



OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

Sunday Adult Class
9:45 AM

The Geography of Palestine

The Land of Palestine



• Distinct Parallel Zones

- Mediterranean Sea
- Coastal Plain
- Western Hill Country
- Jordan Valley
- High Tableland
- Arabian Desert

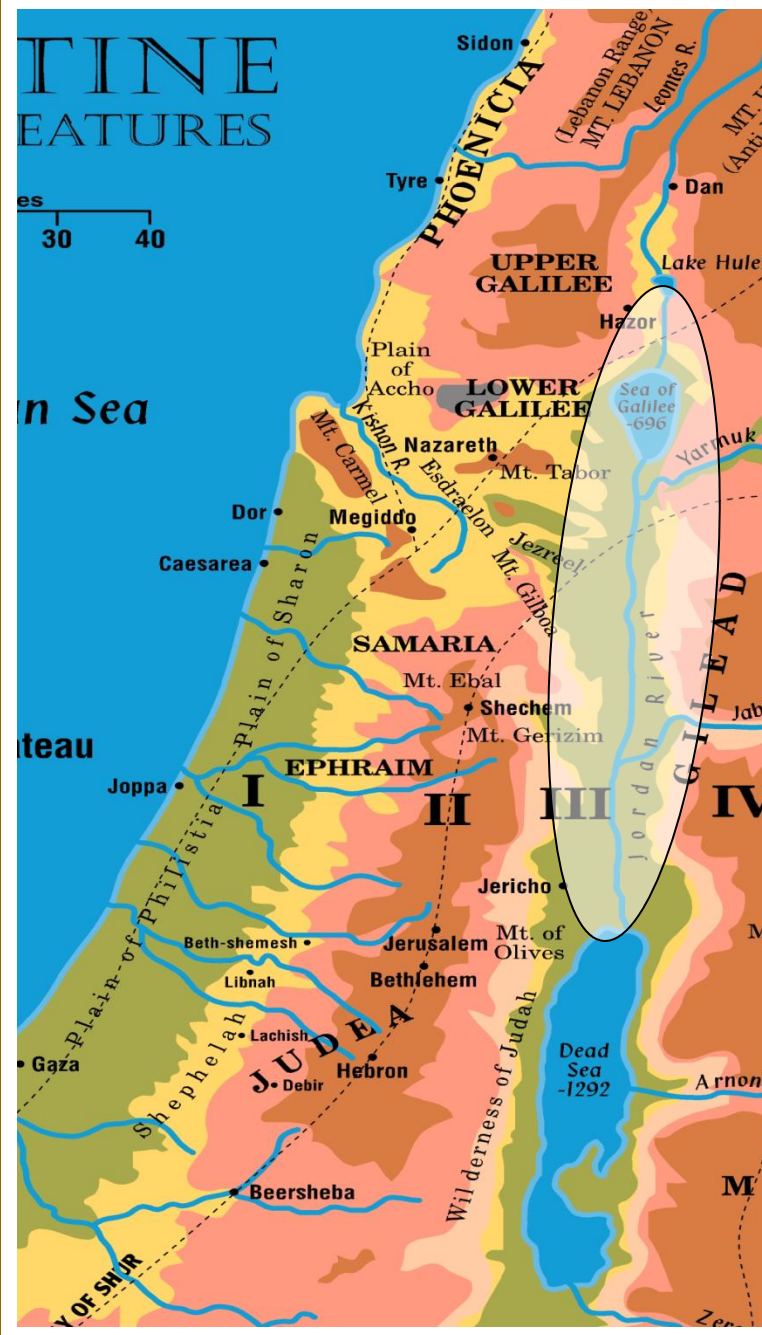




The Jordan Valley

- **Part of the Great Rift Valley**

- Rift: A crack in the earth's crust. Runs along two fault lines



The Jordan Valley

- Begins on the NE shores of the Mediterranean and extends down the Jordan through Palestine, Arabah, Gulf of Aqaba, the Red Sea, and into Eastern Africa
 - 4,000 miles long
 - The portion from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is called “**EI Ghor**” today



The Jordan Valley

- **Valley is narrow**
 - 2–15 miles wide with cliffs on either side
 - Tropical growth (jungle like) in the valley

Jeremiah 49:19

19 Behold, like a lion coming up from the jungle of the Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly make him run away from her. And I will appoint over her whomever I choose. For who is like me? Who will summon me? What shepherd can stand before me?





The Jordan Valley

- **The Jordan River**
 - Covers 80 miles from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea
 - It takes 200 miles of wandering river to cover the 80 miles



The Jordan Valley

- **The Jordan River**
 - River bed varies from 80 to 180 feet wide with an average depth of 5-12 feet
 - Jordan Valley is 14 miles wide at Jericho. It was flood season when the Israelites crossed the river to take Jericho

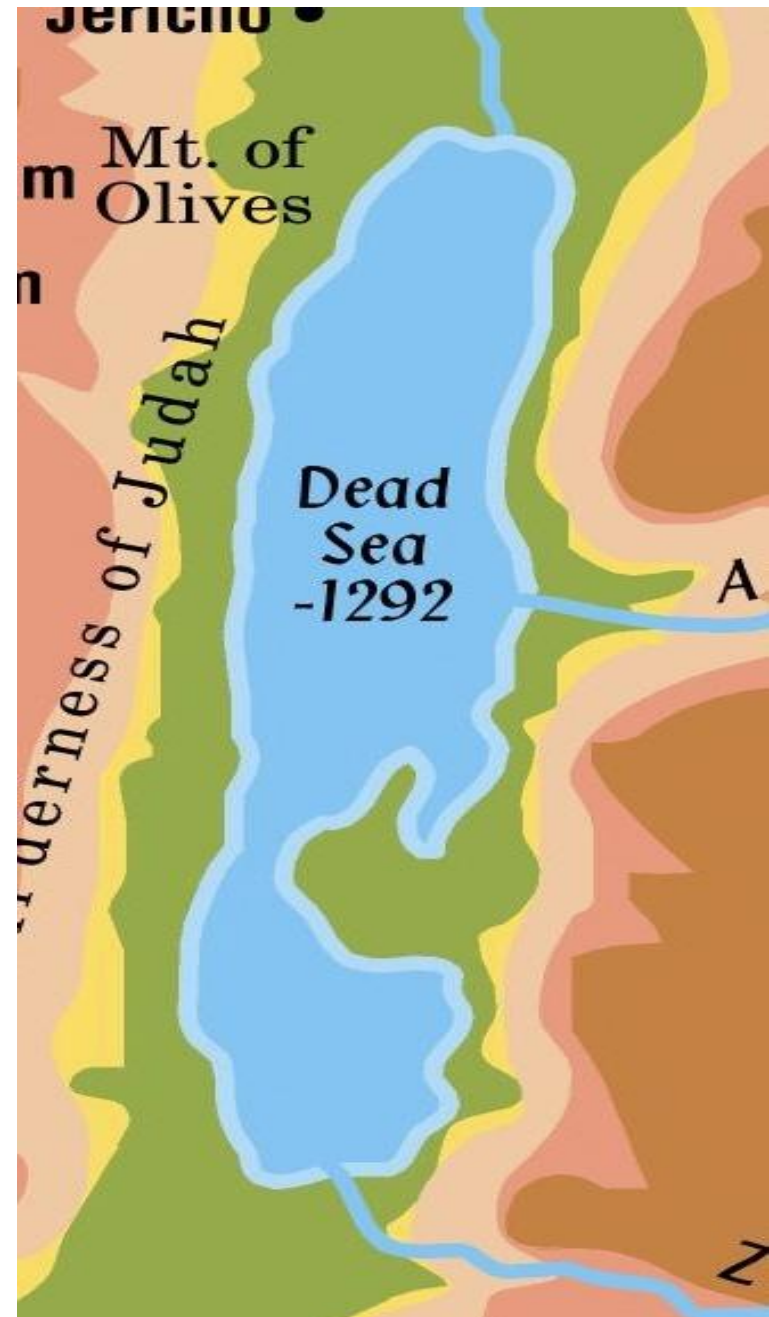
• **Joshua 3:15-16**

Joshua 3:15-16

15 and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), 16 the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho.

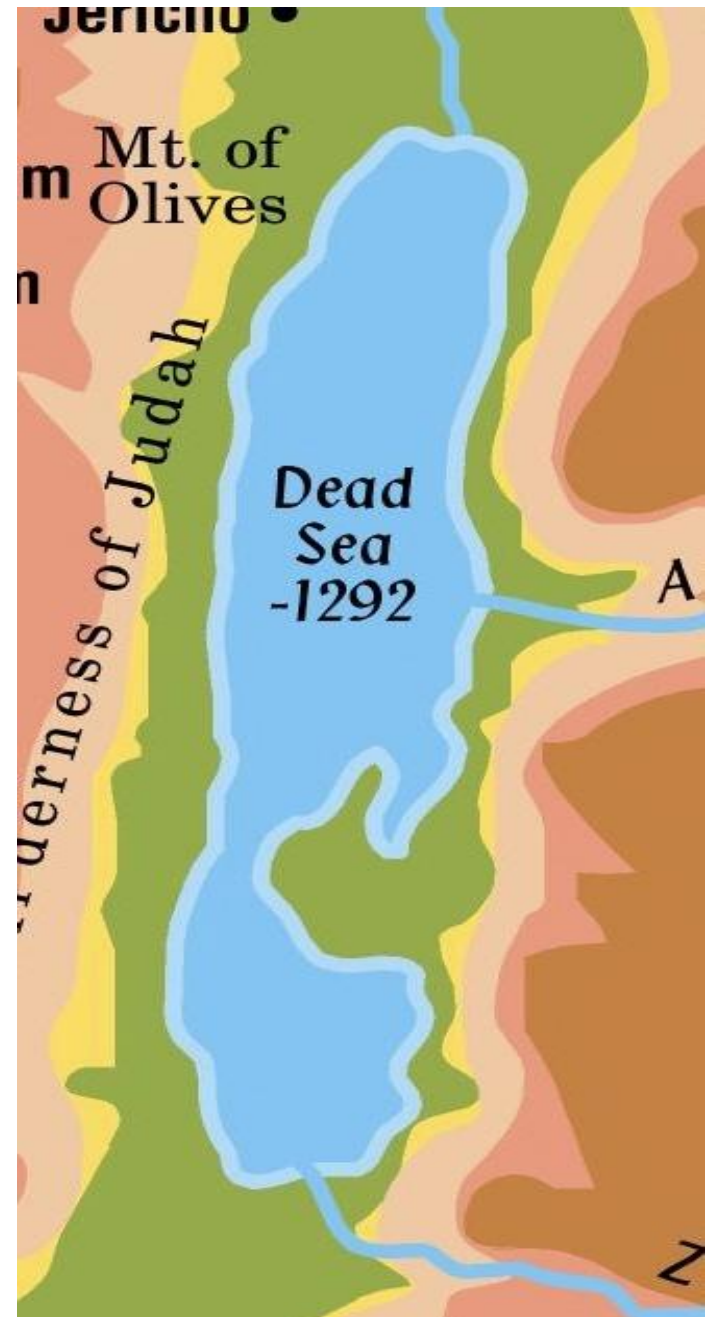
The Jordan Valley

- **The Dead Sea**
 - 48 miles long
 - Maximum width is 10 miles
 - Deepest point on land (-1292ft)
 - Depth of Sea another 1300ft



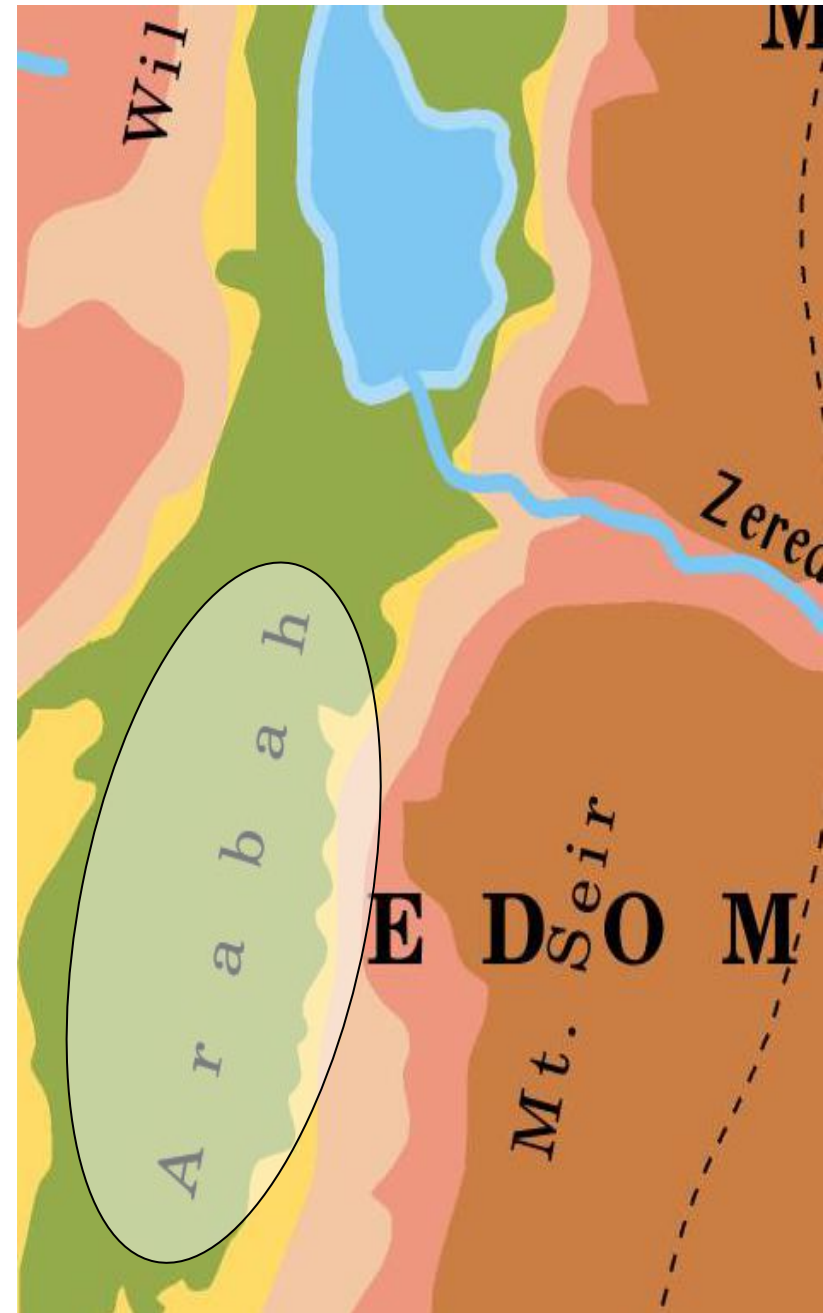
The Jordan Valley

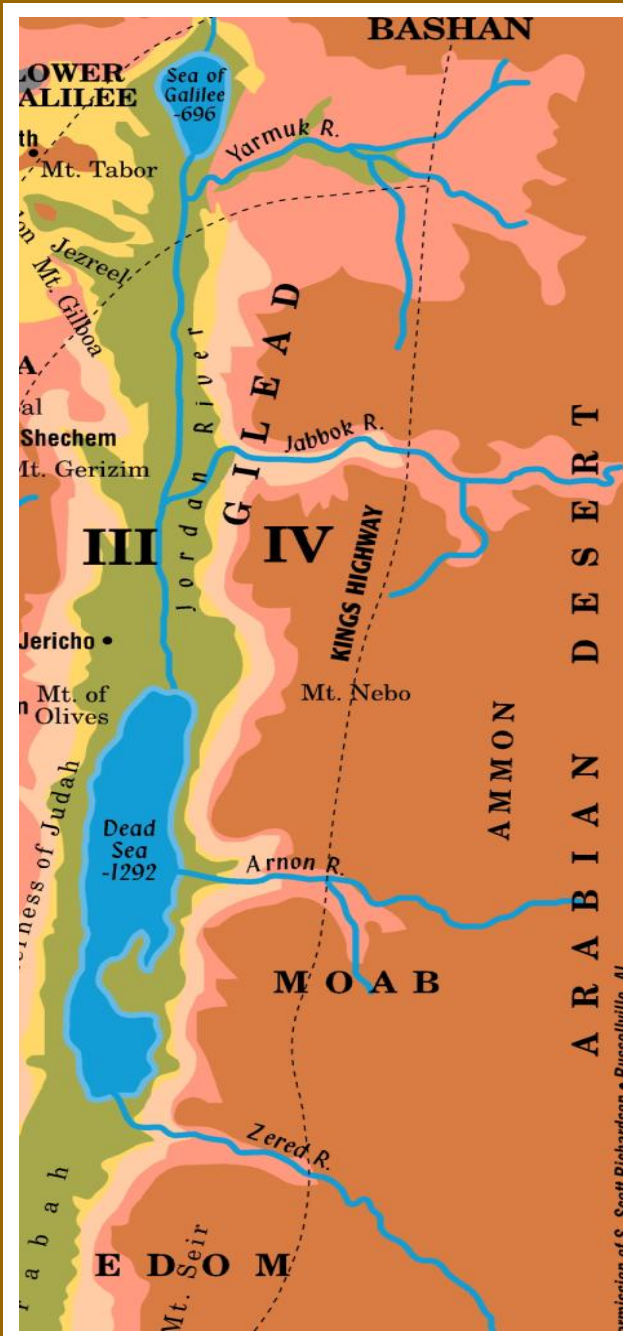
- **The Dead Sea**
 - 6 ½ million tons of water flowed into the Dead Sea each day
 - Jordan, Arnon, Zered rivers flow into it
 - NOTHING flows out of it because the evaporation rate is so great
 - Water is 25% solid substance – five times saltier than the oceans



The Jordan Valley

- **The Arabah**
 - Trough-like valley that gradually rises in elevation as it continues southward 110 miles to Eziongeber at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba
 - Barren and rugged valley



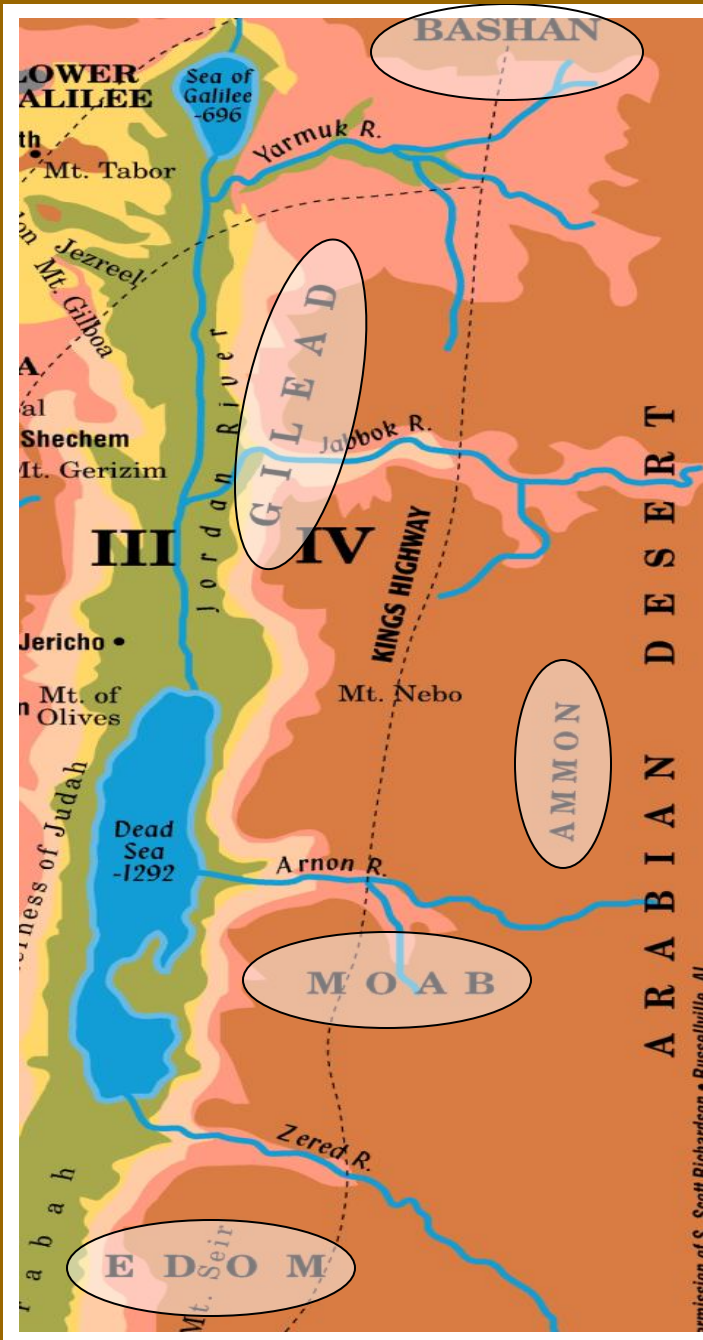


Trans-Jordan Plateau

- **Extension of the Anti-Lebanons**

- Plateau of Moab forms a wall 3,000 feet high
- Mountains on the east side are higher than those on the west

- Moses viewed the Promised Land from one of the peaks on Mt. Nebo (Deuteronomy 34)



Trans-Jordan Plateau

- **Regions of the Trans-Jordan:**

- Bashan
- Gilead
- Moab
- Edom
- Ammon



Trade Routes

- **Way of the Sea**
 - Coastal plain
 - Through Megiddo
 - Busy route

PALESTINE PHYSICAL FEATURES

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40

Mediterranean Sea

- I. Coastal Plain
- II. Hill Country
- III. Jordan Valley
- IV. Trans-jordan Plateau



Trade Routes

- **Way of Shur**
 - Along hill country
 - Israelite main route



Trade Routes

- **King's Highway**
– Trans-Jordan Plateau
- Wars fought to gain control of the routes

Old Testament Lands



Scale of Miles Comparison



When reviewing and studying maps be sure to look at the scale of miles to get a proper understanding of how large or small an area really is

Mesopotamia



Mesopotamia

Rivers



- Tigris and Euphrates
 - Flow southeastward into the Persian Gulf
 - **Tigris** is swift and is over 1,150 miles long

Mesopotamia

Rivers



- Tigris and Euphrates

- **Euphrates** is about 1,700 miles long

- Called “Great River” or simply “The River” in Old Testament times

The description of Eden includes these rivers
(Hiddekel and Euphrates)

Joshua 1:4

4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.



Genesis 15:18

18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”



Mesopotamia



The Area

- Mesopotamia
 - The word means “between the rivers”
 - Term will be used to refer to the entire area reaching from the Persian Gulf to the Ararat Mountains

Judges 3:8-10

8 The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. 9 But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. 10 The Spirit of the LORD came on him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. (NIV)

Judges 3:8-10

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. 9 But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

Mesopotamia

The Area



- Mesopotamia
 - Geographic term
 - Never a nation of people
 - Great Assyrian and Babylonian Empires originated here

Genesis 28:2

2 Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.



Mesopotamia Facts of the Area



- **Villages**

- Grew into cities over the years
- Able to conquer and control their neighbors

- **Technology**

- Early irrigation systems, Wheel invented, Metals to make tools
- Mathematical systems began – that we still use

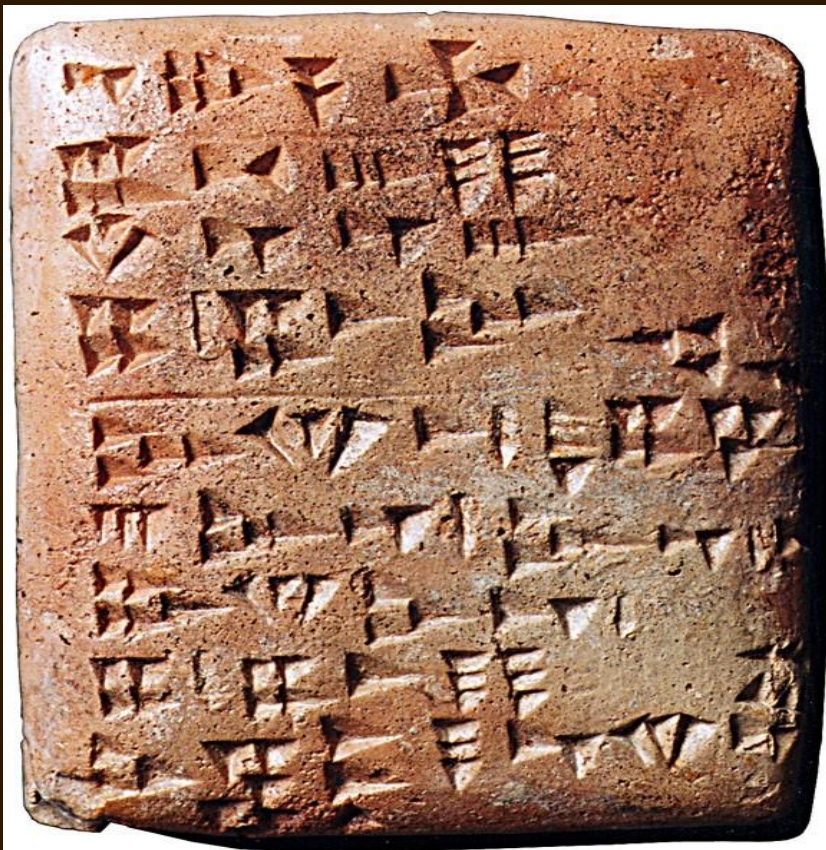
- **Technology**

- Early irrigation systems, Wheel invented, Metals to make tools
- Mathematical systems began – that we still use
- Cuneiform writing began
 - Sounds and syllables depicted with wedged shaped characters
 - Some date as early as 3,000 B.C. (1,000 years before Abraham)
 - Aramean tribes developed an early alphabet making for an easier language
 - Aramaic became the official language of Mesopotamia empires
 - Aramaic was used by the Jews in captivity and often the language of Jesus

Ancient Writings

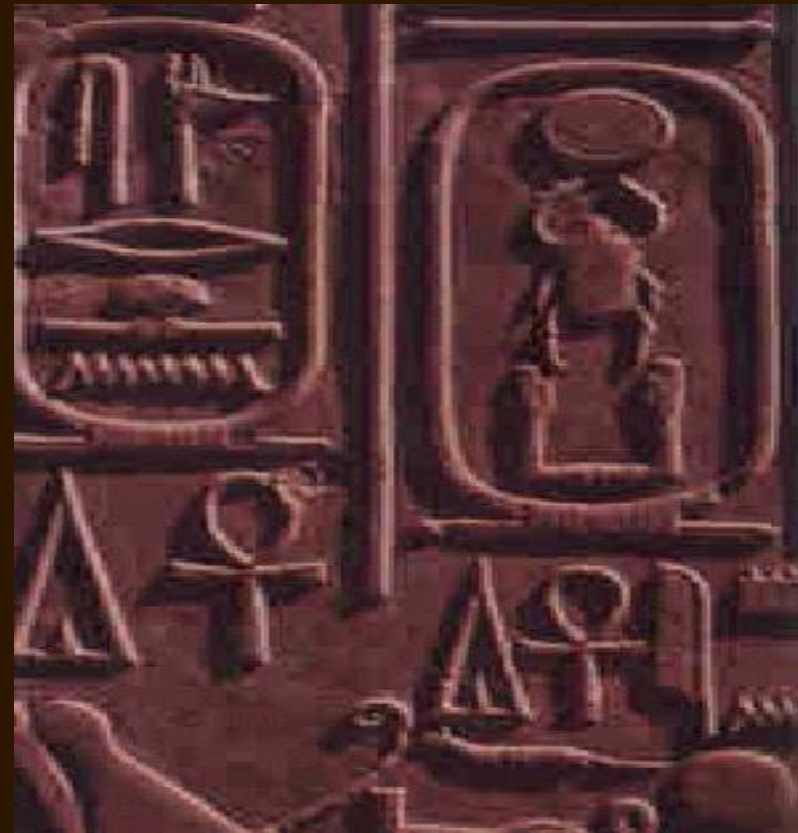
Cuneiform

From Mesopotamia



Hieroglyphics

From Egypt

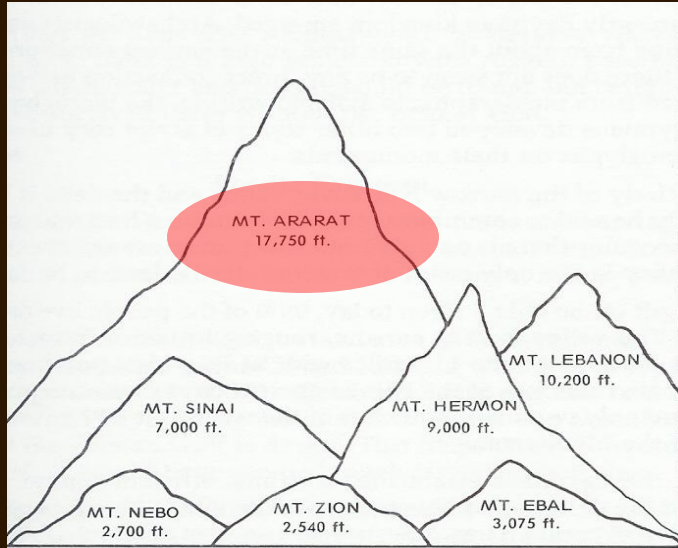


Mountains

- **Zagros Mountains**
 - Parallel to Tigris River
 - Average 9,000 ft high
 - Passes between mtns
 - Trading with one another
 - Descendants of Noah's son Japheth (Medes) developed a civilization east of Zagros Mtns



Mountains



- **Ararat Mountains**
 - High rugged range
 - Formed mostly of lava
 - 20,000 feet above sea level
 - Noah's Ark rested here
 - Descendants of Japheth settled north of the mountains

Desert

- **Arabian Desert**
 - Southwest of the Euphrates River
 - Covers nearly 1,000,000 sq miles
 - Extension of the Sahara Desert
 - Nomadic tribesmen and traders made up the Arabians
 - Made their living by way of the trade routes



Desert

- Not one vast sand dune
- Around 2,000 B.C. the Amorites came and established city-states from Egypt to Babylon
 - Huge lava beds lie immediately east and northeast of the land of Canaan. Beds are larger than Canaan itself



Egypt

- Egyptian Kingdom
 - Emerged during the time the Sumerians were in Mesopotamia



- Hieroglyphics found dating about the same time as cuneiform writing
- A picture writing with no connection between the two

Egypt

• Ancient Egypt

- Consisted of the Nile River valley and the delta
- 99% of people live on 4% of the land
 - irrigated by the Nile River



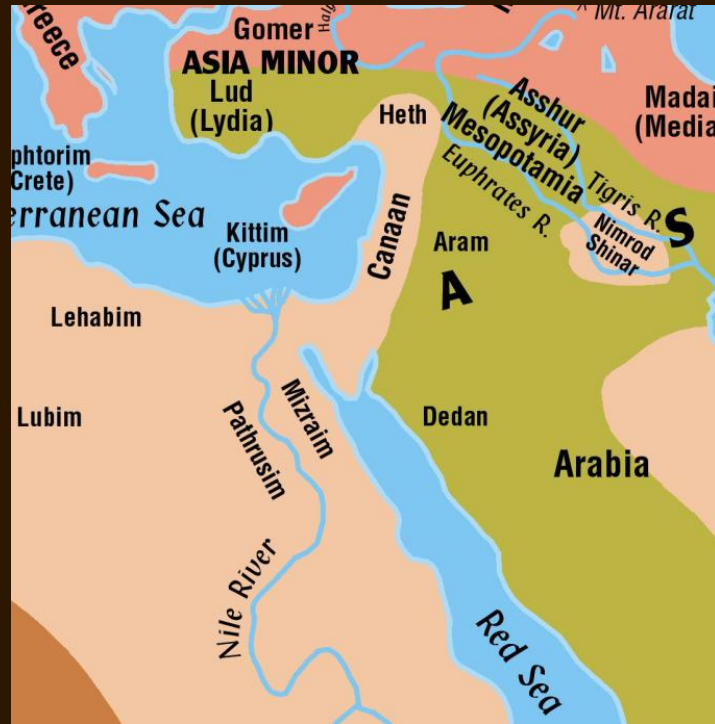
Egypt

– Nile River



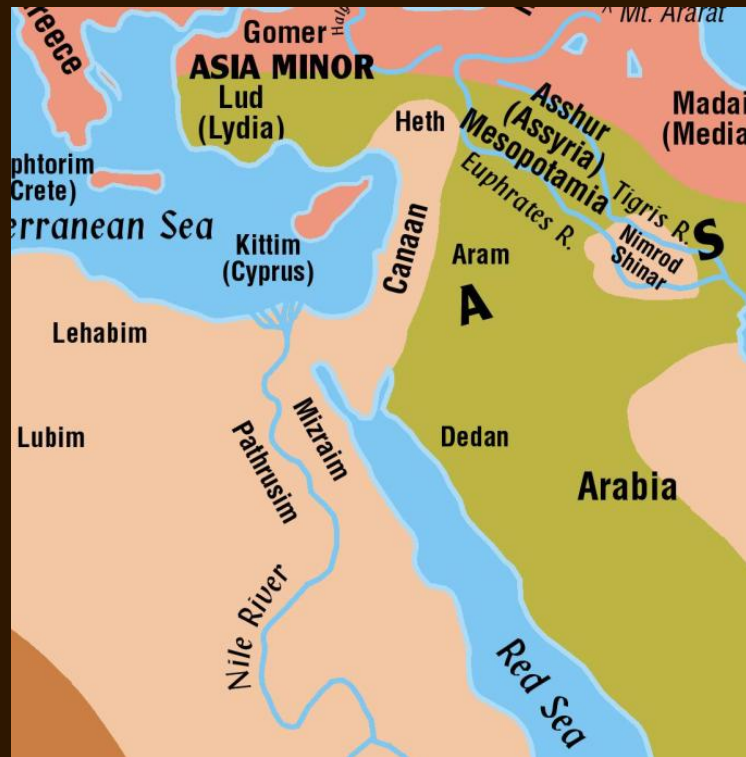
- River Valley (1-24 miles wide)
- 115 miles wide at its widest point (delta) and 125 miles long
- Longest river in the world (4,100 miles) and it flows northward

Egypt • Egyptians



- Built monumental structures
- Pyramids still stand as testimony to the high intelligence of early man
- Built before God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans
- First to set up 365 day calendar
- Unmatched medical skill
 - Performed delicate operations

Egypt • Egypt Tidbits



- Great Sea to the north and desert all around proved inaccessible
- Government was united
 - Not warring as were the Mesopotamia city-states
 - No walled cities or standing armies

Wilderness of Sinai

- Red Sea
 - Opens into the Indian Ocean – 1,500 miles south of Egypt
 - Two Arms
 - Gulf of Suez
 - Gulf of Aqaba

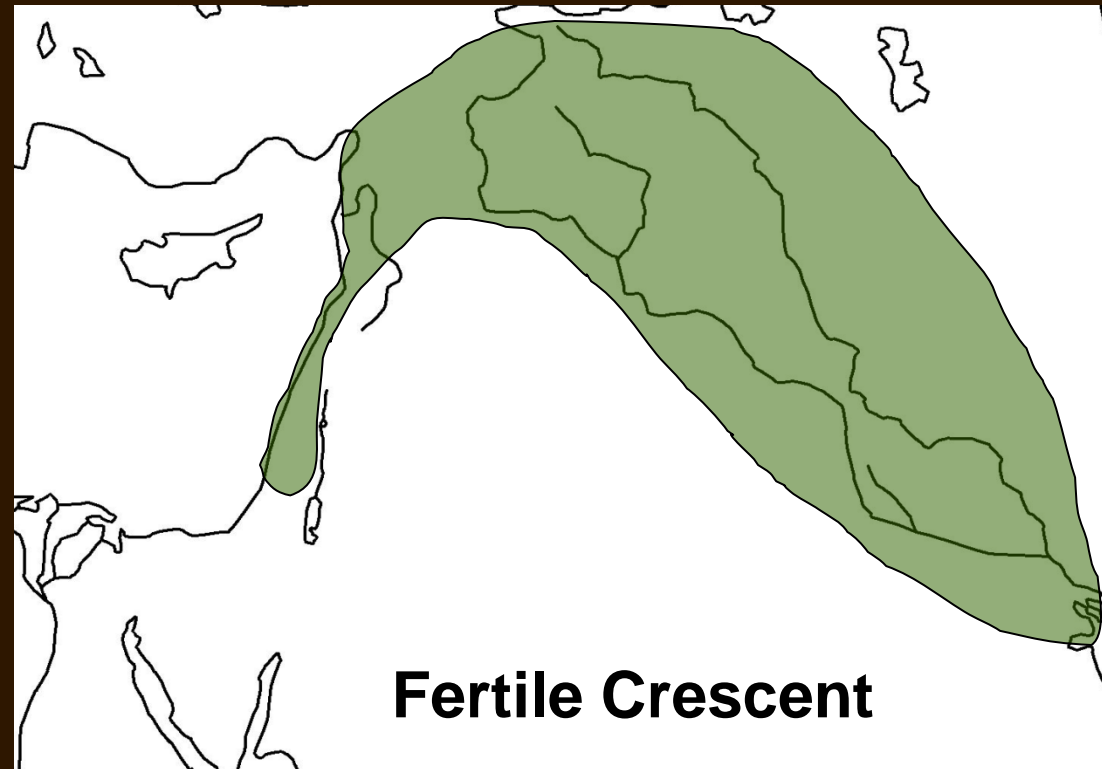


Wilderness of Sinai

- Red Sea
 - Today, the Suez Canal joins the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea
 - Gulf of Suez is 200 miles long
 - Gulf of Aqaba is 100 miles long
 - Triangular shaped peninsula called the Wilderness of Sinai



- Entire Old Testament history takes place in this half-circle of land
 - Plus the land of Egypt
- Equals about 1/3 of the land area of the continental United States



- 1,000 miles from Egypt to the Northern tip of the Persian Gulf
- 1,000 miles from Egypt to the mountains of Ararat

