



GOLAN HEIGHTS

Geographically, the Heights are bordered on the west by a rock escarpment that drops 1,700 feet to the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, on the south by the Yarmouk River, and on the north by Mount Hermon, and on the east by a largely flat plain, called the Hauran. The Golan is usually divided into three regions: northern (between the Sa'ar and Jilabun valleys), central (between the Jilabun and Daliyot valleys), and southern (between the Dlayot and Yarmouk valleys). The Golan Heights themselves are between 400 and 1,700 feet high, and are the source of about 15% of Israel's water supply.

In Biblical times, the Golan Heights was referred to as Bashan; the word "Golan" comes from the Biblical city of Golan in Bashan (Deuteronomy 4:43, Joshua 21:27). The area was assigned to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 13:29-31). In early First Temple times, (953-586 B.C.), the area was contested between the northern Jewish kingdom of Israel and the Aramean kingdom based in Damascus. King Ahab of Israel (who reigned 874-852 B.C.) defeated Ben-Hadad I of Damascus near the site of Kibbutz Afik in the southern Golan (I Kings 20:26-30), and the prophet Elisha prophesied that King Jehoash of Israel (who reigned 801-785 B.C.) would defeat Ben-Hadad III of Damascus, also near Kibbutz Afik (II Kings 13:17). In the late 6th and 5th centuries B.C., the region was settled by returning Jewish exiles from Babylonia (modern Iraq).

This site includes a military briefing on the ferocity and importance of recent wars here, and the realities of Israel's modern-day security challenges.

