

Today's Israel is a land that borders the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt to Lebanon; encompassing 20,770 square kilometers, of which 440 square kilometers are water, an area slightly smaller than the State of New Jersey. Its borders run a length of 1,017 km, including Egypt-266 km, Gaza Strip-51 km, Jordan-238 km, Lebanon-79 km, Syria-76 km, and the West Bank-307 km. Its lowest point is the Dead Sea, 408 meters below sea level; and its highest point is Har Meron, 1,208 meters above sea level. It presently has between six and seven million residents.*Regarding the land of Israel, as described in Scripture above, it was God that gave (transferred title of) it *unconditionally* to the “descendants of Abraham.” The transfer of the title to the land of Israel was part of God's promise of blessing to Abram (later to be renamed Abraham) when God called him out of the country of Haran, a promise that includes a blessing for anyone (or nation) who supports the Israelis and/or the nation Israel, as well as a curse for anyone who does not. Additionally, the promise assured Abram that all the peoples on earth would be blessed through him, a prophetic look forward to the incarnation, sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Genesis 12:1-7).

This covenant (promise) of God with Abram was unconditional, as seen by its confirmation ceremony where *only* God walked between the divided pieces of the sacrificial animals. By excluding Abram from the ceremony (contrary to custom), God guaranteed that His covenant with Abram regarding the Promised Land was contingent *only* upon the nature (character) and Word of God, totally apart from the nature and performance of Abram or his descendants. God described His covenant with Abram, at his name-change to Abraham in Genesis 17, as an *everlasting* covenant. In fact, God twice mentions the *everlasting* nature of the covenant in Genesis 17:7, 8:

The sign of the covenant for Abraham and his descendants was circumcision (Genesis 17:12). Although there are those who assert that God's covenant with Abraham was conditional upon Israel's faithfulness to God, the Bible teaches otherwise.

Although God will judge His chosen people if they disobey Him, their disobedience will not forfeit their right to the Promised Land. The promise of the land is based *only* upon God's oath and character.

The Promised Land was again promised to the descendants of Isaac (Israelis), not to the descendants of Ishmael (Palestinians). Even though Abraham suggested that Ishmael might be the recipient of God's covenant blessings and even though God promised to bless Ishmael and his progeny, God made it crystal clear to Abraham that His covenant to Abraham and his descendants would *only* be accomplished through his son Isaac.

Even though Abraham had other sons by his concubines, ancestors of many Arab peoples today, and gave them gifts as he sent them away to the “land of the east,” the Bible is clear about assigning His covenant-promise (including the land) solely to Isaac (Genesis 25:5, 6; 26:3)

BOUNDARIES OF THE PROMISED LAND

Some 3,500 years ago the Canaanites inhabited the land that God promised to give to the offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (see Timeline). God promised that He would give the land of Israel to the Jewish people as an eternal possession. The promise was unconditional. God confirmed it at least 55 times with an oath and stated, at least 12 times, that the covenant was everlasting (see Bible References).

God did bring the Israelites into the Promised Land, 40 years after the Exodus from Egypt. Israel reached the peak of her power some 500 years later, under King Solomon.

The map shows the area that Israel controlled at that time. It almost matched the boundaries of the land that God had promised. Gaza was not taken from the Philistines in Solomon's day, and the land of the Canaanites promised to Abraham included the coastal strip all the way to Sidon – the city of Canaan's first-born son [*1 Chronicles 1:13, Genesis 10:19*]

Scripture indicates that the boundaries of the Promised Land are as follows:

- South:

From the Red Sea, in the region of Eilat today, to the Sea of the Philistines, which would be the Mediterranean Sea near Gaza. This southern line was to a point called the River of Egypt, or the wadi of Egypt (which was certainly not the Nile River) on the Great Sea – another name for the Mediterranean. [*Exodus 23:31; Ezekiel 47:19; Genesis 15:18*].

The Red Sea and the coast road of the Sinai Peninsula, just south of Eilat.

- West:

The coastline of the Mediterranean – called, in those days, the Great Sea [*Numbers 34:6; Ezekiel 47:20*].

Mediterranean coastline at Caesarea

- North:

From the Great Sea, or Western Sea – other names for the Mediterranean – through what is Lebanon and Syria today, to the Euphrates River in the north [*Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 11:24; Ezekiel 47:17; Joshua 1:4*].

The mountains of Lebanon seen from the Hula Valley in Israel's north.

- East:

From the Euphrates River in the north, extending south, past Damascus, along the slopes on the eastern side of the Sea of Kinnereth, what we know as the Golan Heights today. The Kinnereth is also called the Eastern Sea in Scripture and is what we know as the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee

– the Bible calls this the Sea of Kinnereth or the Eastern Sea.

The Jordan River rises in the mountains of Lebanon and runs south to the Sea of Galilee. At the southern end of the Sea of Galilee the Jordan River flows out and along the Jordan Valley to enter the Dead Sea. The eastern side of the Jordan River, south of the Golan Heights, represents the boundary of the Promised Land [*Numbers 34:11-12; Ezekiel 47:18*].

The Dead Sea or Salt Sea as it is called in the Bible.

Although some of the geographical reference points mentioned in Scripture are difficult for us to identify, God knows the full area into which He is going to bring Israel. We know enough to be sure that Israel is not in her full inheritance yet.

The Bible refers to significant points that we can identify – the Sea of Kinnereth being the Sea of Galilee; the Salt Sea being the Dead Sea; and places such as Gaza and Sidon, where there is no doubt about the ancient location. Archaeology has given us proof.

What we can say is that the Promised Land stretches from the Red Sea, around Eilat, as a southern boundary, to the Mediterranean at a point south of Gaza and extending from there up the coastline at least as far north as Sidon in Lebanon, to form the western boundary, then north to the Euphrates River, to form the northern boundary, and down the line of the Jordan River to form the eastern boundary.

This area would encompass the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, also called Judea and Samaria, and Gaza. Certain world leaders may be looking for the establishment of a Palestinian state separate from Israel, but God's Word makes a different judgment. God says that this is the land that He promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Scripture shows that God has a dispute with those who are involved in "dividing up My land" [Joel 3:1-2].

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The land belongs to Israel

Question: "What is the land that God promised to Israel?"

Answer: In regard to the land that God has promised Israel, Genesis 15:18 declares, "To your descendants [Abraham's] I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates."

God later confirms this promise to

Abraham's son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob (whose name was later changed to Israel). When the Israelites were about to invade the Promised Land, God reiterated the land promise, as recorded in Joshua 1:4, "Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates — all the Hittite country — to the Great Sea on the west."

With Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4 in mind, the land God gave to Israel included everything from the Nile river in Egypt to Lebanon (North to South) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (West to East). So, what land has God stated belongs to Israel? All of the land modern Israel currently possesses, plus all of the land of the Palestinians (the West Bank and Gaza), plus some of Egypt and Syria, plus all of Jordan, plus some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Israel currently possesses only a fraction of the land God has promised. Recommended Resource: Bible Answers for Almost all Your Questions by Elmer Towns.

Since May 14, 1948, when the Israelis reclaimed the land God promised to them, there has been continued conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the land. This conflict has involved all of the Islamic nations in the Middle East, many nations around the world, and especially the United States of America. A study of the Bible clearly indicates that the Promised Land was given to only the Israelis (Jews), not to the people now known as Palestinians.

The first description of the Promised Land is made in Genesis 15:18-21, as "this land, from the river of Egypt, to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites." It is a piece of property that God often referred to as the "land of Canaan," and its dimensions are best depicted in Numbers 34:1-12. Although the Israelis only have a foothold in their land at this time, the Bible is clear that the "land of Israel" will eventually *all* be in the hands of the Israelis and its destiny will be that of host to the Millennium Kingdom, the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church and the King of the Jews.