**Israel And The History Of The Land – Appendix ONE – Israel’s Historical Ties To The Land**

1. **Jews have had a continuous presence in the land of Israel.**

While the Romans expelled most Jews in 70 CE, the Jewish people have always been present in the land of Israel. A portion of the Jewish population remained in Israel throughout the years of Jewish exile while the rest settled around the world and became the Jewish diaspora. In particular, Jewish communities existed throughout much of this period in what is known as the Four Holy Cities: Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed (Tzfat), and Tiberias. Jerusalem is the most sacred, known for the Western Wall. Hebron is associated with the Cave of the Patriarchs, the traditional burial site of several important Biblical figures. Safed became the center of Jewish mysticism in the sixteenth century. Tiberias is notable for the Jerusalem Talmud during the Byzantine Period.

1. **Israel was under Jewish leadership for hundreds of years in antiquity.**

The ancient history of the land of Israel includes many centuries during which the land was governed by the Jewish people. Beginning in approximately 1000 BCE, which was the beginning of the Iron Age, under King Saul, David, and Solomon, the entire land of Israel was under a unified Jewish kingdom. The Unified Kingdom, as it is known, was divided in approximately 931 BCE into the Kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom) with its capital in Samaria, and the Kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom) with its capital in Jerusalem. Both kingdoms remained under Jewish rule. The Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BCE and most of its inhabitants were exiled, but the Southern Kingdom remained under Jewish rule until 586 BCE when the Babylonian Empire conquered it, exiling many Jews. The Jews returned from exile under the Persian Empire and regained control over the land with the Hasmonean dynasty in the 2nd century BCE. Judea, as it was then called, became a client state of Rome in 63 BCE, and the Herodian dynasty, a Jewish dynasty under the control of Rome took over. In 70 CE, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and exiled many of the Jewish inhabitants of Judea. (PALESTINE)

1. **Jerusalem is the holiest site in the Jewish faith.**

Jerusalem has been the spiritual, religious, and national center of the Jewish people for thousands of years. Approximately 3,000 years ago, under the rulership of King David, Jerusalem became the capital of Israel. **Jerusalem was the site of the two great Temples, the centers of Jewish worship for hundreds of years. The first Temple was built by King Solomon during the tenth century BCE and destroyed by the Babylonian Empire in 586 BCE, who laid siege to the city of Jerusalem, flattening the holy city and also forcibly exiled Judeans from the Kingdom of Judah. The second Temple was built less than a century later, and destroyed in 70 CE by the Romans, who also destroyed the Jewish capital and forcibly exiled most of the Jewish inhabitants. The Western Wall, the last remaining wall from the Second Temple structure, is the holiest site in the world for Jews**. At Jewish weddings, the groom traditionally breaks a glass in memory of the destruction of the Temple. At the end of the Passover Seder, Jews recite “Next year in Jerusalem!”

1. **Israel plays a central role in the Bible.**