

Ancient Ruins in Palestine

Note: *There are about 10 million Palestinians scattered in the world.*

According to discovered ruins, Palestine was first inhabited by the Arabs who were called in Arabic "Youbiseyyon" who were the first to establish a kingdom in it more than 7000 years ago. Their famous king Salih Maleek Sadiq was the first to draw a design for Jerusalem and build it. The Canaanite dominated the land for long and their marks and ruins can be found in many places in Palestine. Palestine was called the "Canaan Land".

While the native inhabitants (the Arabs) continued living there, Palestine was attacked or occupied or controlled by many. Among those were the Helinies, the Israelites, the Persians, the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Crusaders (that's in addition to others). The Muslims took control of the country in the year of 636. In 1516, it became under the Ottoman control. That continued until 1917 when it became under the British mandate.

Palestine has ancient villages, cities, temples, towers, walls, tools and instruments, artifacts, churches, synagogues, mosques, graves/tombs of prophets, sites and structures related to prophets and well-know kings/emperors/commanders, cemeteries, graves, palaces of famous Roman emperors, Muslim Caliphs, or Canaanite, castles, dams, prisons, theaters, mommies, church of holy, Aqsa Mosque (built in the seventh century), the Dome of the Rock, the Church of the Nativity, etc. Some of the palaces/ruins are still standing and in excellent shape. Palestine is the place where many (if not most) prophets lived or died or born or passed through. Many other (in addition to those mentioned below) prophets, kings or commanders of different nationalities, or religious figures, left their marks in different places there. It was inhabited in pre-History, Stone Ages, Bronze Ages, etc. It has ruins/remains from many ages/eras including the Bronze, the Canaanite, the Roman, the Byzantine, the Muslim, the Crusader, etc. That's in addition to even earlier ages. It's also full of ancient olive trees, caves, tools/instruments, artifacts, drawings, scrolls, currencies, etc. Some places also contain copies of old letters such as those written by Muslim Caliphs.

For more about the history of Palestine and ruins in Palestine, see

- 1) <http://www.pnic.gov.ps/english/history/history.html>
- 2) <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/76A6A315-6781-4082-855F-FC40FAC635D6.htm>

Here are some of the important existing cities and towns that have ancient sites:

Jericho: The oldest city in the world (built more than 10,000 years ago) and lowest (from the sea level) city in the world (mentioned many times in the Bible). The Arabic name of Jericho is Ariha (named after a fourth descendent of Noah) and the lowest spot on earth (near the Dead Sea - 393 m below sea level). It was the first in history to domesticate animals and invent other important things that changed the civilization and the way humans live. Its towers and walls were built about 4000 years before the pyramids of Egypt. In Tel Sultan (Old Jericho), 23 layers of ancient civilizations were found . One of

those is 7000 years old. Some of the ruins still exist including the oldest known stone-ladder, the oldest known wall, and huge defense tower that was built 700 B.C. It has a well-know famous church that was built in the sixth century over the site where Jesus spent 40 days fasting. I think the church or a structure nearby has a mommy of a priest who died long ago. On the way to the church which is located on a mountain hard to reach, there are between 30 and 40 caves used by priests during the early Christianity. It has the beautiful palace of Hisham (a Muslim Caliph) that was built in the seventh century. One of the surviving arts in the palace is thought to be one of the best in the world. It has also a 6-star (similar to David's star). This star was a symbol used by the Muslims (Omaweyyeen) at that time. About 20 km from the city, a Palestinian shepherd discovered in 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls. The most important one was 1 by 24 feet from the eighth century and belongs to one of the Jewish prophets. After that, 900 more were found in more than 30 caves. It also has Moses Shrine that was built in 1269 and it became an important shrine since Salah Edin (a Muslim Kurd commander who expelled the Crusaders) who stayed there. The shrine is a compound consisting of a mosque, market, and many rooms and other structures that are still intact and as they were. There is also an ancient cemetery nearby. It has the Baptist site where John Baptisized Jesus. It has the Dead Sea (the lowest on earth) and the only sea in which life is impossible (Salts consist 25%). But it is considered good for the cure of some diseases such as some skin diseases. In addition to Hisham's Palace, it also has palaces of other important emperors (I think Roman).

East Jerusalem: It has the Church of Holy Sepulcher, the Walls of Jerusalem, ancient churches and mosques, and many other ruins and ancient religious sites associated with Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. It has also the Mount of Olives (where most important events in the life of Jesus occurred).

Bethlehem: It has the Church of Nativity (built in the year of 325 on the spot where Jesus was born) and many other ruins and ancient religious sites associated with prophets such as David. It has also Bilal's tomb (Muhammad's caller for prayers) which is located near Rachael's (the wife of Jacob) tomb.

Beit Sahour (near Bethlehem): It has the field where the Angels appeared carrying the news about the birth of Jesus (located in).

Beit Jala (near Bethlehem): It is a Canaanite Arab ancient city and its name means Grass Carpet. It has Nicholas Church.

Hebron: It is one of the oldest cities in the world that was inhabited continuously. Its Arabic name (Khalil) is originated from the Arabic nickname of Abraham. The grave of his wife Sarah is located there and so are the graves (located in the Ibrahimi Mosque which is another ancient mosque) of his two sons Isaac and Jacob and their wives. Near Hebron there is a tree thought to be on the same spot where Abraham put his tent on the way to Hebron.

Halhoul (near Hebron): It has a mosque called Yunis Mosque which is thought to be built on the grave of Prophet Yunis.

Albirah (adjacent to Ramallah): was built by the Canaanite about 3500 years ago. Mary and Joseph rested in this city on their way from Jerusalem to Galilee when they discovered Jesus was missing. There is a church built by the Crusaders near the site.

Beitin (near Ramalla): it's village that goes back to the pre-history era. There are tools and animal bones discovered there from the fifth century BC. It has also a tower that contains a structure built by Abraham on his way from Hebron to Nablus. It has also the site in which Jacob saw a ladder rising to the skies. It was a town full of life during the Roman and Byzantine eras and long before that. It has remains of towers and churches that belong to these eras.

Nabi Samuel (near Ramallah): it has the grave of Samuel and ancient structures such as towers.

Jifna (near Ramallah): was an important city during the Roman and Byzantine era (it was a local capital).

Jenin: It's thought the well where Joseph's brothers dropped him is near the city (close to the town of Arrabah). It contains Roman, Canaanite, Christian and Muslim ruins. Sometimes the Roman and Canaanite ruins (such as those located at the southern entrance of the city) are mixed. It also has a small cemetery for German soldiers (pilots) who were killed in World War. There is also in towns near the city cemeteries for Iraqi and Jordanian soldiers who were killed in Arab-Israeli wars.

Zababdeh (near Jenin): It has a site where Mary rested on the way from/to Bethlehem.

Bergin (near Jenin): It is thought to be one of the places where Jesus cured people.

Qabatyah (near Jenin): It's an ancient town that was built long before the Romans. But it (and the city of Jenin) became an important trade route during the Roman era (the third century during the Emperor Diocletian), and later during the late Muslim era. There are nearby remains of 11 ancient villages or cities that belong to the Muslim, Roman, Canaanite, and Bronze eras. It's also thought the modern town was built on the remains of other ancient towns. It contains a cemetery for Iraqi soldiers who died in Arab-Israeli wars and graves of Jordanian soldiers who died in the wars. The town and the areas around it are full of ancient caves, cemeteries from ancient eras such as the Canaanite, ancient walls and remains of buildings, human remains, tools, and other structures. That's in addition to drawings seen on rocks everywhere in the town.

Nablus: It was built by the Roman Emperor Titus in the year of 72 to remember his father the Emperor Vespasian. Its name was Flavia Neapolis which is the origin of the Arabic name. It has Turkish baths that were built in 1840 and still used until this day.

One of its mountains (Jirzim) has an ancient octal church (built by Zino in the fifth century), the remains of an ancient mosque and ancient mosque from the Saladin era. It has a Roman theatre, high mountains with graves of soldiers, Jacob's well, Joseph's Tomb.

Tel Balata: An ancient Canaanite town. It has an ancient Canaanite temple that is still standing and it's the largest and most beautiful Canaanite temple.

Sebastia (Remember the name Sebastian): An ancient city that was built before the Romans (it has Helini ruins) but it became an important Roman city. It has 7 ancient churches, tower, Roman and Muslim cemeteries, palaces, castles, an underground prison, theatres, and other structures. It contains John's Tomb's (the head is located in Damascus). It has a Roman street surrounded by 600 ancient columns.

Tulkarm: An ancient Canaanite city. Its original name was "Tor Kram".

Qalgilya: An ancient Canaanite city. Its current name has Roman origin. It's coming from the name of a Roman Castle Qalalya.

Gaza City: an important Canaanite city and ancient trade route. It became famous with the Temple that Shimson destroyed on himself and on his enemies. It has the grave of the grandfather (his name is Hashim) of Muhammad and that's why it's called the Gaza of Hashim. It has also a large mosque built on Hisham's grave. It has an ancient mosque, and an ancient Muslim Palace that became later known as Napoleon's Palace because Napoleon stayed in it several nights on his way to Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the rest of Palestine. It has also a church that was built in the year of 420. I think it has also an old British cemetery.

Rafah: Ancient ruins and cemeteries were found there from the Bronze Ages.

Dir Al-Balah: It has an ancient temple built by Helana in the year of 372.

Sources: Aljazeera, Wikipedia, and others.