

# Dr. Donald Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Lecture 14, Sea Peoples

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This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament backgrounds. This is session 14, Sea Peoples.

Well, we're ready to start a new tape, and as we did so, I wanted to introduce the new one by telling you that, first of all, I have a lot more, a lot better visual aids than what I can show you.

We had a little bit of a problem with my computer in which the technicians erased a fair number of things that were important for my teaching that I can't show you. And so, I didn't show you this from the earlier day because I just now found it, but I thought I would show you the foodstuffs before we begin the Sea Peoples movement. These are a picture of the items that were such an important part of their world and barley was really king because it was so hardy, but also, they grew wheat.

You can see the grapes. To the left, we have an occasional food source, pomegranate. Subsequently, we have food sources that are utterly major for their diet: figs, dates, and olives.

Of course, they did eat a wide variety of vegetables, but those are purely seasonal, and they can, for the most part, store them. Down here in the right corner, you'll see where it talks about sycamore figs. Sycamore figs were not really eaten by human beings except in dire circumstances. They were used as animal food, and so this was at least a little bit of a picture of the diet that was available to them.

And so, with that, I'm ready to begin a very important subject area in which almost all of my visuals have been lost, at least for the present, and I'm disappointed about not being able to show you more meaningful things. It's a bold statement. No other event except the Exodus had such repercussions for the Israelite monarchy as the Sea Peoples Movement.

Well, I could make the statement even bolder and say that there were hardly any events in human history of this part of the world that were more important than what's called the Sea Peoples Movement. It's not a term, Sea Peoples Movement, that's used in the Bible. We get it, of all things, I think, from the Egyptians.

And so, this Sea Peoples Movement was of truly protean significance to the world of the Bible. To this day, there is genuine confusion over how to explain the greatest transfer of peoples in the history of the world. And I think what I could say to you is

that after being a student of the Bible now for 50 years, archaeology has shown greater and greater light on our world so that, you know, we have a good chance of making better sense of things than we did 50 years ago.

Ironically and interestingly, in the Sea Peoples Movement, we don't seem to have gotten very far in explaining precisely how this worked. So, what I will tell you is in flux. That is to say, people today are saying contradictory things. I just read some on this not too long ago.

So, the event itself, I mentioned, is that it is a challenge to explain precisely the reasons for this monumental transfer of people. It would not be an exaggeration to say that much of the entire eastern Mediterranean—and I probably should alter that statement in light of what I've been reading—was in transit, not just the eastern but apparently as far west as the central Mediterranean basin. So here's the scenario.

For about a century, we have people, uncounted numbers of people, who have moved from their ancestral homelands to other places in the Mediterranean world, and naturally, we would like to know why they were doing that. Where did they come from? Where were they going? What was the effect of that movement? There are a lot more questions than there are clear answers. In point of fact, the migrations that are called the Sea Peoples Movement lasted about a century, give or take a decade or two, from about 1250 to 1150. What we have happening is there was a collapse of the old power centers of Mycenae, Minoa, and the Anatolian vassal states that seemed to set in motion virtually the collapse of the entire ancient world.

So, I will attempt to show you a new world map in which I can point out to you these locations. Mycenae was a great civilization that ruled much of what we call Greece, and has some connection, it's not crystal clear, but it has some connection to the Great Trojan War. And prior to the Sea Peoples Movement, the Mycenaean seemed to control an important part of the trade in the eastern half of the Mediterranean.

The Minoans ruled on Crete and had an important civilization that was involved in trade in the eastern Mediterranean. This, too, was an area where the political entity collapsed. Then there were the Anatolian vassal states on the western coast of what we call Turkey.

So, what we are suggesting is that a good deal of the ancient world's power structures collapsed, and that led to the rearranging of the entire map of the ancient world. I'm not sure I know how to say it any other than that this is the greatest event in ancient history that I know of. And so, if it's a difficult, if not impossible thing to explain what it was, it's even harder to explain why it happened and so on and so forth.

Many of the mysteries for solving the identities of the various participants are locked in the history of Anatolia. And you might remember, I've been using this word and I never explained it to you. Anatolia is a name for this region that we call Turkey.

It comes not from the inhabitants of that region who you might remember were either Hatians or Hittites. It comes from the Greeks. And what it means is sunrise.

And so, to the Greeks, the area to the east of Greece was the land of the sunrise. And so that's where the term comes from, Anatolia. So, Anatolia is not the name of a nation.

It's not really the name of a region. It's a name for the area to the east of Greece from which the sun arose. But it's the name we tend now to use because the political entities continue to change in what we call Anatolia.

So great pressure on the already weakened Hittite Empire from the Assyrians to the south and the Kashkha to the north appear to have greatly weakened the great imperial Hittite Empire. With the weakening of the central authority, the vassal states appear to have collapsed under pressure from internal and external forces. So, one of the... Well, what we can say is when the Sea People's Movement was finished, all of the great powers were either gone as a result of this or else they were soon to be gone.

And even Egypt, even though it survived the immediate impact of it, Egypt was never the same after the Sea People's Movement. So, this altered the map like no other event I know of in human history. So, the Hittite Empire was not destroyed.

I think what we'd want to say is that that modern area we call Turkey imploded; it collapsed in on itself. In order to be powerful, the Hittites needed to control those western vassal states along the Aegean Sea. And when they lost those, then gradually, within a relatively short period of time, I guess I should say, then the power of the Hittite kingdom just internally folded.

When that empire fell, roughly concurrently with that was the collapse of the Mycenaean kingdom, the great political entity of the island of Crete or the Minoans, as we say. And so when the smoke settles, all of the great powers are gone except Egypt, which is, of course, limited.

From Egyptian sources, we know the names of some of the tribes or peoples who were in this fabulous movement of peoples. So, if we are at the years 1250 to 1150, then you might remember in your chronology that we would be right in the middle of the Book of Judges. This is before the monarchy, right in the middle of Judges.

So, one of the elements involved in this was the Shardana. This may have had its home in extreme north Syria. Apparently dislodged, they went by sea to Cyprus.

Certain elements appear in the Ramses III inscriptions, but most appear to have gone west. Now, to show you where on earth we're at in our confusion, we aren't sure in the Sea Peoples' Movement, so there would be Sardinia; we aren't sure in the Sea Peoples' Movement if the Shardana came from this region here or went back to that region. The Egyptians tell us that they were part of the Sea Peoples' Movement, but we think there is a connection between Sardinia and Shardana.

But whether they came from Sardinia or whether they went back, that's just how impoverished our information is. A second tribe mentioned in the Sea Peoples' Movement is the Shekelesh. Their original homeland is unknown, although they appear to have been connected with the Sycals of Sicily.

While represented in the Ramses inscriptions, they are best connected with the early Libyan invasion during the time period of Merneptah. So, we had two great waves of the Sea Peoples' Movement. The earlier one was about 1220, and the other one is about 1190.

But what we do know is, as we look at our map, is that they are associated with what we call the island of Sicily. Now, in English, I can remind you that C, the alphabetic letter C, can be pronounced like S or like a K, as in cat. What we know about language in antiquity is that the C sound was always a K. So, whereas we're used to saying Sicily, it was actually Sicily.

This tribe or tribes that came from this region, they either came from this region and moved to the east, or else, having come from somewhere else, they moved from their eastern exploits and returned or turned to the island of Sicily. So, as you can see, you can spot the word Sicily in the word Shekelesh. The Teresh or Tursha apparently came from western Anatolia.

They are mentioned in Ramses III's inscription but are not a major force. They may be connected to the Etruscans in Upper Italy. Here's what we know about the Tersha.

In Upper Italy, before there was a Roman Empire, there was an important political entity called Etrusca or Tersha. So, the question that we ask is, when this group of people was attacking to the east, did they come from Tersha or did they go to Tersha? Well, those are not things that the evidence is clear enough to answer right now. The Luka, probably from western Anatolia, they were used as mercenaries and had a reputation as fierce pirates.

They are to be identified with the Lukia in southwestern Anatolia. They do not appear after Merneptah's reign. So, the Luka, this is off of the screen over here on

the right, but they either came from southwestern Anatolia or they returned there or both.

Very difficult for us to say with our information. The last of the tribes that are mentioned in this early inscription is the Ekwesh. The question arises whether they are to be connected with the Achaioi of the Hittite text or with the Achaeans in Greece proper.

In other words, when we look at the word Ekwesh, it doesn't look at all like it's related to Achaean down here, but etymologically it's possible that Ekwesh and Achaia are the same word. And if they are the same word and the same people, then the Ekwesh would have come here from what we call Greece, and what we call Achaia. Achaia is another way of saying Aegean.

You see, in the modern day polyvariant pronunciation of some of these alphabetic sounds, the G in the English alphabet can either be J, which is, you know, dental, or it can be G, which is guttural. In antiquity, the G was apparently guttural. And so Ekwesh and Achaia are the same thing, or could be the same thing.

So, what we have are some interesting possibilities about political identities, and yet we can't even say for sure. So, these tribes that I have listed for you are tribes who are mentioned in the annals of the Egyptian king Merneptah, who defeated the Sea People's Movement, or at least he says he defeated them. Kings in antiquity, if you read them carefully, I don't know of a single case in all of ancient history where a king ever lost a battle or a war.

No matter, even if they were killed, they won the battle. So, I've obviously got my tongue stuck in the side of my cheek. He claims he defeated them.

The Egyptians lied notoriously, so he may or may not. But this list is in 1220. Decades later, in the time period of Ramses III, we have another group of people, and they are told, he mentions the Danuna.

The homeland of the Danuna is unknown. Perhaps they came from North Syria. Some have sought to connect them with the Danites of biblical fame, although this is extremely unlikely.

And we would just probably have to say that even though Ramses III mentions the Danuna, we don't know who they were, where they came from, or where they went. In short, we know nothing about them. The Jecker, perhaps, came from the Troad by the way of Cyprus.

They settled in Palestine at Dor after defeating the gates of Egypt. So, I can at least show this one to you. So, Dor, the Troad, is this area right here.

The famous, partly historical, partly mythology, the famous war over Helen of Troy. Well, Troy is so named because of the Troad, and it's this area up here in northwest Anatolia. And so we think that this is where the Jecker came from.

What we do know is that they were settled here in Palestine, right along the coast. When Ramses III defeated them, he settled them right along the coast of Palestine, close to this area of Gaza and Joppa. The Weshesh, another group that he talks about, is a group about whom we just know nothing.

I guess I might be revealing perhaps in some Freudian fashion my frustration. I said totally unknown. Well, if it's unknown, it's unknown.

You don't hardly have to call it totally, but we know nothing about the Weshesh. Now the Palisades, they are perhaps the most interesting because they appear to have given their name to Palestine. Everybody in the audience, I'm guessing, has heard of Palestine.

Well, if you look carefully at the consonants, the consonants for Palestine are the same as the consonants in the word Palisade. So one of the tribes in the Sea People's Movement during the time period of Ramses, which was several decades after Merneptah, one of the tribal groups was the Palisade, and they are the people who ended up giving their name to this land that's called Palestine. We know them from the Bible as Philistine.

Philistine is what happened when the Hebrews got done with Palisade. So they have given their name to the land of Canaan. The Bible gives their homeland as Caphtor, which is Crete, but this need only mean that Caphtor was a stopping off place before the continued move southward.

So we have a very famous group of people. We don't know for sure where they came. Well, we know this much.

We know beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Philistines were Aegean. That is to say, they came from the Mediterranean Sea lands, but we don't know which one. But we also know this about them.

When the Philistines were defeated, they along with the Tjeker were settled here in Israel in multiple places I can show you. When they were settled here, the Egyptians defeated them and settled them here along the coast like this. So, they were stretched out along the coast.

We know the Egyptians also settled them up here at Beit She'an in the confluence of the Jordan and the Galilee valleys. And then they were also settled over here in Amman in Jordan. So the Bible just has one word for them.

It calls them Philistines. But in actuality, Philistines stands for multiple tribes in the Sea Peoples Movement. Well, as you can tell, this is sort of chaotic.

If you were ever on the Liberty campus where I teach here, every summer, it's like the Sea Peoples Movement. Bodies are going everywhere, buildings are being torn down, buildings are being refurbished, offices are being moved, and people are wandering around wondering where they're at and not knowing where they're going. Well, that's kind of a picture of the Sea Peoples Movement.

Chaos, and we're not even sure what on earth has caused this. Something set off the movement of these people. Something unprecedented, actually.

And even though we may never know positively the identity of the causes, we can probably come up with a few explanations that are more than just wild guesses. Now, when you don't know what causes things, you do guess. And so, one of the explanations for why we have this incredible movement of peoples, people from the Mediterranean basin, has been guessed at, and so I call this the catastrophic view.

In other words, this argues that some sort of catastrophe occurred that set off the movement of people. Those who hold this theory have attempted to relate, related in some way, to the mysterious disappearance of Atlantis. Well, in fact, we don't know if Atlantis ever even existed.

But this argument holds that some gigantic natural catastrophe occurred that upset the human equilibrium. And everyone was in transit. Maybe it was a gigantic earthquake.

You know what earthquakes can do? They create tsunamis. Tsunamis can destroy port cities. Well, if all of the port cities at this time period were destroyed by a gigantic tidal wave, well, who knows? The problem with this view is that it could look attractive if we had any kind of consistent evidence of what the catastrophe was.

There is neither archaeological nor geological evidence of such a catastrophe. So, while it remains a possibility, we have to confess we don't have any evidence for it. Another view is what is called the migratory view.

This idea is that a new movement of people upset the balance of power. The idea given in Georges Roux's Penguin book on ancient Iraq reads like this. It was probably the arrival in the Balkans of the prolific and pugnacious tribes, the Illyrians, which thrust out the Tracho-phrygians in Anatolia, where they overthrew the Hittite

kingdom and then drove the Dorians, Aeolians, and Ionians into the Hellenic Peninsula, the Aegean Islands, and the western districts of Asia Minor, where they destroyed the Mycenaean or Aegean Empire, the Trojan War.

Well, if you've got that, you should be teaching the class rather than me. Here's what he was proposing. Up here in the Balkan regions, one group of people moved from somewhere.

Oftentimes, these movements seem to have come from the Russian steppe. Some people moved into the Balkans. When they did, that moved people south here.

The people who moved south here moved people out to the east. The people who were in the east moved people out to the west and to the south. It's kind of like watching a ping-pong match, back and forth, up and down, lots of spin, lots of confusion.

What's the score? I can't remember. The problem with the migratory view is not that there weren't migrations, but that the migrations were so numerous and so haphazard and so multi-directional that we can't recreate it in any coherent fashion from archaeology. It wouldn't surprise me that migration played a part, but we wouldn't leave this without saying this as a question mark.

Throughout the entire human history of Old Testament times, there have been migrations. Probably a century never went by that there wasn't some sort of semi-important or important migration somewhere along the Mediterranean basin or in the Middle East. Why did this migration result in the entire collapse of the political world of its age? If it is the migration that started all this, one of the question marks is, why did this migration have this effect when so many other migrations didn't have this effect? I think the best view is the third view, the climatic argument.

Now, by simply adding another consonant, we could have a pun with our first view. The first view was the catastrophic view. Well, if I wanted to try to be funny, I could have said the first view was the climactic view because some gigantic climax brought about the collapse.

But this view is not the climactic view. This is the climate view. Basically, this view argues that there was a tremendous drought in the ancient Near East.

Evidence of this is cited in the case of the Egyptian King Merneptah, who sent a huge grain shipment to the Hittites. Normally, the Hittites were not only self-sufficient in food, but they could ship it. We know that the ancient port city of Ugarit shipped some 2,000 measures of grain to Cilicia.



So, there's some modest epigraphical evidence of a food shortage. But the most important evidence for this comes from various other measurement factors. For example, very interesting studies are being done in sediment analysis that reveal to us that there was indeed a tremendous drought that gripped the region.

I've read now three or four different articles on this. They sink these tubes down into the bottom of the Sea of Galilee. They just sink them straight down as far as they can go.

And then they pull the tube up. And then that tube is a perfect repository of exactly how things settled and built up on the bottom. And so, then they can measure it with incredible scientific accuracy by looking at what is in the various sediment levels.

And then they can tell us important things about pollen and things in the air that can tell us if there was climate change. And what all of the studies are showing and have shown for some time now is that this analysis of sediment material at the bottom of things like the Sea of Galilee reveals that in the time period where we're at, there was a monumental drought. And that's not debatable.

There's plenty of evidence for this. It's mostly updated. I don't think I have any of it in my bibliography down here.

But it's well-known. Now, obviously, oh, and there's another area where we know there was a tremendous drought. There is a science, archaeology, today.

The idea of archaeology in Indiana Jones is so preposterous that it is truly laughable. Archaeologists today, many times, they're scientists. And so there is a very specialized form of archaeology called dendrochronology.

Dendrochronology is archaeology in which specialists analyze tree rings. They can tell by studying tree ring growth or lack of growth. They can study those and they can tell how things were by the width of the tree ring growth.

In other words, if there were hostile climate situations, the tree ring would register, but it would be very narrow. But if there was a good climate for the trees, then the tree ring would be there, but it would be wider. Well, these tree rings or bristlecone pines in the Hittite region have revealed to us identical information to what we learned from the sediment analysis.

There was a period of well over a century in which there was climate change. And there was a tremendous drought. That drought was seemingly clearly why there was a gradual weakening of the great powers until they just got so weak, so slowly, but so weak for sure, that they were unable to perpetuate themselves and just imploded.

Now, we're in an era right now where we want to say that climate change is human-induced. And I am certainly no scientist, trust me. And I have no idea about how to evaluate those kinds of claims.

But what we know from history, going back thousands of years, is that there are periodic periods of plenty of moisture and then periods of plenty of dryness. And we are in a period of drought. Just as we have today, there are archaeologists who have come up with hypothetical explanations for why there was this drought.

One of the common ones is that the human population brought about the burgeoning of the human population at this time brought about climate change. And there are two major theories, and probably both of them work hand in hand. One theory was that as the human population grew, then it deforested large regions of the territory.

And this large deforestation was the result of a drying out of the climate. Well, we know that deforestation was occurring. It was occurring in Israel, it was occurring in Lebanon, it was occurring in Anatolia.

We know that that was occurring. As the population bases exploded and human prosperity increased, of course people have to have wood. We heat with it, we cook with it, we use it for light.

Deforestation was a fact. Whether it led to the climate change, we can't say. We know that there was another catastrophe.

For millennia, people herded as their primary animal. They herded sheep. But what we know now is that right where we're at, the goat has taken on more and more popularity for multiple reasons, not the least of which is that the goat is much harder than sheep and much smarter. And so, it's been argued that the widespread employment of goats in place of sheep is at the core of this or one of the factors in this problem and that because you see what the goat does is it doesn't bite off the grass, it pulls it up, root and all.

And so what that does is it has a terrible effect on marginal ground because where the ground is marginal, it can be very difficult for plant life to take root. But when you uproot it, then you have killed the plant, you've killed the terrain. And so this too has been argued as a factor in why this incredible drought occurred.

What we can say is that there was a drought, and there is indisputable evidence of it. This drought is probably the result of climate change, but it explains one really interesting factor about the Sea Peoples Movement that I can show you on this map. A substantial amount of the movement of the peoples was down this land bridge heading toward Egypt or by flotillas of ships that were coming across the

Mediterranean, but it was the proverbial by land and by sea. That is to say, a substantial amount of the Sea Peoples Movement was heading for Egypt.

Now, you know, Egypt has a dry climate. They only get about two to four inches of rain a year, so you would wonder why they would be heading to a place like Egypt, where it's already hyper-arid. And the answer is that, in Egypt, it doesn't matter if it ever rains. The Egyptian economy and agricultural entity do not depend upon rain; they depend upon flood water.

So, Egypt was impervious to the drought. It did not matter whether it rained in Egypt and there was plenty of food in Egypt, and this provides a plausible explanation for why the Sea Peoples were making their way southward by land and also by sea to go to Egypt because the Egyptians had food. So, we have a plausible explanation for why they were heading to Egypt.

Egypt is not prone to drought. Let me just call that backup. When I say Egypt is not prone to drought, let me say this.

As I said, the Egyptians don't depend on rain, but the Egyptians can have crop failure. Crop failure isn't crop failure exactly like they have in Mesopotamia or in Syro-Palestine, but they can have crop failure if the Nile doesn't flood properly. They can have crop failure if there is disease or if there is animal infestation, but they don't have crop failure because of drought because they don't depend on rain.

So, while conclusive answers to the finer details will never be known, it appears that whatever the original disruption, the movement fed upon itself, gradually dislodging greater numbers of people. As the order of central authority diminished, anarchy became the order of the day. There was a dramatic increase in pirating and general lawlessness.

So, this led to some phenomenal changes that I think, from a biblical perspective, are amazing. Here's where if you have gotten sleepy with all of this esoteric ancient Near Eastern Mediterranean stuff, we can invite you to come on board because this is very interesting. The results of the Sea Peoples Movement.

There are two major important results of this movement. First, it either destroyed or permanently weakened all of the superpowers of the world. If you looked at a map that had the names on places, if you looked at a map that had the names on the places before the Sea Peoples Movement, and then you would look at the map after the Sea Peoples Movement, almost, well, the vast majority of places have name changes.

The old kingdoms are gone, and new kingdoms appear. Old cities were destroyed, new cities appear. So, this had the incredible effect of changing the map unlike anything else in the history of ancient times.

Secondly, because it changed the map, it changed Israel's future status. You see, prior to the Sea Peoples Movement, Israel was surrounded by a very powerful entity of powerful nations. Egypt to the south, the Hittites to the north.

But now, those powers are either completely gone or are greatly weakened. And so, what that meant is, after 1150, Israel is not surrounded by superpowers. Now, that's significant, and here's the reason why.

In 1150, we're moving toward the end of the Book of Judges. You might remember that in Judges, things are a catastrophic mess. So, if the Sea Peoples Movement came to an end in 1150, the first king of Israel was Saul, who was king in 1050.

David is king in 1010. Solomon became king in 970. We enter into the period called the United Monarchy.

This is Israel's golden period. This is the only time in the history of the world, until modern times, that this tiny area that we call Israel can be politically powerful. And so, as a result of what has happened, not being surrounded by superpowers means that David and Solomon can have an empire.

David and Solomon can have kingdoms that reach beyond the hundred miles of Israel, and they can bring surrounding kingdoms under their control. It's a time period in which God can sort of fulfill his promises made to Abraham, David and Solomon. So, this became the time period of Israel's greatest prosperity, but it is simply a pause in the way things are.

Because when Solomon dies in 930, in just a matter of a few years, Assyria awakens. So, what we have here is a time period when Israel is in catastrophic condition, the period of the judges. What we have here is a time period of prosperity, and what we have here is the end of the golden era.

With the rise of Assyria, then we are facing the end of Israel's successful political power. So, what I would suggest to us, as readers of our Bible, is God is giving Israel a unique window of opportunity. It is an opportunity in which you can see the hand of God's blessings and thank God and serve him faithfully, or it is a window when Israel can reject God, when it can become preoccupied with its own prosperity, and fail to see that indeed God has blessed them.

It is a unique window of time in all of history. Not until the rise of modern Israel, in all of human history, not until the rise of modern history, has Israel been able to be a powerful political entity. And that is only because of modern weaponry.

So here is the unique window of God's blessing, and I am sad to say that when you read the biblical text, the Israelites missed their moment in time. So, the Sea People's Movement was used by God, maybe God sent the drought, I have no idea. The Sea People's Movement was used by God to create a political environment where Israel could rise to its greatest height.

And what that means is when this window is closed, then Israel enters into a very long downhill slide from which it will not recover right up until the modern era. So, with that, I would like to draw your attention back to our class notes. The problem of the Philistines.

Okay? The problem of the Philistines. You might be asking, well, in what sense were they problems? Well, they were a real problem for the Israelites because they were better warriors and better militarists. But that's not the problem I'm making reference to.

The problem that we have with the Philistines is that they're mentioned in Genesis. As you can see from our notes, they're mentioned in Genesis 21 and 26, and then they're also mentioned in Deuteronomy 2. Now, here's what we know. The Philistines were not in Palestine; they were not in Israel until after about 1150.

So, who are the Philistines in Genesis? Who are the Philistines in Deuteronomy? The Philistines are a tribe, an Aegean tribe, probably a group of tribes, who came in the Sea Peoples' Movement. How is it that they can be mentioned as present in Genesis? If Abraham was 2100 BC, and the Sea Peoples' Movement was 1100 BC, how can we bridge a thousand years like that? So, there have been some rather weak attempts to try to explain this. I don't even know if anybody holds this position, or if I just made it up, I can't recall.

But my argument here, firstly, is that maybe the Philistines adopted the name of the land before they went into it. In other words, maybe Israel was called PLST, Peleset, or some other such name. Maybe it was called that before the Philistines, and they just adopted the name.

Well, that would be nice, if that was the case, that would solve our problem. But the fact of the matter is, while we have the area mentioned repeatedly, in text going back into the near third millennium, it's never ever called PLST. It would be an incredible coincidence if the Sea Peoples' Movement just happened to have the same name as Peleset, the so-called proposed name of the land before it became Israel.

I think this view is virtually impossible. Perhaps a better explanation is that the words Philistine in these several chapters in Genesis are an anachronism or a gloss. This is always a possible explanation, although it does run counter to the normal historiography of Genesis.

What we mean as an anachronism is this. You might remember that the biblical text, while every biblical book, or every biblical chapter, had an origin at some time, somewhere, by someone. You might be reminded that all biblical chapters, all biblical texts, had to be copied and re-copied and re-copied over the millennia.

What we know is, when scribes copied and re-copied the text, what we know is that sometimes they changed things. Sometimes they made errors. We know from 1 Samuel 13 that whoever was copying the text on that given day, he left out a number.

No question whatsoever a number dropped out of the original text. So what this view argues is that some scribe who was copying the biblical text added Philistine where Philistine wasn't originally at. So that's what we mean.

What it meant, what this view would mean is that something like this, that maybe originally it said Canaanite, I'm just being hypothetical, we wouldn't know what it, but then the scribe decided he wanted to change that, so the scribe X'd out Canaanite and wrote in Philistine. Well, this is possible. God inspired the original authors.

He didn't inspire the copyists. So, it's possible that the copyist may have changed the text. The problem is we have no way of proving that this happened.

None of the versions support this. All of the versions say Philistine. So, if this happened, we have no way of proving it.

Some people have tried to argue, in my third point, that they represent an early Aegean migration well before 1200 BC. In other words, what this view is arguing is that long before the Sea People's Movement, there were Aegeans who had emigrated from the Aegean area and were now dwelling in Palestine, that maybe they were merchants and traders. So, this view would argue that the Philistines in Genesis were early Aegeans, not to be confused with the Philistines who were involved in the Sea People's Movement.

This view also has serious problems. We're almost done with this tape. First, the tribes called Peleset are not even known in the Aegean.

They don't exist at this time period. So that's part of our problem. Second, the Philistines in Genesis are not in the right place for trade.

If we look at the map, the Philistines in Genesis are down in the desert. They're at Beersheba, which is the southernmost city in the country. It's right in the middle of the desert.

So that's an awfully strange place if they were there to trade. Third, and intriguingly, the king of the Philistines at Gerar and Beersheba, the king is named Abimelech, and Abimelech is a Hebrew name or a Semitic name. It means father of a king, or my father is king.

The Philistines in Genesis are peaceful. The Philistines later on, the Aegeans, are very warlike. So, this view is unlikely, especially because right now the earliest evidence that we have for Aegeans in the area we call Israel is 1370.

Long, far too late to solve our problem. So, if I were to say to you what you would want me to hear at this, in my conclusion, it would be that I just don't think we have a plausible explanation for the Philistines in Genesis, and we should probably just say we don't know. Unless it's an anachronism or a scribal gloss, I think it's probably best to say we don't know why we have Philistines in Genesis.

Maybe down the road, we'll get a better answer for that, but for now, that gives us a place to stop, and we'll pick back up at the break with post-Exodus Philistines since we can say something about them that is interesting. All right. Thank you for your attention.

We'll see you in the next tape.

This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament backgrounds. This is session 14, Sea Peoples.