

## Genesis Lesson 10: Genesis 11:27 – 13:18

### Lecture

- So, we will begin our study of the patriarch Abraham with a short lesson on genealogy.
  - In our lesson this week, we were introduced to Terah, Abram's father along with Abram's brothers Nahor and Haran (pronounced heron).
  - We also learn the names of Haran's children: Lot, Milcah and Iscah.
  - We learn that Abram's wife was Sarai and that Nahor's wife was Milcah.
  - From Genesis 20:11-12, we additionally learn that Sarai was Abram's half-sister. (Terah had another wife who was the mother of Sarai.)
  - And, using our chart we can figure out that Nahor's wife Milcah was his niece. The chart and the passage tell us that Lot was Abram's nephew.
  - We will come back to this chart when we study the patriarch Isaac, but we can see that his wife Rebekah was his 1<sup>st</sup> cousin 1 times removed (1C1R).
  - And a little “trivia” for the genealogists, this chart is a splendid example of endogamy.
    - Endogamy is the practice of individuals marrying within the same community or group over a prolonged period encompassing numerous generations.
    - This creates genetic isolation which makes it possible to use DNA to identify certain groups such as Ashkenazi Jews or Newfoundlanders.
- We can also pause here and talk about the meanings of the names Abram and Sarai in Hebrew:
  - Abram means “high father” or “exalted father.”
  - Sarai means “princess.”
- The next topic that we need to study from these Genesis passages is geography.
- Looking at the passages in Genesis 11 and 12, we see listed: Ur of the Chaldees, Canaan, and Haran. And we need to ask ourselves the following questions:
  - What was the Fertile Crescent (aka Cradle of Civilization)?
  - Where was Ur of the Chaldees/Chaldeans?
  - Where was Haran?
  - Where was Canaan?
  - How do you get from Ur to Canaan?

- The Fertile Crescent is the area from the Tigris and Euphrates River Valley northwest from the Persian Gulf and then southward along the Mediterranean coast, sometimes including the Nile Valley.
  - This area got its name from the fact that it was fertile due to the major rivers (Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile) and the Mediterranean coast that created good land for farming and livestock and was conducive to the development of collections of people (aka cities).
  - This was also the Fertile Crescent and Cradle of Civilization because it was the source of so many famous and prolific civilizations: Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, etc.
- Based on Biblical figures that we can tie to known historical events, we can place Abram's entrance into the land of Canaan anywhere between 2100 BC to 1875 BC (a 225-year span).
  - Why is this important? It is important when we try to pinpoint Ur of the Chaldees.
  - The ancient Sumerian site of Ur was located just Northwest of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
  - And this site, in the mind of many Bible scholars and Biblical map makers, is the Ur of the Chaldees referenced in these Genesis passages.
  - However, the Chaldeans occupied Southern Babylon 900 BC to 801 BC, well past the time of Abram. And the roots of the Chaldeans before they moved into Southern Mesopotamia are obscure but tend to be associated with Northern Mesopotamia.
  - So, was Sumerian Ur the Ur of the Chaldeans?
- There are other reasons to consider that Ur of the Chaldeans was in Northern Mesopotamia, according to the *Magazine of Biblical Archaeology*.
  - The route from the Sumerian Ur to Canaan would not likely lead to Haran which is 80 miles north of the known caravan routes from the Euphrates west into Syria and then Canaan.
  - The distance from Sumerian Ur to Haran is 700 miles. From Haran to Canaan was another 500 miles.

- There are ancient archives from Ebla, Alalakh, Ugarit, and Hattusa which reference cities in Northern Mesopotamia with names which can be equated to Ur.
- And some of these are in the vicinity of Haran.
- Referring to the passage from Genesis 24:3-4 where Abraham sends his servant to get a wife for Isaac, we see that the servant set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. Abraham called this “my country and my own relatives.”
- Aram Naharaim ( âr' əm nā' ə rā' əm) means Aram of the two rivers and Nahor was in Northern Mesopotamia in the area of Haran.
- So, if Abraham referred to this as my country, it might make sense for Ur to be nearer to Haran than the Persian Gulf.
- Regardless, there is not enough data to confirm an exact location for Ur of the Chaldees currently. We will consider the question open and unresolved until further information comes to life.
- Where was Biblical Canaan?
  - It is the land that is the Eastern Mediterranean area which is currently Lebanon, southern Syria, western Jordan, and Israel.
- Let’s conclude our introduction to Abraham with a look at the call of Abram.
  - Why did Terah take his son Abram, Abram’s wife and his grandson Lot and set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan when it was Abram who got the call?
  - For an understanding of this, let’s look at 4 verses:
    - Genesis 12:1: “The Lord had said to Abram “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.””
    - Genesis 15:7: “He also said to him, ‘I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this and to take possession of it.’”
    - Nehemiah 9:7: “You are the Lord God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham.”

- Acts 7:2-4: from the speech of Stephen to the Sanhedrin “To this he replied: ‘Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’ ‘So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.’”
- These passages help clarify that it was Abram who got the call to leave.
- Remember that this was a patriarchal society and Terah was head of the family. So, it was the head of the family who led the others to Canaan.
- The next question we need to ask ourselves is “why was Abram chosen by God?”
  - Genesis 11 and 12 give us no discernable reason.
  - We can possibly discern an answer by looking at Hebrews 11:8-9a and 11: “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; ...By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.”
  - Genesis 26:5 adds “because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”
  - Lastly, Genesis 18:19, where the Lord says “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”
  - God saw in Abram a man of great faith and great obedience and it would take both to do what God asked:
    - To follow God faithfully
    - To ensure that his family and his household will follow the Lord faithfully
    - For all to do what is right and just
  - If we look back at the previous chapters in Genesis to Noah and the Flood and the Tower of Babel, we see that the knowledge of God had been lost and the concept of God had been distorted.

- Abram and his family were chosen as a way for God to reveal himself again to the world through the covenant he made with Abram.
- And what, exactly, was God asking Abram to do?
  - Leave your country.
  - Leave your people.
  - Leave your father's household.
  - Go to the land I will show you.
- Abram and his relatives were well settled in Ur of the Chaldees. God was asking Abram to abandon his land in favor of the land God offers.
- God was asking Abram to abandon the family he has for the family God offers, which will become "a great nation". This was not insignificant considering Sarai's infertility.

- Abram was being asked to set aside his inheritance from Terah, his position in the family line and any blessings that would have been passed down the family line to him.
  - Abram is listed as the first son of Terah. If this genealogy correctly lists the sons in order, then he would become the head of the family upon the death of Terah.
- Abram was being asked to leave the fertile land of Ur of the Chaldees (whether at the intersection of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers or Aram-Naharaim which was a fertile land with grassy steppes, bounded by the Balikh and Habor rivers and having high winter rains) for a land he had never seen.
- Abram was being asked to set aside Terah's gods, in favor of a God he did not know. In the ancient world, many deities were associated with the land or people groups. The gods portrayed were local, territorial deities or patron deities.
  - Joshua 24:2 tells us "Joshua said to all the people, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshiped other gods.''"
- What was God offering to do for Abram?
  - Make a covenant with Abram.
    - A covenant formally binds 2 or more entities together into a relationship based on certain conditions.
    - But here, God's commitment to Abram has NO conditions.
  - Make you into a great nation. This had to be attractive given the size of Terah's clan and Sarai's infertility.

- Bless Abram.
  - In the culture of Mesopotamia, there were gods, goddesses, and demons.
  - People worshipped them to keep them happy because when the gods were angered, the people were punished.
  - If something bad happened, such as a natural disaster, then the correlating god was angry.
  - A blessing from God is an offering of God's favor and a sign of being under his protection and care. This would have been attractive to Abram.
- Make Abram's name great. This had to be attractive to a man who was one of 3 sons, had a barren wife, and was leaving his family and homeland where he was known for the unknown.
- Make Abram a blessing. God will bless those who bless Abram and curse those who cursed Abram. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through Abram.
  - God's blessings (favor, protection, and care) will extend to those who show favor to Abram.
  - This favor, protection and care will be removed from those who do not.
  - God's original blessing to all mankind at creation (Genesis 1:28 "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'") will be restored through Abram and his offspring.

**You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham.<sup>8</sup> You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Gergashites. Nehemiah 9:7-8**

1. Read Genesis 11:27-32.

- a. Describe Terah's family.
  - Terah had 3 sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
  - Haran had a son named Lot and a daughter named Milkah. Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans.
  - Abram married Sarai. Nahor married Milkah.
- b. What do you learn about Sarai?  
Sarai was not able to conceive.
- c. Where did the family originally live?  
Ur of the Chaldeans
- d. Where did they plan to go to and where did they settle?  
They planned to go to Canaan but settled in Harran.
- e. Where did Terah die?  
Terah died in Harran at age 205.

2. Read Genesis 12:1-9.

- a. What command did God give to Abram?  
The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. Genesis 12:1

b. What promises did God make to Abram?

“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Genesis 12:2-3

c. Who accompanied Abram on his journey?

Lot and Sarai

d. What happened at Shechem?

Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.<sup>7</sup> The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. Genesis 12:6-7

e. What happened near Bethel?

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. Genesis 12:8

f. What does the expression “called on the name of the Lord” mean?

It means worship the Lord.

g. Where did Abram go next?

Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev Genesis 12:9

h. Why do you think Abram did not stay at Shechem or Bethel?

He feared conflict with the Canaanites, who were well entrenched in Canaan and much more powerful than Abram and his group.

i. How would you describe Abram’s relationship with God?

Abram trusted the Lord to fulfill his promises.

3. Read Genesis 12:10-20.

a. Why did Abram go to Egypt?

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. Genesis 12:10

b. What plan did Abram have to protect himself in Egypt?

As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are.<sup>12</sup> When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live.<sup>13</sup> Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.” Genesis 12:11-13

c. Do you think Abram trusted God to protect him?

No, Abram’s trust in God did not extend to God’s protection.

d. What do you think Sarai felt at this point?

Sarai must have felt displeasure about being forced to lie about her relationship to Abram just to spare Abram’s life.

e. What happened to Abram and Sarai when they met the Pharaoh’s officials?

When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman.<sup>15</sup> And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace.<sup>16</sup> He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. Genesis 12:14-16

f. What did God do to protect Abram and Sarai? Why did God do this?

- But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai.<sup>18</sup> So Pharaoh summoned Abram. Genesis 12:17-18
- God did not want Sarai to conceive a child by Pharaoh. God had another plan for a child of Abram and Sarai.

g. How did Pharaoh react?

“What have you done to me?” he said. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife?<sup>19</sup> Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!” Genesis 12:18-19

h. How did Abram’s wealth increase in Egypt?

- Abram acquired sheep, cattle, donkeys, servants, and camels. He became very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

4. Read Genesis 13:1-18.

a. Where did Abram and his family go after leaving Egypt?

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.<sup>2</sup> Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.<sup>3</sup> From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier<sup>4</sup> and where he had first built an altar. Genesis 13:1-4

b. When they reached Bethel, what did Abram do?

There Abram called on the name of the LORD. Genesis 13:4

c. Why?

- Previously, Abram had built an altar at Bethel.
- Abram realized that God had been protecting them and prospering him in Egypt.
- Abram was offering praise and thanksgiving to God.

d. What possessions had Lot acquired?

<sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. Genesis 13:5

e. What problems erupted between Abram and Lot?

But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.<sup>7</sup> And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. Genesis 13:6-7

f. What solution did Abram propose?

So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives.<sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." Genesis 13:8-9

g. Where did Lot settle? Why do you think he picked this area?

- Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: <sup>12</sup> Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.   
 Genesis 13:10-12
- The plain Lot chose appeared to have more water and also had cities. He would have a better place for grazing his herds and could live in a city if he chose.

h. Where did Abram settle?

Abram settled in Canaan.

i. How did Lot's choice put him and his family at risk?

Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. Genesis 13:13

j. What did the Lord say to Abram about his choice of land?

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. <sup>15</sup> All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. <sup>17</sup> Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” Genesis 13:14-17

k. What might have Abram been thinking about the Lord's statements?

- The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.   
 Genesis 13:7
- What would the people of Canaan think about God giving this land to Abram and his offspring forever?
- How am I, Abram, going to have unlimited offspring when Sarai is childless?

l. Where did Abram choose to live next?

So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. Genesis 13:18

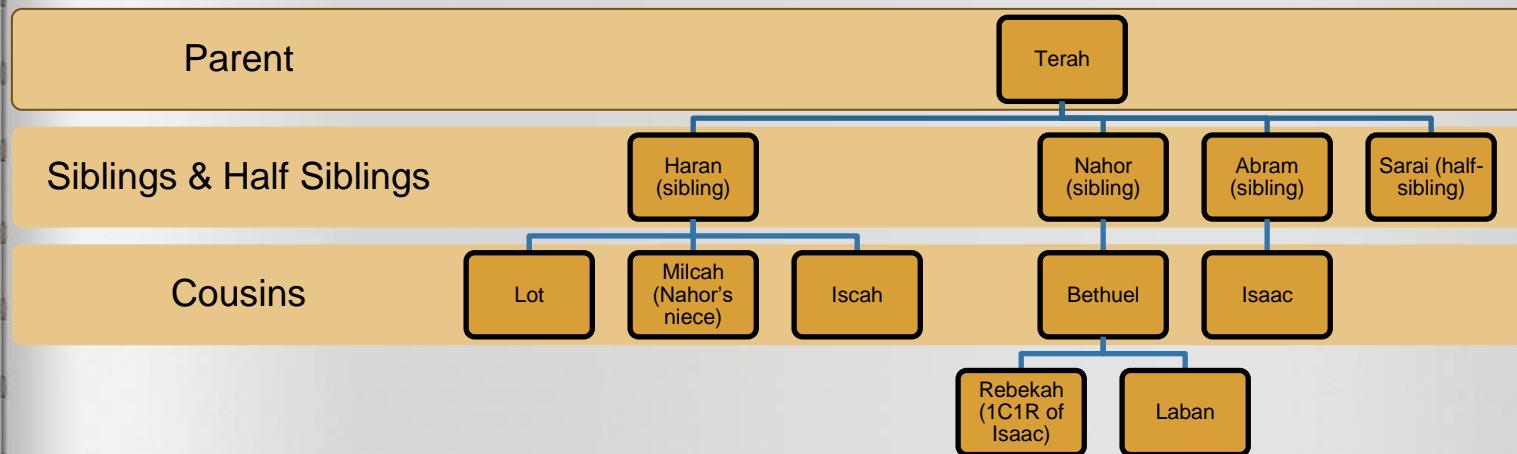
m. What did he do there?

There he built an altar to the LORD. Genesis 13:18

# **Genesis Lesson 10**

## **Genesis 11:27 – 13:18**

# Genealogy of Abraham



# Geography

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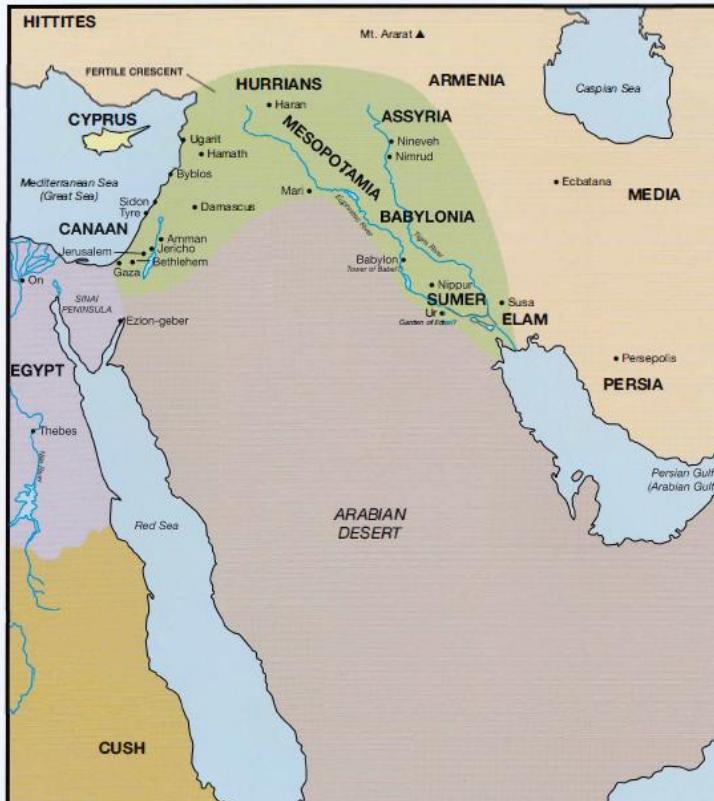
- ❖ What Was the Fertile Crescent (aka, Cradle of Civilization)?
- ❖ Where Was Ur of the Chaldees/Chaldeans?
- ❖ Where Was Haran?
- ❖ Where Was Canaan?
- ❖ How Do You Get from Ur to Canaan?

## **Fertile Crescent / Cradle of Civilization**

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- ❖ From the Tigris and Euphrates River Valley Northwest from the Persian Gulf and Then Southward Along the Mediterranean Coast (Sometimes Including the Nile Valley)
- ❖ Fertile Due to the Major Rivers
- ❖ Cradle of Civilization: Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Etc.

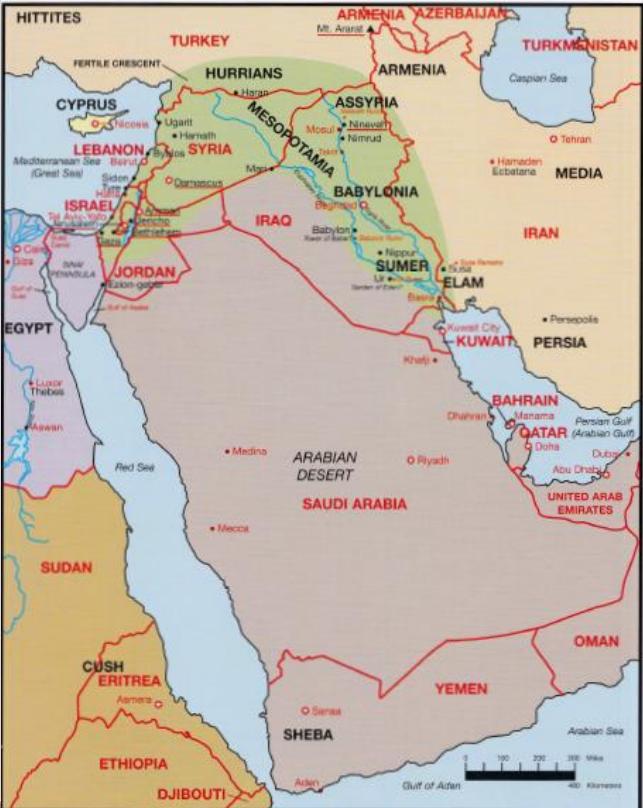
## Middle East: Then (BC)



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## Middle East: Now

Ancient cities that exist today are underlined in red.



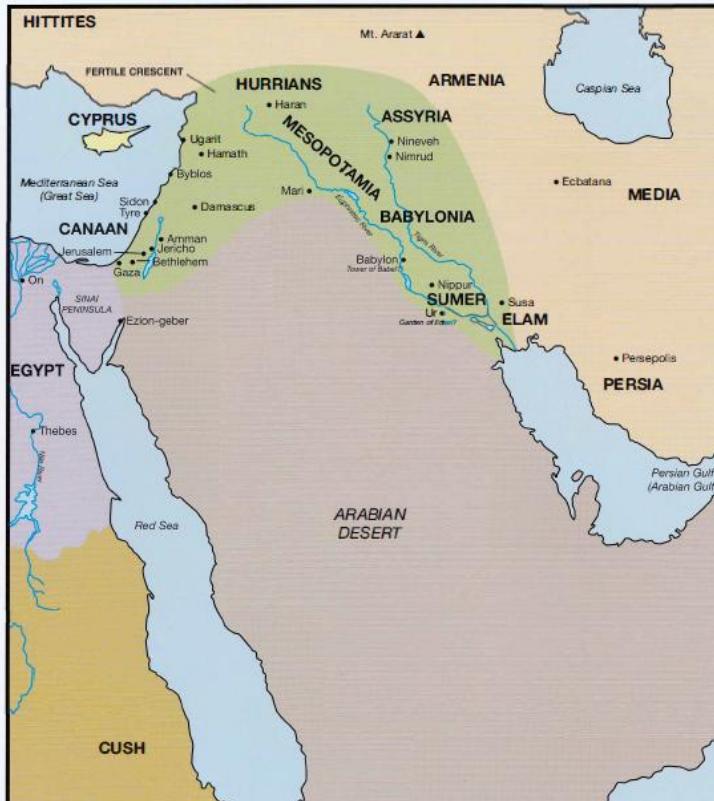
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# Pinpointing Ur of the Chaldees/Chaldeans

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- ◆ Abram Entered Canaan 2100 to 1875 BC
- ◆ Sumerian Ur Was Northwest of the Confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- ◆ The Chaldeans Occupied Southern Babylon 900 to 801 BC
- ◆ The Chaldeans Tend to Be Associated with Northern Mesopotamia

## Middle East: Then (BC)

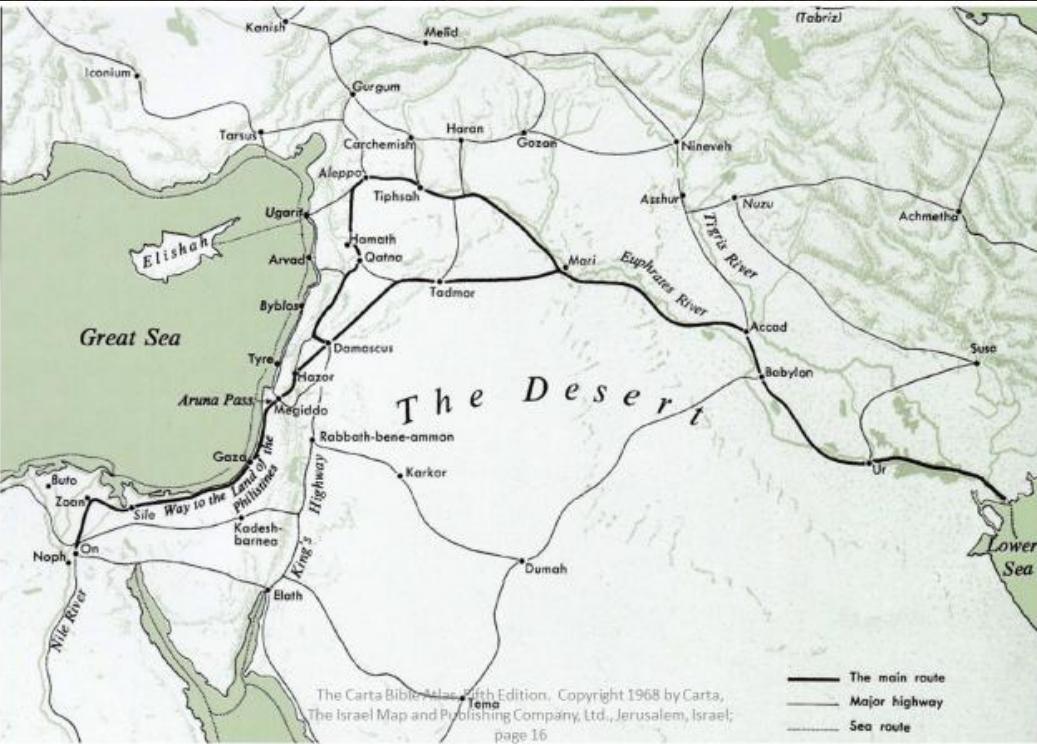


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# Pinpointing Ur of the Chaldees/Chaldeans

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- ◆ The Route from Sumerian Ur to Canaan Would Not Likely Lead to Haran, 80 Miles North of the Known Caravan Routes
- ◆ From Sumerian Ur to Haran: 700 Miles; From Haran to Canaan: 500 miles
- ◆ Ancient Archives Reference Cities of Northern Mesopotamia with Names which Can Be Equated to Ur; Some in the Vicinity of Haran



Ancient Caravan Routes; copyright: 1968; The Carta Bible Atlas

# Pinpointing Ur of the Chaldees/Chaldeans

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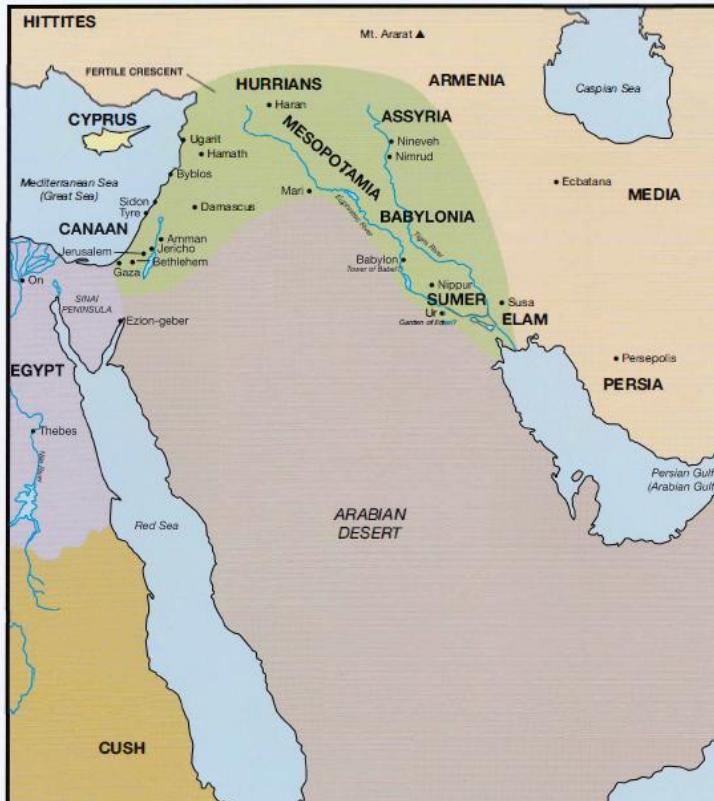
- ❖ Genesis 24:3-4
- ❖ Aram Naharaim Means Aram of the Two Rivers and Nahor Was in Northern Mesopotamia in the Area of Haran
- ❖ It Makes Sense for Ur to Be Nearer Haran than the Persian Gulf
- ❖ Regardless, Not Enough Data to Confirm

# Biblical Canaan

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- ❖ Eastern Mediterranean
- ❖ Lebanon, Southern Syria, Western Jordan, Israel

## Middle East: Then (BC)



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## The Call of Abram

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- ❖ Why Would Terah Set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to Go to Canaan?
- ❖ Genesis 12:1
- ❖ Genesis 15:7
- ❖ Nehemiah 9:7
- ❖ Acts 7:2-4
- ❖ Abram Got the Call to Leave, but Terah Was the Head of the Family

## Why Abram?

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- ◆ Genesis 11 and 12 Give Us No Reason
- ◆ Consider Hebrews 11:8-9a,11; Genesis 26:5; Genesis 18:19
- ◆ God Saw Abram as a Man of Great Faith and Obedience
- ◆ After the Tower of Babel, The Knowledge of God Had Been Lost and the Concept of God Had Been Distorted
- ◆ God Would Reveal Himself Again Through Abram

## What Was God Asking Abram to Do?

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- ◆ Leave Your Country
- ◆ Leave Your People
- ◆ Leave Your Father's Household
- ◆ Go to the Land I Will Show You
- ◆ God Was Asking Abram to Abandon His Land in Favor of the Land God Offers
- ◆ God Was Asking Abram to Abandon His Family for the Family God Offers