

Chapter 1

A Brief History of Palestine and Israel

It wasn't an accident, it wasn't a mystery, it was calculated, and the rest is history.

Elvis Costello, **20% Amnesia**

This brief history of Palestine-Israel begins with Biblical accounts of events that shaped this land in ancient times. Modern archeology has validated much of the macro-history reported in the Bible, while some of the details remain disputed or unconfirmed. An example where contemporary archeology seems to validate the Biblical account is the excavation of Nineveh, on the Tigris river in modern Iraq, including Assyrian records unlocked by the decoding of cuneiform. The Assyrian accounts of the fall of the Kingdom of Judea seem to be consistent with the account of events in the Bible. In the case of the walls of Jericho coming down, some archaeologists uphold evidence that seems to contradict the Biblical timeline. Our point here is not to prove or disprove the Biblical outline of the history of this region, but to simply present the ancient history that is generally agreed upon among the current populations, both Israeli and Palestinian. This ancient history is important to our study in that it is used as a basis to claim rights over certain territory in current times. We will ultimately find that these events of ancient history do not actually impact the current problems and potential solutions, but we need to understand these stories in order to appreciate some of the assertions set forth.

As we move into the Roman era, we enter into what is more widely considered to be the current era of recorded history. Of course, as we continue through history into modern times, the reliability of the recorded history improves and there should be decreasing degrees of controversy in regards to what actually happened. As we deal with certain historical events, the interpretation of which is disputed, we will analyze the opposing views of history and make an effort to reconcile those views into an objective assessment of what happened, the consequences of the events, and the relevance of those events to the state of affairs today.