

LESSON 37

PALESTINE

References : *Deu. Chapter 8 -11*

Memory verse : *Deu. 1: 11 -12*

Objective : To have a clear understanding about the land of Palestine thereby making alive the Bible events in our minds.

Study Aids: The Map of the land of Palestine.

Introduction : Which is the homeland of the Jews? When was the present State of Israel born? Israel is generally known as Palestine. Let us study some important facts about the land of Palestine as the history of Israel and the public ministry of Jesus Christ are interwoven with this land.

I. ITS NAMES :

The land of Palestine is called by different names.

1. **Palestine.** This name derived from philistine' the name of a nation who ruled the land for a long time.
2. **The land of Israel.** So called because this land is possessed by Israelites as an inheritance. (I sam. 11: 3)
3. **The land of Canaan.** The Original inhabitants of this land were the Canaanites who were the descendants of Ham the son of Noah. Thus the land was called so.
4. **The land of Promise** : This is the land God Promised to Abraham and his descendants (Heb. 11: 9)
5. **The Holy Land.** Called so because the Holy Temple of Jerusalem was in this land. Besides this, it is also called the land of Hebrews (Gen. 40 : 15) and the kingdom of Judah (Ezra 1:3)

II. LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES :

This land is situated in the north east of Egypt, south of Syria, west of the Arabian desert and east of the Mediterranean Sea. Its position is very significant as a principal centre of the three great continents such as Asia, Europe and Africa. It is blessed by the river Jordan flowing through the middle. Length of this land is 156 miles and breadth is 50 miles.

The boundaries marked for Palestine generally in the Bible are : From Dan on the north to Beersheba on the south (Judg. 10:1) who were the different nations who occupied in the land before Joshua allotted the land tribe by tribe to Israelites (Gen. 15. 19- 21). Moses has described this land as the most fertile and beautiful land. (Deut.8. 7 - 9).

III. RIVERS :

1. **Jordan.** This river which flows in through the middle of Palestine divides the land into two areas as 'East of Jordan' and 'West of Jordan'. Starting from Lebanon, it flows through the lake Merom and sea of Galilee and terminates in the Dead Sea. It is 200 miles long. We find 3 instances in the Bible when the river Jordan was divided and crossed. John baptized people in this river. Jericho is a city near the point of its merger into the Dead Sea. Since the Temple of Jerusalem is situated on the Western part, the area west of Jordan is more significant.

Jabbok, Arnon etc. are its supporting rivers. Jacob wrestled with the angel at the river Jabbok.

In addition to these main rivers, there are some small rivers that merge into the Mediterranean Sea.

The Brook Kishon. Beginning from the mount Gilboa, it flows towards north west and falls into the Mediterranean at the north side of the mount Carmel. It was at this riverbank that Barak defeated Sisera (Judges 4:4:13 -16) and Elijah killed the prophets of Baal (I King. 18:40)

2. **Brook Besor-** starting from the mountains of Judea, it flows towards west and falls into the Mediterranean. David and his army crossed this brook to chase the Amalekites (I Sam. 30 : 9)

Besides we also read about small brooks such as Kidron (I King. 15 : 13), Cherith (I King. 17 : 3) etc.

IV. MOUNTAINS

1. **Lebanon.** See this in the previous lesson. The cedar wood is important resource of these forests (I King. 5: 9 -14)
2. **Mt. Tabor.** This is a hill in Galilee. Our Lord was transfigured upon this hill.
3. **Mt. Olives:** This mountain situated near Jerusalem is an important one in the land of Canan. From the Gospels we find that Jesus frequently went to this mountain to pray. The Lord ascended from the top of this mountain. Again, He will descend on the same mountain as the King of Kings (Act. 1: 12, Zech. 14:4)
4. **Mt. Moriah :** It is near the city of Jerusalem. Abraham offered his son Isaac on this mountain. (Gen. 22: 2) Solomons temple was also situated here (2 Chro. 3:10).
5. **Mt. Carmel :** It is near the Mediterranean Sea in Galilee. The prophets Elijah and Elisha centered their ministry in this mountain (1 King. 18: 17-40; 2 King. 5: 25).
6. **Mt. Gilboa :** Saul and his sons were killed on this mountain (I. Sam. 31 : 1 - 4)
7. **Mt. Zion.** The city of Jerusalem situated on this mountain (Psa. 48: 12)
8. **Ebal- Gerizim.** It was upon these mountains near Shechem in the central Palestine that the blessings and curses of the Law were pronounced (Deut. 11: 29). The Samaritans worshipped in the Gerizim mountain. (Jn. 4:20)

V. OCEANS & LAKES :

The most important sea in Palestine is Galilee. It is 12miles long and 7 1/2 miles wide. Being a lake of good water, fishing is the main trade here. The river Jordan flows through this lake. The cities, Bethesda, Korazin, Capernaum etc. are situated on the side of this lake. There are many episodes in life of Christ connected with the sea of Galilee.

EXERCISE -37***Answer the following questions***

- 1 What are the different names of Palestine? Why are they called so?
- 2 Where is palestine situated?
- 3 Which river flows through the middle of Palestine?
- 4 Name the brooks which are found in Palestine?
- 5 Name the mountains of Palestine?
- 6 Which is the most important sea in Palestine?

