

Past to Present of Palestine



The history of the region to which Palestine belongs, usually commences with Canaan and the Canaanites – an agricultural people who existed circa 3000 BCE. About 1,800 years later, conquerors arrived from the Aegean Coast – the Philistines – and settled in the coastal area. In the area south of Jaffa and the **Gaza Strip**, stretching to North Egypt, they founded several city-states. Somewhat later, nomadic Hebrew tribes also arrived from South Mesopotamia; they established the Biblical Kingdom of Israel. Afterwards, this kingdom was divided into Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

In 722 BCE and 586 BCE respectively, invading Assyrians and Babylonians destroyed these kingdoms. The Babylonians themselves were soon ousted by a Sassanid army (Persians), and the Sassanid Empire subsequently ruled over the region for about three hundred years, until Alexander the Great's legions conquered it. Another three hundred years later – in 63 BCE – the Romans arrived. They were the first to employ the geographic denomination 'Palestine'. Throughout the period in which the region was part of the Christian East Roman (Byzantine) Empire – from the 4th century onwards – Christianity managed to spread profusely. The lengthy Greek-Roman presence explains the dominant Hellenist culture prior to the arrival of Arab conquerors.



A Palestinian woman waits at a checkpoint in Hebron that leads to the Israeli controlled area of the street /Photo New York Times

Civilizations
of the Middle East



INTERACTIVE
TIMETABLE