

In order to properly understand the Old Testament, it is necessary to know something of the countries which were around Palestine in various directions. Because their relations with Palestine influenced it tremendously at all points in its history. The most important of these regions were Egypt and Mesopotamia. Egypt is to the southwest of Palestine and Mesopotamia is to the east. Palestine is about half-way between the two, a little nearer to Egypt than to Mesopotamia. Between Palestine and Egypt on the one half is a great desert and there is a still greater one between Palestine and Mesopotamia. On the northern rim of this eastern desert, there is a narrow strip of watered country where there is the possibility of a certain amount of human settlement. So that the trip from Palestine to Mesopotamia, while it is longer than that to Egypt, is not quite as difficult.

Egypt and Mesopotamia have very much in common. Each of them is a land which is formed by a river flowing through a dry region. In Egypt, if it were not for the Nile River, it would simply be a section of the Sahara Desert. Egypt has been called the "Gift of the Nile" and that is no exaggeration at all.

Egypt is divided into two parts, the so-called Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Lower Egypt is the Delta Region where the Nile River spreads out into many different branches and finally reaches the Mediterranean Sea through a number of the channels. Between these different branches of the Nile on the land that has been built up by sediment brought down by the Nile, there has always been a large population living in the very fertile territory that is thus made. This Delta Region extends about two hundred miles to the south. Then we come to the end of the so-called Lower Egypt, to the point the Nile comes in a single channel.

Upper Egypt extends about five hundred miles south of