

# Dr. Donald Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Lecture 13 People Groups, Habiru and Arameans

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This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament Backgrounds. This is session 13, People Groups, Habiru, and Arameans.

Well, welcome back as we try to finish off this study of why the Hebrews are called the Hebrews or, more specifically, why Abraham is called a Hebrew. Because we can say if Abraham is called Hebrew, it makes sense why his descendants are called Hebrews.

But is Abraham called a Hebrew because he's a Habiru? Well, that's what we're struggling with here. And so, before we make that connection, there are a number of things about Habiru that we have to look at. So, I invite you to look at our notes up here.

Notice with me in A, underneath 4, Habiru or Habiru, it would be the same thing, is used in Akkadian as early as Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin. Now, I know when we see those kinds of things that they don't speak to us, but let me point out to you that these places, these persons are both in Mesopotamia. And you'll notice that in 1800, you are outside of Mesopotamia and hundreds of years after Abraham.

Notice also with me that the word appeared at Nuzi in 1500, where a Habiru from a Syrian name, Adiglat, and a female named Sinbalti are mentioned. Habiru is very frequently used in the Amarna period. So what we're asking you, and I know from experience that this gets confusing.

So let me point out to you then, the word Habiru in Akkadian is used all over Upper Mesopotamia. And it's used all the way over here in Palestine as well. So what that means is, already you can see the term Habiru is used outside of the Bible in Akkadian, used all over Mesopotamia.

The Akkadian word Habiru has a Sumerian counterpart called Shara-igizi. And the Sumerian word goes back into the 3rd millennium BC in its usage. So, if it goes back to the 3rd millennium, then that means that's a thousand years before Abraham.

So here is the first conclusion that we're going to make when we look at the map. The term Habiru is used far beyond the borders of Israel. And it's used long before Abraham.

So, one of the first things we can do is draw a very premature conclusion in saying Abraham may have been a Habiru, but certainly he's not the only Habiru, because

that term was used long before Abraham, and it was used all over the Fertile Crescent. So that's the first tentative conclusion that we can make. The second tentative conclusion that we can make for you is this.

In both Sumerian and Akkadian, the word is not used to describe an ethnic group. As far as I know, Habiru is never used for a people group. There is no such name as a nation or a tribe of people who are called Habiru.

The word Habiru is used as a socio-ethnic term. In other words, in Akkadian, Habiru is a term that was used for people groups of various ethnic origins, all of whom were sort of living on the fringe of society. They were outsiders.

The closest that I can think of as an example might be the term gypsy. Gypsies are people, especially in Europe, who lived all over Europe. They were transnational.

They were not really part of any people group, and they always tended to live outside the law on some level. So that what we're suggesting to you in this C point of our notes is the word is not used for a people group. It is used for people groups that are outside the law, living on the fringes of the law.

So, when we come to D, we can make this point. The term Habiru is used all over the ancient world before and after the period of the Exodus. And, of course, this is especially true of Palestine.

So, I would say in conclusion, we can say some Habiru may have been Hebrews, but it is an absolute certainty not all Habiru were Hebrews. See, in other words, to come back to Genesis 14:13, when Abraham was called the Habiru. It's possible that he was called a Habiru because he was perceived as somebody who was on the fringe of society and was outside the law. But we cannot say that the word Habiru equaled Hebrews because Abraham because the term in Abraham's time was used far beyond the borders of Israel where Abraham was at.

So, I'll say the conclusion, then I want to say a few things further about this. While it's possible that Abraham was called the Hebrew because he was considered a Habiru, which meant somebody who was on the fringe of culture, we cannot automatically say Hebrew and Habiru are the same thing. So, in this confusing presentation, what I would say is, I think we have, my guess is that what we have is a phonetic accident.

Hebrew in Genesis 14:13 and Habiru are two different words. And what I would suggest is that they just happen to sound the same. This is tentative, but what I would suggest is that they just happen to sound the same. I would suggest to you that Abraham was called the Hebrew because he crossed over from Palestine, excuse me, crossed over from Mesopotamia to Palestine, and I don't see any connection between the word Habiru and Hebrew.

They are just two words that sound alike but are not the same word. I doubt that there is any connection between the word Habiru when it appears in the Amarna archives and the word Hebrew. In other words, in 1370, when Joshua came into the land, and the king of Jerusalem wrote the king of Egypt and said the Habiru are coming, I am modestly suspicious that that is not referring to the Hebrews.

When the king of Jerusalem writes that Habiru is coming to send troops, what he says is the Habiru are coming to send, and the exact terminology is sent 10, 15 troops. That does not sound like an invasion by the Hebrews. We read in the biblical text that Joshua fought the city of Jerusalem called Jebus and that he defeated them in battle.

That was certainly more than 10 or 15 troops. So, I am a little suspicious that when the Amarna archives where the word Habiru is used, I'm a little suspicious that that does not relate to the Hebrews, but I'm not going to press the point. So, what I would say in conclusion to the Habiru is I suspect Abraham was called a Hebrew because he crossed over, and that the word Hebrew there is not the same as the word Habiru, which is basically a Mesopotamian term.

So that's our discussion on this. It is hardly the final word. It may not even be the final word from me.

Maybe a few years from now, my friend Dr. Hildebrandt will ask me to do another lecture on this and I'll have another view on this. But for right now, that's my view. It allows us to move to a subject area of considerably more importance than whether Abraham was a Habiru or a Hebrew.

And that is the subject area of the Arameans. So, when I make a statement like this to introduce it to you, it tells you this is much more important. No other people are of greater importance for Old Testament study than the Arameans.

This is not some scholarly debate between Hebrews and Habirus. This is a debate about the origins of the people of Abraham. So, they are of prime importance to the historical veracity of Genesis.

Second, they restrained Assyrian expansion westward for almost 300 years. Third, they represent one of the more important ethnic factors in the period of the divided monarchy. In other words, they were the major opponent of the Israelites during the period of the divided monarchy.

Fourth, the books of Genesis, Ezra, Daniel, and Jeremiah are written in part, a small part, sometimes larger part, in the Aramaic language. So, when we talk about the Aramean people, we are talking about something of monumental importance in the

Bible. This is also true because in spite of what I mentioned in the paragraph above, I should have mentioned to you that Jacob, Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, was called a wandering Aramean.

So, when we talk about the Arameans, this is worth spending an hour together trying to figure out. So, do we have a problem? I mentioned to you in the second paragraph, the problem is generally stated, most liberals, or I should have used the word critics, most critics and archaeologists would say that the first identifiable reference to a people called Arameans is in the time of Tiglath-Pileser I in about 1100 BC. By anybody's dating system, Abraham was well before 1100 BC.

So, since Genesis clearly mentions the term in 2000 BC, we have a chronological problem. If the earliest reference to the Aramean people is 1100 BC, and Genesis actually mentions the name Aramean, and later on, when we see Laban and Jacob having their kiss and makeup time together, they make a covenant, and Laban in his covenant makes it in Aramean, and Jacob makes his covenant in Hebrew, then we actually have the Aramean language appearing in the time period of Jacob. So that's part of the problem that we are dealing with.

Can we have Aramean people before 1100 BC? My proposal is, well, Genesis does, and we need to think about it and try to come to some understanding about it. So I have been wise to put this in terminology that is humble. Toward a solution, I don't want to necessarily give you the impression that I have the solution, but I hope I can move us toward a solution.

So, part of the difficulty is that with the exception of the information in Genesis, the origin of the Aramean peoples is obscure. Most scholars state that the Arameans originated in the great deserts of Syria, Iraq, and what we call Saudi Arabia. Another, however, conservative view has it that they have always been in their homeland of Aram-Naharaim, Aram of the two rivers.

So, I'm afraid that in my computer woes that I have lost the map recently that I wanted to show you about this. So, I cannot show you that map. I will have to settle for showing you a lesser map about the, I think we can close out on that map.

I can show you a lesser map in which I can point out the historical distribution of the Aramean peoples. So, we'll look at some Bible passages, and hopefully, I can make this clear, but notice this terminology right here. It doesn't mean anything to you.

That's why you're watching this video so I can explain it to you. Padan Aram. That means the field of Aram.

This is a historical designation for this region. We're in upper Syria, Mesopotamia. This is the Euphrates River.

Right here, see the Euphrates? Here's the Balak. In maps going back, as far as we can go back, this area up here is called the field of Aram. This also is called in ancient Near Eastern literature, Aram-Naharaim.

Aram-Naharaim means Aram of the two rivers. Alright, let me just say it again to try to make it clearer. This region in upper Mesopotamia, long before 1100 BC, this region had two names.

We have copious mention of these names in ancient Near Eastern documents long before 1100 BC, when this region up here was called either Padan Aram, which meant the field of Aram, or Aram-Naharaim, which is Hebrew, or actually Aramaic, for Aram of the two rivers. So, the two rivers would be the Euphrates River here and the Balak River here. All right, so later on, the distribution of the Aramaic peoples is pictured for you in yellow here.

That's the borders of the Aramaic kingdoms during the period of the divided monarchy. So, let's come back toward a solution. With that, hopefully I can explain to you what I mean for you to understand.

Here I mentioned the Bible itself clearly reflects a rather consistent memory of at least the name or the word Aram. For example, Nachor, who was Abraham's brother, has a grandson named Aram. Isaac, according to Genesis, Isaac and Jacob both marry daughters of apparent Aramaeans, Betuel and Laban, and when Laban and Jacob reconcile, Laban names his stone in Aramaic and Jacob in Hebrew.

And Deuteronomy 26:5 calls Jacob a wandering Aramaean. So, what we're pointing out to you then is Genesis repeatedly uses the word Aramaean, both as a place name and it seems to suggest a people group. It actually employs the Aramaic language, but here's our problem.

The earliest archaeological record we have of the Aramaean people is 1100 BC, fully a thousand years different from the time of Abraham to the time of Tiglath-Pileser. So, what do we do with that problem? Genesis has Aramaeans, a place named Aram, and people speaking Aramaean. It indeed refers to Jacob himself as a wandering Aramaean when we have no other archaeological evidence of Aramaeans. So, my response is the catch is determining if the name Aram can be identified with ethnic Aramaeans.

Let me go back and show you what I mean. So, then, on this map that we looked at earlier, somewhere, I thought I still had it up, but apparently, I don't. Yeah, here it is.

There's no dispute, there's no dispute, but that the name Aram was around long before the time of Tiglath-Pileser I. Padan Aram is on all of the ancient maps, Aram

Naharaim is on the ancient maps, so we clearly indisputably without controversy have the fact that the name Aram appears on the maps fully a thousand years earlier than Tiglath-Pileser I in 1100 B.C. Okay? So, what we are asking is does that in any way suggest a connection between the Aramaean people and the place name Aram? So, if you understand that, then that's the question we're going to work with here. As early as Narm Sin, I'm sure some of you remember Narm Sin. He was the guy with the horned helmet, you remember, who was the first king in Mesopotamia to have himself declared to be a god, to be divinized.

Narm Sin mentions an Aram located in the upper Euphrates area as early as 2300. Aram appears as a place name in the Drechem archives in upper Mesopotamia in 2000, the Mari documents in 1800, the Alalakh tablets in 1700, and Ugarit in 1400. As you can see, for fully a thousand years, the word Aram appears long before 1100 BC.

Furthermore, there are some ancient place names for upper Mesopotamia, such as Paddan Aram and Aram Naharaim, that are long before Tiglath-Pileser I. So, simply put, are these place names indicators of ethnic Aramaeans? Lots of place name references to Aram. Can we equate the place names that have Aram in it with ethnic Aramaeans? Well, let me look at the camera and be honest with you. The answer is that apart from what we read in Genesis, we don't have any evidence that Aramaean was a spoken language in the time of Abraham, nor do we have any archaeological evidences.

All we really have is just place names that have Aram in it, mentions places where Aram appears as a place name. So, the origins of the Aramaean peoples often times are connected to the Akhlame and the Sutu, and there is strong linguistic evidence that they are closely related to the Amorites. So, I can give you some good news.

It's also the bad news. The good news is that Lawson Younger, who is a professor at Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, north of Chicago, Illinois, just wrote a book that is about that thick on the Aramaeans. He has become one of the leading experts on this, and so, if for whatever reason known to the God and the angels, you decide you want to pursue this further, you can go to your seminary library. I'm sure it will only be in a seminary library, and find his book, Lawson Younger, spelled Y-O-U-N-G-E-R, just like young with an E-R.

You can read what he has written on this. So, that's the good news. That's also the bad news because, in the end, we are still hamstrung with the problem that all we really have is a place name apart from what Genesis describes.

So, that leads us to another problem, which is, since Genesis pictures Abraham as descending from this general area, then we are tasked with the problem of asking the question, where did Abraham come from? In this particular map, if you just want to follow my cursor, when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, the next place he went

to was Haran. There, at the city of Haran, he waited for his father to die. After his father died, he then continued the journey.

Now, what you'll notice is that way down here, there is a great city, the city called Ur. So, what we are going to do for a while now is ask ourselves the question, where is Chaldees? Did Abraham come from an Ur up here, or did Abraham come from this Ur down here? Those are our two choices. Abraham, the Hebrew.

Did he come from Ur here, or Ur up here? So, that's our task. I'm saddened considerably that I don't have a map to show you the alternative. So, what I want to do is invite you to purchase a book.

And I don't get a royalty from Moody Press, but Moody Press has a fine book called the Moody Bible Atlas. And that atlas has a wonderful map created to show you that Abraham came from an Ur in the north. And so, if you want to pursue this and you want to see it on a map form, then you can go to the Moody Bible Atlas because that has Abraham coming from an Ur in the north.

We're going to talk about this for some length here. So, let's go to Genesis chapter 11. This is the first place that it tells us about it.

And let me just read a few verses in Genesis chapter 11. At the end of chapter 11, the biblical text gives us a hinge to get us from the end of the events of chapter 11 to the beginning of the events of chapter 12. So, in chapter 11, the text tells us, in verse 27, these are the records of the generation of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. Now, Haran, being the father of Abraham, died in the presence of his father, Terah, in the land of his birth.

I hope that you have your Bible out. You can always pause the video right now. In verse 28, Abraham died in the presence of his father; excuse me, Haran died in the presence of his father Terah, in the land of his birth.

In the land of his birth is in the Ur of the Chaldees. And Abraham and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abraham's wife was Sarah.

The name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. And so, in verse 31, Terah took Abraham, his son, Terah took Abraham, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarah, his daughter-in-law, his son, Abraham's wife, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldees in order to enter the land of Canaan. And they went as far as Haran and settled there.

All right? Now, let me just go back to the map very quickly to show you what it just told us. So, what it just told us is that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, he left Ur of the Chaldees, and he went to Haran right here, and that was his jumping-off point to come over here, where God was calling him. Here's Haran.

As far as I know, no one disputes that this is the location of Haran. So, if Abraham came from here, the question is, why would he go to Haran? Because, as you can plainly see, you have two routes that you would tend to follow if you were going from this Ur over to here. And so, the one route would be the southern route to go through Tadmor to Chatna and then go south.

The northern route would be to hug the river and to go up here to Aleppo and then come down because it's not as desert, it would be easier on, you know, a large body of people, because Abraham had a large body of people. So, as you look at the map, it's very puzzling that Abraham would have gone from Ur up here to Haran. So, now that we've seen the picture, I'm going to go back to the written text, but before I go back to the written text, let's take a look at the map one last time.

As you can see, here is Ur. Ur is on the west bank of the Euphrates. So, it means we would have expected that Abraham might have just stayed on the west bank like this and made his way all the way along the Euphrates and then crossed over.

So, if Abraham was from this Ur, we have a potential problem because we know he didn't take a ship. The text tells us it does not mention a ship. If he's traveling in this region and he goes to Haran, then Haran is not only out of the way, but Abraham is going to have to cross large rivers multiple times to get to Haran.

So, with that, I'll come back to the text, and we'll begin to unfold this. I think it's a really interesting subject, but my interest level is not always the same as the world around me. So, I'll hit you with the shocker by telling you that even though the English translations, as far as I know, every last English translation says he came from Ur of the Chaldees, the Hebrew text does not say that.

The Hebrew text reads not Chaldees, which is Greek. The Hebrew text says Chasdu. So, I can erase my Habiru discussion and so what the Hebrew text says is not Chaldees, but Chasdu.

So, why would they translate it as the Ur of the Chaldees? Okay, well, I can't say with certainty, but I think this is probably a pretty good guess. In Stephen's speech in Acts chapter 7, Stephen walks his way through the history of Israel, and in Greek, naturally, Stephen, who is a Hellenistic Jew, Stephen is quoting from the Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek.



And so, Stephen quotes the Septuagint. Well, the Septuagint says he came from Ur of the Chaldees, but the Hebrew text doesn't say that. So, the first thing is Stephen's speech.

The second thing is that we don't know where Chasdu was. So, if the English translators had chosen to say Abraham came from Ur of the Chasdu, then what that would have done is resulted in one of the many question marks that we have in Old Testament studies because there is no clear identification of Chasdu. So, those are my suggestions as to why the translation was chosen Chaldees, but therefore, as you can plainly see, Chaldees in Greek is not a transliteration of the Hebrew, it's an interpretation.

So, here's one of my first points and I'm not sure if we're going to be able to finish all of this discussion in this lecture, but we will see. The Septuagint translators didn't know where Chasdu was, but they did know where the great city of Ur was. So, since they knew where Ur was in the 3rd century B.C., they knew where Ur was at, and the geographical identification of Ur in the 3rd century B.C., right down into the New Testament period, Ur would have been called Ur of the Chaldees, and that is exactly why they chose to translate it Ur of the Chaldees, because this is the only Ur that the New Testament authors knew of, or I should say the Septuagint translators.

Okay, let me just pause there because that's got to be a little confusing. In New Testament times, the world only knew of one Ur, and that was this very famous city of Ur, which goes back to the 5th millennium B.C. So, because of that, that's the only Ur that they knew about, and in the 3rd century B.C., that Ur was called Ur of the Chaldees. So therefore, the translators of the Septuagint concluded that this was the homeland of Abraham down here, because it was the only Ur that they knew of.

So, they translated in the Septuagint that Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees. What I'm going to propose to you is that I don't think that it is right. Okay? Chaldees is a late-term used to identify our man-like peoples who first appeared in the south around 1000 B.C. It was not until the middle of the millennium that the area came to be called Chaldea, but what I am pointing out to you is something that works like this.

Allow me to return to the map another time. You've been with me now from the beginning, and so in the time of Abraham, this Ur down here was there. But in the time of Abraham, that Ur would have been called Ur of Sumer.

The word Chaldee, or from which we get Chaldeans, the word Chaldean didn't even exist in the time of Abraham. If Abraham came from Ur down there in the far south, then the Hebrew text should have said Ur of Sumer. As a matter of fact, if we go to Genesis 10 and we read about the Tower of Babel, excuse me, this is chapter 11. The Tower of Babel was built in the plain, and the biblical text calls it Shinar.

It came to the plain of Shinar. Well, I mentioned to you that Shinar was sort of a Hebrew corruption of Sumer. So, what we're pointing out is something that I think is indisputable, and that indisputable thing is that Ur in the time of Abraham would have been called Ur of Sumer, or if it was going to be put in Hebrew terms, it would have been called Ur of Shinar. And so, as I get ready to move on to my next observation then, I want to return to say that this word Chaldees, which is actually called Chasdu, from Chasdu we get Chaldees.

This is a word that did not even exist in the time of Abraham. It's a word that described Aramean peoples who came to live in southern Mesopotamia after 1000 BC, and so it can't possibly have been Ur of the Chaldees. And the good news is, as we know that, is because the Hebrew text never said Chaldees.

It said Chasdu. So let me say it a last time, and then I'll move on. The Hebrew text says Chasdu.

If it's the Ur in the south, it should have said Sumer, or the Hebrew equivalent of Sumer, which is Shinar. So, the text says Ur of the Chaldees, and what that does is it takes us back together right now, and sort of like almost in a little fit of humor here, okay, so where is Chasde? Okay, that's where we're at. I'm glad that you stuck with me through that, and if you didn't, God will judge you.

All right, so here we go. Abraham would not have had the faintest idea of an Ur in the south called Chasdu. So we know Abraham would have known that southern Ur as Ur of Sumer.

So that leads us to embrace the question, okay, what on earth then is Chaldu, since that's where the Hebrew text says he came from? Well, let me flip to this paragraph here. A better suggestion is that Chaldu is a Hebraism for Proto-Arameans. Since the time of the later books in the Old Testament, the Chaldeans in the south became more famous than the older Aramean groups in the north, Chaldean came to stand for any Aramaic-speaking group.

On the other hand, there are some arguments showing that Chaldu is actually in the north. Okay, so what I'm going to propose is that the mysterious term Chaldu is actually a designation for Arameans who live in the north as opposed to Chaldeans who live in the south. All right? If you aren't utterly confused, it's nothing short of a miracle.

Let me divide Mesopotamia into two parts. After 1000 BC, there is an influx of Aramaic peoples, brand new Aramaic-speaking peoples into this region. They became famous because they settled largely in the south and they were called Chaldu or Chaldeans.

In the north, there were Arameans who settled. They weren't nearly as famous, but I'm going to try to connect these Arameans in the north with the word Chaldû, which is where the Hebrew text says. So, here are some important points on the way to journey that allows us to conclude that Abraham came from an Ur, a village actually in the north that was called Chaldû because of the northern Arameans who were dwelling there in his time.

So, the argument from personal names. This is a little confusing. If you don't get it, don't worry about it.

I think there are other things that are more important, but Abraham has three relatives. One named Serug, another named Nahor, and a third one named Terah. All three of these relatives have names that are identical to the names of cities in the north.

Serug is the same name as a city which is located in that region called Paddan Aram. Nahor is the same name as a city in upper Mesopotamia on or near the Kabur River. Terah is the same name as a city in the north as well.

So, if you don't get it, here's another quick look at the map. Up here in this region of Paddan Aram, we have three cities that are identical to the names of Abraham's relatives. This is important.

In Abraham's time, that is 2100 BC, he came from Ur of the Chasdu, and what we have is in this region here three relatives whose names are the same as cities. Now, that doesn't mean that his relatives are the same as the city. It means that they share the same name.

So, with that in mind, we're telling you that Abraham's relatives have names that are the same as cities in the region in the north, creating a certain suggestion that it's in the north that Abraham came from, not in the south. Let's leave this and go to the arguments from geography. So, here is the map that I can show you.

Here is the famous Aram-Naharaim, the Aram of the two rivers. So, on this map, this is the region. This map could be used.

What I'm going to do is go back to this map and use it to show you that once again, if Abraham was going to go from Ur down here over to here, then the question that comes, why on earth would he go all the way up here to Haran? If Abraham was traveling with hundreds of people, which he absolutely was, we know when we get to Genesis that Abraham had so many servants that he had his own private military force, and they actually defeated an army up here from this northern region. How could he possibly have crossed these rivers at least three times with hundreds of

people and hundreds and hundreds of animals? It makes virtually no sense. Indeed, one wonders how he could have even done it because, at the very least, he would have had to have crossed the Euphrates River here, crossed the river Balak here to get to Haran.

Then, having gotten to Haran when his father died, he would then have had to cross the Balak again. Then he would have had to have crossed the river Euphrates again. By going to Haran, which is what the text says he did, as well as by waiting for his father to die, Abraham would have had to have crossed the river four times with hundreds of people in his retinue, as well as an even larger number of animals.

It seems almost impossible to explain why he would have gone to Haran. Well, not just my proposal, but the proposal of others as well, that that's because Ur of Chasdu is not the great city of Ur to the south, but is a smaller city up here in this region to the east of Haran. So Abraham went to Haran because it was the place where, when you were going from east to west, it was the place where you cross the river.

In other words, the cuneiform sign for the city of Haran looks like this because it was a crossing point, and everybody who was going from east to west or west to east would have crossed the river at Haran because they had barges there. People would pull the barges across. Abraham went to Haran because it was a place where he could have put his large number of family members as well as animals onto the barges to get them across the river.

In other words, Haran was right on the way. To me, this is a very powerful argument explaining that Abraham came not from the south but in the north. There are other arguments as well that I could mention.

Maybe I can get through this in the next few minutes, maybe not. We have some evidence, and they're relatively meager right here, suggesting that the area of Chasdu is in the north. Now, the evidence is anything but conclusive, but it does seem to suggest that Chasdu is in the north, not in the south.

But we have other arguments that I think are much more conclusive. So let me point us to some important passages in the Bible, specifically Genesis chapter 24 and chapter 28, if I remember correctly. In Genesis chapter 24, Abraham is very old, and so he sends his servant to get wives for Isaac.

And notice with me in chapter 24, verse 10, the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and he set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hands, and he arose, and please notice with care, the Bible translation I use is the New American Standard, and it translates it Mesopotamia. As far as I know, that's what the English translations tend to do. It is not Mesopotamia, it is Aram-Naharaim, and we know precisely where Aram-Naharaim is.

Go back with me to the map. Do you see on the map Aram-Naharaim? That is exactly where Mesopotamia was. Mesopotamia is not Mesopotamia.

It is Aram-Naharaim, and there it is on the map, and there just can't be any dispute about this as far as I'm concerned. He went to Aram-Naharaim, and notice in verse 10, he went to the city of Nahor. Well, we not only know exactly where Aram-Naharaim was at, but we also know that there was a city there named Nahor.

So, it seems to me indisputably that Abraham sent his servant right here, which is exactly where I'm proposing that Abraham went, and so it seems to me that the text is crystal clear that when Abraham sent to get a wife for his sons, he went exactly to the region that he himself came from. So, hang on with me because we're almost ready to be done with this. We'll go to Genesis 28.

Now, it's not Abraham getting a wife for Isaac, but it's Isaac getting Jacob a wife. And so, in chapter 28, Isaac says to Jacob, you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. But in verse 2, he says, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethel, your mother's father.

And he says, from there, take a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. And so, the point that I'm making for you in chapter 28 of Genesis is that Paddan Aram, no one disputes that Paddan Aram is the area between the rivers in the north. So, in chapter 24, he goes to Aram-Naharaim.

Nobody argues that's in the north. In chapter 28, he goes to Paddan Aram. No one argues that it's in the north.

When we go back to Genesis 11 and read about Abraham leaving, the text reminds us that wherever he came from, the land of his birth was in the north. It leads me to conclude, therefore, that as I try as hard as I might, it's hard for me not to make the point that Abraham came from an Ur in the north, which is exactly where the Arameans first appear. Now, I actually have a little bit of news as well for you.

And that news is that when Abraham does finally appear here in the north, now the Ebla archives have told us that there is a city, it's a village probably, it's a village that exists up here in this northern region so that what we have now is archaeological evidence of an Ur that is actually mentioned in the north. It may or may not be the same Ur that Abraham came from. But it looks to me like we have evidence to suggest that Abraham came from the north, and that is very convenient for us as Biblicalists because when Arameans do appear, they appear in the north.

And that we have all these place names of Aram in the north, so that what I would draw as a conclusion for you on this video, this particular video is, I think the

evidence is very strong that Abraham was of Aramean extract. Maybe they didn't call them Arameans back then. Maybe they called them Akhlamites. But that Abraham came from Aramean extract, that Abraham came from a northern Ur, and that the homeland of the patriarchs is in northern Mesopotamia, which is exactly why Genesis has them associated with the Arameans.

I believe that is their ethnic origin, even if in the time of Abraham, the word Aramean wasn't used for them. They are Aramaic-like. I would say that Genesis has an impressive amount of evidence showing that the forefathers of the Hebrews came from Aramean extract, and thus, I would suggest the homeland of the patriarchs is in northern Mesopotamia, as is the Ur in northern Mesopotamia. Even in Joshua 24:2-3, he says that their homeland was Aram-Naharaim, and no one disputes that Aram-Naharaim is Aram in the north.

So, with that, I can close this discussion, and we can prepare ourselves for the coming lecture or the coming discussion, which is the greatest movement of people, perhaps, in the history of the world, the Sea Peoples' Movement. So, with that, we can end this lecture and prepare ourselves for the next one on the Sea Peoples' Movement. Thank you for your attention.

This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament Backgrounds. This is session 13, People Groups, Habiru, and Arameans.