

BIBLE LITERACY COURSE

OLD TESTAMENT PART II WHERE DO THEY FIT?

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Bible Literacy, Old Testament Part II

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Our Mission is to teach Bible basics as well as His Word, which will encourage
Bible growth through the “renewing of our minds” which will lead us to test
and approve “God’s perfect will” in our lives.

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.”

Ps. 119:103 NIV

Old Testament Part II

The major objective of this course is to understand that the last 22 books increase the historical knowledge of the period in which they fit.

WHERE DO THEY FIT?

Where do the 22 last books of the Old Testament fit into the eight periods of history?

5 Books of Law
12 Books of History
5 Books of Poetry
5 Major Prophets
12 Minor Prophets

REVIEW OF HISTORY CATEGORIES

1. Era of Beginnings (Genesis 1-11)
2. Patriarchs (Genesis 12-50)
3. Israel Becomes a Nation (Exodus-Deuteronomy)
4. Conquest and Occupation of the Land (Joshua, Judges, Ruth)
5. United Kingdom (I Samuel to II Kings 11)
6. Divided Kingdom, including Judah Only (II Kings 12 through II Chronicles)
7. Exilic Period (Joel, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Daniel)
8. Post Exilic Period (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)

Note to teacher: When this is taught by the author, she does it in a colloquial style. Under each book there is much information about that book and then where it fits within the 8 categories of Old Testament history. She says it may be too much information and may cause the presentation to get bogged down with details if you try to use too much. It may be best to give a quick overview that hopefully allows their appetite for knowledge to be whetted. They then can go back on their own and study what is given here, or study about the book in other places. At the beginning of some of the books the author has put some of what she says when she presents it. However, you can do whatever you like if it is true to the book. May God Bless you as you teach this course. It is so needed, especially since it gives more historical insights into what else is happening during the time of Old Testament History.

BOOKS OF POETRY –

JOB (42 Chapters)

Summary Statement: God allows Satan to test Job through loss of family and health. He is also tormented at times by friends who think he has sinned. Job comes out victorious but read the book to discover how it happens.

Job may have been a contemporary of Abraham, but more likely Moses since Edom is a country of Esau's descendants. After major testing due to a challenge of Satan to God, Job is shown to have integrity in his relationship with God. The book shows that God is a rewarder of those who have faith in Him. (Heb. 11:6) It also shows that God is enough above all things. Job is restored at the end and his companions judged. Use what you want below!

Job could have lived somewhere between the 18th to the 12th century B.C. Most believe he lived in Edom. Job struggled with the justice of God. We realize what he didn't: there are spiritual forces in the heavens that affect us.

Satan's challenge to God to test Job's character through circumstances. (Ch. 1-2)

Job suffers not just by what happened, but through the questioning of family and friends and their accusations of sin. (Ch. 3-38)

Job questions God. God answers by challenging Job. Job is first silent and then submissive. (Ch. 38-42:6) God's reasons for events are not always known, but people can still choose faith.

The Lord vindicates, intercedes, and restores Job. He also rebukes Job's friends. (Ch. 42:7-17)

Note that Job's questions did not provoke God.

Where does it fit?

Somewhere between PATRIARCHS to CONQUEST & OCCUPATION of the PROMISED LAND

PSALMS (150 CHAPTERS)

Summary Statement: Psalms is written mostly during the time of David, although it does have psalms by Moses to priests during the post exilic period. David wrote 73 of the Psalms. It is a book that shows the human condition from praise to despondency, from worship to anger, from love to rejection. It covers the wide spectrum of human emotions and can be used by the individual in his search or worship of God. It can also be used by the church to worship as a Body.

Written during the time of King David and beyond.

Used in worship throughout history of Israel, Judah and the Jews.

Still used by Christians and contemporary Jews for meditation and worship.

The center of the Bible is Psalm 118. The shortest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117. The longest chapter of the Bible is Psalm 119.

Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. It contains the full range of human experiences and emotions. It is not just for Old Testament times, but it speaks to all mankind throughout the ages. It is filled with theology. We see themes which are repeated in the rest of the Bible, i.e. salvation or redemption in Ps. 3:2,7 and 19:14. Others are monotheism, creation and fall, election, covenant, and eschatology.

The Psalter is fundamentally a hymnbook and allows the people of God to worship. It takes the themes and many other ideas and puts them to song!

The Psalms are prophetic. In the "Messianic Psalms," we see the birth, death, and ministry of Jesus foretold. These are Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 24 and 110.

The Psalms are poetry. Various poetic forms are used. In Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, each line in each subsection begins with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Almost every verse has a word that is synonymous with command or law.

The Psalms were written by various authors over many years. Many are identified in the titles of the Psalms. David has 73. Others are the Sons of Korah (11), Asaph (12), Solomon (one, possibly two), and Moses (one). Other Psalms do not identify anyone as their author. Korah and Asaph are thought to be post-exilic.

There are five sections, or books, which divide the Book of Psalms. Simply put, they show:

Book 1: God beside us (Ch. 1-41)

Book 2: God going before us (Ch. 42-72)

Book 3: God around us (Ch. 73-89)

Book 4: God above us (Ch. 90-106)

Book 5: God among us (Ch. 107-150). These include the Psalms of Ascent (Ch. 120-134). People would sing these as they journeyed to Jerusalem for festival occasions such as Passover.

Another common type of a poetic device used in Hebrew literature is Parallelism. This device is one that is not lost in translation. Rhyming and meter rarely survive translation into various languages. There are three types of parallelism: synonymous, antithetical, and synthetic.

Read Psalm 103. As you read it you will see these examples of parallelism: synthetic in verses 7 and 8, antithetical in verse 6, and synonymous in verses 11-12.

Synonymous parallelism involves the repetition in the second part of what has already been expressed.

Antithetical parallelism: this shows a contrast in thought.

Synthetic parallelism involves the completion or expansion of the idea of the first part in the second part.

Where does it fit?

UNITED KINGDOM and some during POST EXILIC PERIOD

“For the Hebrew poets, God represented a reality more solid than their own emotions or the checkered history of their people. They wrestled with God over every facet of their lives, and in the end, it was the very act of wrestling that proved their faith. One way to approach the book of Psalms is to think of it as a collection of personal letters that, when put together, reveals a panoramic picture of humanity wrestling with God.”

God wants us to express our deepest feelings to him, not to pretend to be something we are not. “Doubt, paranoia, giddiness, meanness, delight, hatred, joy, praise, vengefulness, betrayal—you can find it all in Psalms. Such stewing of emotions, which I once saw as hopeless disarray, I now see as a sign of health. From Psalms I have learned that I can rightfully bring to God whatever I

feel about him. I need not paper over my failures and try to clean up my own rottenness; far better to bring those weaknesses to God, who alone has the power to heal.”

From “The Bible Jesus Read” by Philip Yancy, Copyright 2002

PROVERBS (31 Chapters)

Summary Statement: The theme of Proverbs is the fear of the Lord and gives practical advice as to how to live a Godly life. It is mostly written by Solomon. Some of the proverbs show contrasts, some show similar thoughts.

Written mostly during the 10th century by Solomon and others.

Wisdom based on the fear of the Lord is theme: see 1:7, 9:10

Some proverbs were added during the period of Hezekiah (Agur and Lemuel), 7th century B.C.

The paternal wisdom of Solomon is in chapters 1-9. (Ch. 1:8, 5:1) See it in many verses.

General Proverbs of Solomon are in chapters 10-22. (Practical, i.e., 11:17, 12:1)

Sayings of the wise in chapters 22-34.

Hezekiah’s collection of Solomon’s proverbs, chapters 25-29.

Sayings of King Agur, chapter 30

Sayings of King Lemuel, chapter 31:1-9

The excellence of a woman, chapter 31:10-31.

Where does it fit?

UNITED KINGDOM

ECCLESIASTES and SONG OF SOLOMON

Both were written by Solomon.

ECCLESIASTES (12 CHAPTERS)

Summary Statement: Ecclesiastes is a human perspective on life and shows that man has little hope on which to base his future (without God). Solomon gives many examples of this and in general says “all is vanity” or useless. The author occasionally brings in God and His way of doing things. This brings not only hope but a God centered perspective on life. His conclusion is to “Fear God and keep His commandments” (12:13). This gives the hope that all people need.

Ecclesiastes shows a human perspective on the futility of man on earth and that devotion to worldly things will, unfortunately, lead to a state of utter despair. Vanity (meaningless) is often used to describe things such as the natural world, pleasures, accomplishments, labor, and even wisdom.

Chapter 3 is famous for “There is a time for everything.”

Life under the sun is meaningless due to injustice, greed, earthly wisdom (Ch. 5:8-7:24)

The real problem is sin (Ch. 7:25-29)

More life under the sun in Ch. 8:1-12:7. How it is meaningless in other areas.

Look for places where God is mentioned. You will see the teacher say things that finally make sense. He is turning to God for wisdom and not to himself.

Conclusion: Ch. 12: 3-14 “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

SONG OF SOLOMON (8 Chapters)

Summary Statement: Most agree that this is sensuous poetry spoken between a shepherd and shepherdess. Some scholars believe, more recently, that the book’s purpose is to show that God’s people can honor God by having sexual intimacy within the confines of marriage.

Marriage is a gift from God and should be based on loyalty and commitment. This gives freedom within that covenant to delight in each other.

Lovers long for each other (Ch.1:2-2:17)

Dreams of the woman shepherd (Ch. 3:1-6:3)

The yearning between lovers (Ch. 6:4-8:4)

The lovers join in marriage (Ch. 8:5-14)

Where do they fit?

UNITED KINGDOM

NEXT THE PROPHETS

“Why read the prophets (all 17 of them)? There is one compelling reason: to get to know God. The prophets are the Bible’s most forceful revelation of God’s personality... One who reads the prophets encounters not a... distant deity but an actual Person, a God as passionate as any person you have met. God feels delight, and frustration, and anger. He weeps and moans with pain... The prophets proclaim loud and clear how God feels; He loves us.”

“The Bible Jesus Read” by Philip Yancy

In order in the Bible, they are:

5 MAJOR PROPHETS = Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

12 MINOR PROPHETS = Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

(Please memorize these in this order so you know where to find them in the Bible.)

WE ARE NOW GOING TO STUDY/PRESENT THEM IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

(This means in the order that they were written or happened, so you can more logically understand them.)

JOEL (3 chapters)

Written between 835 and 800 B.C.

Or alternatively about 430 B.C.

Summary Statement: Joel warns of the Judgment to come. He asks the people to repent and turn to God.

Joel's audience is the nation of Israel/Northern Kingdom or possibly during the beginning of the exilic period.

Joel sees the devastation to come. Talks about "great and dreadful day of the Lord" but also the hope of restoration (Ch. 2:12-14) He uses the images of locusts who devour the land, as a symbol of the coming military destroying everything.

Other themes are repentance, that the Lord is in their midst, and all come together in the promise of the future outpouring of the Spirit. (Ch. 2:28-29; also see Acts 2:1)

Where does it fit?

Either during the Divided Kingdom/Israel or Post Exilic

(Scholars differ as to its date)

JONAH (4 chapters)

Summary Statement: The book tells of the story of Jonah and his running from God. He is given a second chance and goes to Nineveh where he warns the people of His judgment. They repent and turns to him, although this is displeasing to Jonah.

No one knows for sure when it was written but it occurred sometime between 782 to 753 B.C.

Jonah, who was a prophet from Israel (Northern Kingdom) was told to warn Nineveh of God's wrath. He runs away to Tarshish by ship, is swallowed by a big fish, but lives. He is given second chance to go to Nineveh. Preaches to them and they repent even though Jonah is not happy about it. It shows salvation is for all people and shows God's grace. Jonah 3:4 is it message.

Where does it fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM/ISRAEL

AMOS (9 chapters)

Summary Statement: Amos warns Israel about its coming destruction due to its idolatry, being complacent and the oppression of the poor.

Ministered 792 to 740 B.C. Prophesied to the Israel/Northern Kingdom.

Israel was experiencing prosperity and thought they were going into another golden age under Jeroboam II. However, this was at the expense of the poor. (Ch. 4) Amos told them they were at the brink of God's judgment which would happen soon. (Did occur in 722 B.C.) God would judge Israel for its complacency, idolatry, and oppression of the poor. "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel." (Ch. 4:12)

Where does it fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM/ISRAEL

I found the prophets to be the most "modern" writers imaginable. In chapter after chapter, they deal with the very same themes that hang like a cloud over our century: the silence of God, economic disparity, injustice, war, the seeming sovereignty of evil, the unrelieved suffering that afflicts our world. These, the same themes that surface

periodically in Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and even Deuteronomy, the prophets bring into sharp focus, as if examining them under a microscope.

“The Bible Jesus Read” by Philip Yancy

HOSEA (14 chapters)

Summary Statement: Hosea illustrated God’s love and forgiveness for his sinful people in various ways, including a husband/wife relationship.

Written to Israel somewhere between 755 to 725 B.C. It is a picture of a broken marriage, then redemption, and forgiveness. It is often thought to represent God’s marriage to Israel. (Ch. 1-3:5)

God accuses Israel of hypocrisy and gives appeals to His people through similes of what Israel is like...i.e., Ch. 7...oven, cake, dove. While they worship man-made gods, Hosea tells them they are rejecting the only hope they have. (Ch. 4-14)

Where does it fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM/ISRAEL

MICAH (7 chapters)

Summary Statement: to warn of God’s judgment and to offer pardon to those who repent.

It occurred 750 to 687 B.C., prophesied mostly to Northern Kingdom

Predicts fall of Samaria, which is the capital of Israel, and the inevitable desolation of Israel. Also predicts future Godly rule of Jerusalem and restoration of His people.

Famous verses are Micah 5:2 and 6:8.

Where does it fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM/ISRAEL

BEGINNING OF PROPHETS WHO SPEAK TO JUDAH

ISAIAH (66 Chapters)

Summary Statement: Isaiah calls Judah back to God and tells of God's salvation through the Messiah. (740 to 681 B.C.)

Isaiah is thought to be like a mini-Bible. It has 66 chapters. The Bible has 66 books. Some say there may be a correlation between Isaiah and the Old and New Testaments?

The first 39 chapters in Isaiah (OT) generally have to do with judgment (although some grace). It seems to be based more on the old covenant and only some hope (like the Old Testament). The next 27 chapters (40-66) have to do with comfort and hope which is much like the NT. (There are 27 books in the NT.) God's glory and prophetic verses on the Messiah are given in this section. Isaiah served under five kings for about 60 years. Use more from below:

- Ministered from 740 B.C. to 681 B.C. under five kings, beginning with Uzziah and ending with Manasseh.
- Prophesied some to Israel but mostly to Judah. Prophesied about surrounding nations.
- Messianic prophecies (Ch. 53). Some are still to happen! (Ch. 60-66)
- Judah's sins are confronted and condemned. (Ch. 1-5)
- God offers a new future to Judah and Israel through grace and judgment. (Ch. 6-12)
- God will give judgment and grace to the world. (Ch.13-27)
- God's spoken word is given to the world. (Ch. 28-35)
- A transition... "Whom will you trust?" (Ch. 36-39)
- God will give comfort to the exiles. (Ch. 40-55)
- There will be a future Glory! (Ch. 56-66)

Where does it fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM mostly JUDAH ONLY

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

Summary Statement on both books: Happened between 626 to 586 B.C., Jeremiah ministered to Judah under five kings, Josiah to Zedekiah. He is known as the weeping prophet, but was a tough, persevering prophet, who often used symbolism. He warned of destruction by Babylon and wanted Judah to turn back to God. Lamentations fulfills curses of Deuteronomy 28.

JEREMIAH (52 CHAPTERS)

Overall, the book stresses God's judgment on the unfaithfulness of (Judah) and what was to have been a covenant-keeping people. God also wants these same people to someday know a new covenant. Some call him the weeping prophet but he shows he is as tough as nails. The man, despite suffering greatly, continues to give God's Word, despite the circumstances it causes. There is more information below.

Jeremiah was consecrated by God while in the womb. He was to suffer as he spoke God's Word, but he was promised God's protection. (Ch. 1)

He condemned Judah's idolatry and false religion. (Ch. 2-10)

He struggled with God and Judah. (Ch. 11-20)

He confronted kings, other prophets, and the people for their false belief (Ch. 21-29)

He predicted restoration of the nation, a promised land, a new covenant, and the honoring of the Davidic covenant. (Ch. 30-33)

He judged Judah and its rebellion against Babylon and God (Ch. 34-45)

God spoke through Jeremiah about the judgment of other nations (Ch. 46-51)

Finally, he told of the fall of Jerusalem, its temple destruction, exiling of its people, but still, the continuation of the Davidic covenant. (Ch. 52)

LAMENTATIONS (5 CHAPTERS)

If Jeremiah is the author, (this is likely) it was probably written about 587 to 580 B.C.

Shows the destruction that Jerusalem suffered while being sieged by Babylon for two years. Much of the suffering is predicted in Deuteronomy 28 which gives the curses for disobedience.

Yet during suffering, God's faithfulness can be seen, and restoration can be possible. (3:22-24)

Where do they fit?

DIVIDED KINGDOM/JUDAH ONLY

NAHUM (3 chapters)

Summary Statement: Predicts destruction of Nineveh. The three chapters give details as to why and how this will happen. It is written about 100 years after Jonah.

It is written to both Judah and Nineveh. Destruction did happen in 612 B.C. Written after 660 B.C. and before 630 B.C.

Where does it fit?

Judah Only

HABAKKUK (3 chapters)

Written between 640 to 609 B.C

Summary Statement: to show that God still controls the world despite the victories of evil.

Habakkuk asks God why He doesn't do something about Judah's wickedness. God says He is sending Babylon. Habakkuk must trust God despite His using evil Babylon and maybe not seeing restoration in his lifetime. This book shows that God is in control of the world despite evil.

"The just shall live by faith." is first said in Hab. 2:4, also 3:17-18

Where does it fit?

JUDAH ONLY

ZEPHANIAH (3 chapters)

Summary Statement: To tell Judah to return to God and to also see their own complacency.

It tells of some of the prophecies that took place during the reign of Josiah, 640-609 B.C. and was written during this time.

The judgment of God is on those who sin against Him but blessings for those who follow Him. God has no grandchildren. Every person must decide for himself who God is in their life.

The prophesy of God is against Judah and the judgment of surrounding nations is given too.

In the last chapter Zephaniah, it talks about the glorious future of Israel/Judah.

Where does it fit?

JUDAH ONLY

EXILIC PERIOD

EZEKIEL (48 Chapters)

Summary Statement: He spoke to the Jews still in the land while he was in captivity in Babylon. He wanted all to repent so they could have confidence in the future.

Written sometime between 593-573 B.C.

He was taken from Israel in 597 B.C. While living in Babylon he spoke to Judah and surrounding nations while announcing God's judgment on them. However, he eventually tells of future salvation of His people. He sees the throne of the Lord and receives a vision. Use what you want from below.

Called to be a watchman. (Ch. 1-3)

Jerusalem & Judah are judged (Ch. 4-24)

Speaks against other nations (Ch. 25-32)

Talks about what happens after the fall of Jerusalem. Gives many specifics about future Israel. (Ch. 33-39)

Has a vision of restoration, especially of the temple. (Ch. 40-48)

Where does it fit?

EXILIC PERIOD

DANIEL (12 Chapters)

Summary Statement: His audience is other captives in Babylon. He gives an account of what happened to the faithful Jews there. He also shows how God is in control of heaven and earth, of the destiny of nations, of the forces of nature and how He cares for His people.

Written sometime between 605 to 536 B.C.

He was taken from Israel as a teenager in 605 B.C. and lived in Babylon for the rest of his life. Covers 605 to 536 B.C.

When he was about 85, he realized from reading Jeremiah that it was time for some of the captives to return to the land. (See Jeremiah Chapters 25 and 29 and Daniel 9:1-2)

The first 6 chapters of Daniel contain what are usually well-known stories:

- Teens staying true to God, especially food they eat (Ch.1)
- King's Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation (Ch.2)
- Golden image and fiery furnace (Ch. 3)
- Nebuchadnezzar and insanity (Ch. 4)
- Handwriting on the wall (Ch. 5)
- Daniel in lions' den (Ch. 6)

If you then want to add what is below go ahead or it could be said the last 6 chapters talk about what happens soon regarding God's Kingdom (Chapter 7) and world kingdoms...Medes/Persians, Greece, and Rome. See below.

The last 6 chapters are of Daniel's visions:

- Four great beasts and heavenly court (Ch. 7)
- Vision of ram, goat, and horn (Ch. 8)
- Vision of Daniel's prayer and its answer (Ch. 9)
- Vision of the Final Conflict (Ch. 10-12)

Where does it fit?

EXILIC PERIOD

OBADIAH (1 chapter)

Summary Statement: Probably written between 586 & 553 B.C., probably occurred in 585 B.C. Prophesied destruction of Edom which was located southwest of Israel/Judah and was an enemy of Judah.

It was written to show that God judges those who harm his people. Edom's destruction was due to the continuous harassment of the Judah and were glad for Babylon's destruction of it.

Where does it fit?

EXILIC PERIOD

Beginning of the Post Exilic Period

HAGGAI (2 chapters)

Summary Statement: to call the returned exiles to complete the temple.

This was written about 520 B.C. and encouraged those who had returned from exile to start building the temple again. It had begun at least 20 years before this, but it stopped. It was finally finished in 515 B.C. Haggai had seen Solomon's temple, so was an older returnee.

Where does it fit?

POST EXILIC PERIOD

In "The Bible Jesus Read," Philip Yancy provides some tips for reading the prophets. He gives three categories to help overcome barriers against reading the prophets and to help discover the book's essential message.

- (1) *“Now” prophecies relate primarily to situations in the prophet’s own time.*
- (2) *“Later” prophecies are well removed from each prophet’s own time but were later fulfilled in history.*
- (3) *“Much later” prophecies seem still to lie in the future.*

ZECHARIAH (14 chapters)

Summary Statement: He encourages the people to return to building the temple. He also gives glimpses of the future deliverance by the Messiah.

Mostly 520 B.C. He was a contemporary of Haggai. He encouraged returnees to rebuild the temple.

He also had eight-night visions, some related to our end times, (eschatological themes).

The last five chapters include prophecies about the first and second coming of the Lord (some as Shepherd during the first coming).

Where does it fit?

POST EXILIC PERIOD

MALACHI (4 chapters)

Summary Statement: He confronted the people with their sins and wanted them to be restored to God.

About 438-433 B.C. He warned against sin of the Jews and priests during second visit of Nehemiah.

He speaks about such things as unfaithfulness, robbing God, and the Day of the Lord. He used six questions to frame things that disputed the current thinking.

Where does it fit?

POST EXILIC PERIOD

OVERVIEW OF WHERE THE BOOKS FIT

Between the PATRIARCHAL and the CONQUEST/OCCUPATION OF THE LAND

book of Job

UNITED KINGDOM

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

DIVIDED KINGDOM

Isaiah (to Israel and Judah)

Hosea (to Israel)

Amos (to Israel)

Jonah (to Israel)

Micah (to Israel)

JUDAH ONLY (This was after Israel went into captivity in 722 B.C.)

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Nahum

EXILIC PERIOD

Joel (?)

Obadiah

Ezekiel

Daniel

POST EXILIC PERIOD

Some Psalms (ascents)

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

MAPS



Map #1 Old Testament World



Map #2 Conquest and Occupation of the Land



Map #3 United Kingdom



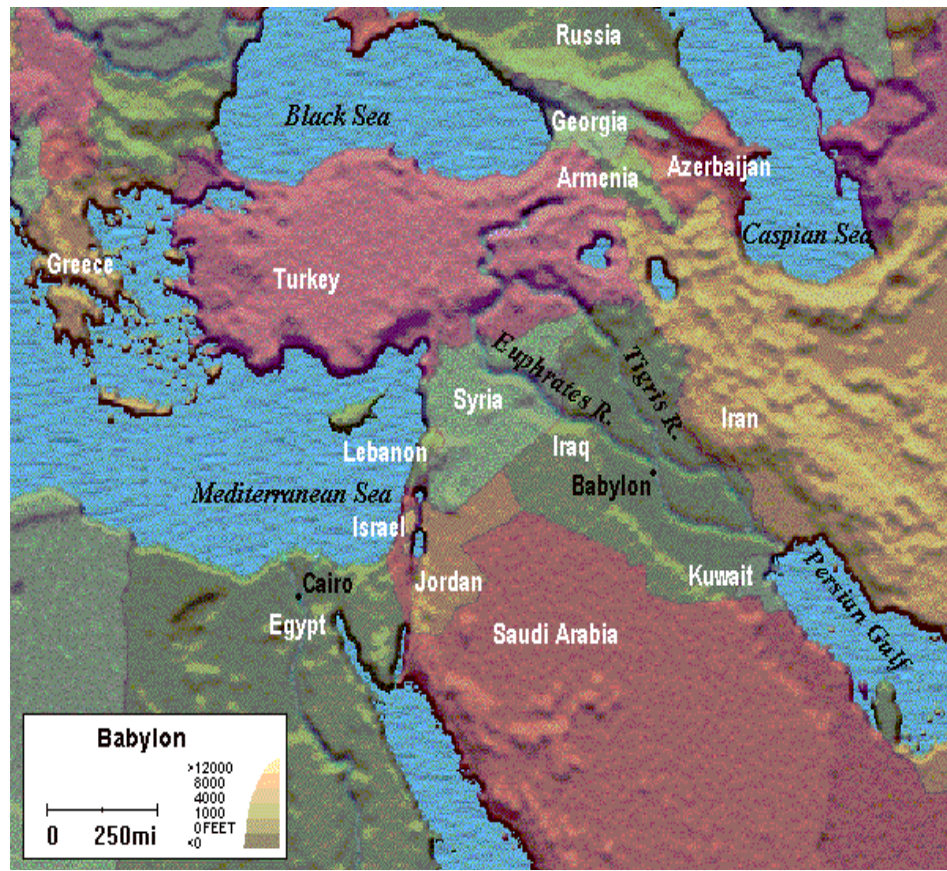
Map #4 Divided Kingdom



Map #5 Exilic Period



Map #6 Post Exilic Period



Map #7 The Current Middle East