers are over 40.
- Cochin Jew** **9,731 (WCE)**
 Almost all are Black Jews from Kerala, India with some White Jews.
- Caucasian Mountain Jew**
 See Bik, Tat.
- Hulaula, Hula Hula** **9,000 (JP11)**
 Population in the world is 10,000. They are originally from Iranian Kurdistan and the surrounding area in Iraq. Religious adherents are Jewish.
- Lishanan** **4,500 (JP11)**
 They speak Lishan Didan. There are about 5,000 in the world. Originally from Iranian Azerbaijan and Southeast Turkey. Most speakers are over 50, very few below 40. They have the Bible in their language. They are Jewish adherents.
- Dutch Jew** **2,049 (WCE)**
 They are Ashkenazis from the Netherlands: many are religious Jews. 1% is non-religious. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.
- Arbil, Lishanid Bedawi** **2,000 (JP11)**
 Originally Eastern and Southern Iraqi Kurdistan. All speakers are over 40. They are Jewish adherents.
- Judeo-Greek** **51 (WCE)/ 62 (OW)**
 They are Jews of Greek origin from the Balkans and Greece. Jews quit using in Rome in 4th Century, Spain by the 6-7th Century; Crimea by the 8th Century and after 1000 AD was used only in Greek circles. The language is now nearly extinct. Only a few elderly people speak it.
- Yevanic** **35(JP11)/ 62 (OW)**
 See Judeo-Greek. Nearly extinct.
- Arabic Peoples**

Israeli Arab **1,000,000/ 840,000 (JP11)**

They speak South Levantine Arabic, bilingual in Hebrew. There are over 6 million speakers worldwide. They have a Bible, audio recordings and the Jesus film. 1% is evangelical. There are several groups and organizations involved in evangelism and church planting.

Palestinian Arab **750,000 (JP11)/ 752,887(WCE)**

They speak South Levantine Arabic, a Northeastern colloquial Arabic and Madani. 18% are Christian, 67% are Muslim (Sunni – strong Alawis), 8% are Jew, 1.3% are Druzes, and 1% is Ahmadis. They have a Bible, audio recordings and the Jesus film. Many groups and organizations are working evangelistically and planting churches.

Bedouin Arab **160,000 (JP11)/ 66,582 (WCE)**

They speak Arabic, both South Levantine and North Levantine. .02% is Christian. They have a Bible, audio recordings and the Jesus film. There are over 11,800,000 speakers in the world. Bedouin Arabic is also called Badawi. Bedouin Arabs are in the Arabian Desert. Some migrated to the Negev Desert, the largest groups being the Banu Sakhr and the al-Huwaytat. There are two basic social classes: “true” Bedouin – nomadic shepherds and Fellahin – farmers. Women do most of the work, while men socialize and plan for the group. Tents and animals are their main possessions. Nearly 100% are Sunni Muslims. There are several groups and organizations involved in evangelism and church planting.

Turkish **30,000 (JP11)**

There are 59,000,000 speakers in the world. 99.9% are Muslims. They have a Bible, audio recordings and the Jesus film. They are originally from Turan, a land between the Caspian Sea and the Mongolian Desert. They came to Asia Minor in the 11th Century and by 1298 the Ottoman Empire ruled the vast area and lasted until 1923.

Egyptian Arab **25,000 (JP11)/ 8,707 (WCE)/ 9,046 (OW)**

There are 47,000,000 speakers in the world. 80% are Sunni Muslim, 19% are Christian. Most are immigrant workers. The major denominations are Coptic Orthodox, Roman Catholic and CEC. They have a Bible, audio recordings and the Jesus film.

Lebanese Arab **15,964 (JP11)/ 15,365 (WCE)**

They speak North Levantine Arabic. 45% are Muslims. They have a Bible and audio recordings. Denominations ministering are Roman Catholic, Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, Greek Orthodox Church, and American Baptist Church. Christian and Missionary Alliance and IMB are conducting mission involvement.

Syrian Arab **1,596 (JP11)/ 1,537 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

They speak Standard Arabic. 80% Muslim (Sunni, Alawi Shias, Ahmadis) 7% are Christian. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film. Denomination active is Syrian Orthodox.

Gazan Arab **9,731 (WCE)**

Originally from the Gaza strip. 93% are Muslim. Outreach is being done by the IMB.

Other Peoples**Druze** **100,000 (JP11)**

It is a sect out of Islam beginning in the 11th Century. The faith consists of elements from Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. They are located in Galilean villages and at Mt. Carmel. They serve in the Israeli Army.

Spaniard **60,000 (JP11)/ 1,537 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

There are 332,000,000 Spanish speakers in the world. They are expatriates from Spain. They are in commerce and religious affairs. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film. Denomination active is Roman Catholic.

Malayalam **8,000 (JP11)**

They also speak *South Kerala*. An alternate name is *Moplah*. There are 34,022,000 speakers in the world. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.

Mussulman Gypsy **7,400 (JP11)/ 7,683 (WCE)**

Dialects spoken are Domari and Yuruk. They are 100% Muslim. You can find them in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Russia, India, Egypt, Libya and Afghanistan.

Greek **3,193 (JP11)/ 3,073 (WCE)**

They are expatriates from Greece. Denominations are Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic. They have a Bible, literature, and the Jesus film.

Adyge, Circassian **3,000 (JP11)**

There are 280,000 speakers in the world. The dialects are *Aadygh* and *Xakuchi* and are Bilingual in South Levantine Arabic. The predominately Muslim, Sunni with .05% Christian. They came from the Caucasus in Russia about 100 years ago. They call themselves Circassian. They have a Bible, literature, and the Jesus film.

Armenian **3,000 (JP11)/ 798 (OW)**

There are 6,836 speakers in the world. They also speak both East and West Armenian and Bilingual in South Levantine Arabic. 90% are Christian adherents. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.

Dutch **1,680 (JP11)**

There are 20,000,000 speakers in the world. They speak the Dutch and Venlos dialects. They have a Bible, literature, and the Jesus film.

British **1,596 (JP11)/ 1,537(WCE)**

There are 322,000,000 speakers in the world. They are composed of expatriates employed in education, commerce and business. Denominations active are Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, Seventh Day Adventist and the Jehovah Witnesses. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.

Italian **1,596 (JP11)/ 1,537 (WCE)/ 1,596 (OW)**

There are 37,000,000 speakers in the world. They are expatriates from Italy who are strongly Catholics. 84% are Christian adherents. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film. The active denomination is Roman Catholic.

Alawites **1,500(JP11)**

Language is unknown. .67% is evangelical.

Shamerim, Samaritans **560 (JP11)/ 512 (WCE)/ 456 (OW)**

Language is unknown. They are a Jewish sect dating back to the 8th Century BC, located in Holon and Nablus. It is a literary and religious language. Several churches and organizations are working with literature, evangelism, and church planting.

Assyrian **500 (JP11)/ 512 (WCE)**

The dialects are Assyrian, Neo-Aramaic and Iranian Koine. They are Nestorian and Chaldean refugees. The denomination is Ancient Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Church. 95% are adherents of Christianity. They have a Bible, audio and the Jesus film.

Bijil Neo-Aramaic **10 (JP11)**

About ten semi-speakers, all over 60. From Bijil in Iraqi Kurdistan, now they are all in Israel.

French

2,049 (WCE)

There are 72,000,000 speakers in the world. They are expatriates from France who are employed in business and education. Denomination is Roman Catholic and missions are Franciscan (OFM), Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD), Dominicans (OP), Confederate Benedictines (OSB), Salesians of St. John Bosco (SDB) and Society of Jesus (Jesuits, SJ). They have a Bible, literature, and the Jesus film.

German

1,024 (WCE)

There are 98,000,000 speakers in the world. They are expatriates from Germany working in education and business. Denominations are Roman Catholic, New Apostolic Church and Jehovah Witnesses. They have a Bible, radio, literature, and the Jesus film.

Other minority peoples

15,365 (WCE)

Barrett lists the following nationalities in this group: Russians, Scandinavians, Polish, Hungarians, Romanians and USA Whites. There is overlap with the other reporting groups in this area. Denominations in these groups listed are the Russian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/Assets/Profiles/jp12848.htm>

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians should not give up on evangelism among the peoples of Israel. Pray for an evangelistic opening among the Jewish and Arabic peoples of Israel.
2. Evangelical Christians should seek to develop evangelistic and church-starting movements exactly tailored for each segment of the population in Israel. The Russian and Ukrainian Jews, the Ethiopian Jews, the Arabic peoples, and the Druze communities show the most promise of response.
3. Evangelical Christians should incorporate some of the methods of the Messianic Jewish movement and the strategies of Jewish Synagogues to evangelize some of the groups in Israel.
4. Evangelical Christians should support evangelism among the Jewish people around the world. Winning Jewish people outside of Israel can impact the evangelistic efforts within the country.
5. Evangelical Christians should, as much as possible, keep the evangelistic and church-starting efforts separate from political considerations.
6. Evangelical Christians should seek to minimize inflammatory statements from Christian leaders about the situation in Israel and the Jewish-Arabic conflicts. These statements often hinder the proclamation of the gospel as well as efforts to heal the obvious breaches in relationships.
7. Evangelical Christians should redouble efforts to use all types of media to spread the gospel in Israel. The Jesus Film, in various languages, continues to be a strong proclamation of Christ.
8. Evangelical Christians should support efforts toward peace and lessening of tensions in this important part of the world. Christian care-giving should reach all sides of the conflict. Evangelicals should refuse to take sides in the political tensions.
9. Evangelical Christians should recognize that the primary obstacles to Christian conversion in Israel today are the rising non-religious sentiments, the intense conflicts

that people face daily, and the increasing threat of Islam. Aggressive yet loving evangelism should characterize all evangelical approaches to the peoples of Israel.