

June 18, 2006 AM

**THE EXODUS FROM BABEL  
GENESIS 11.27-32**

**VI. The Generations of Terah (11.27–25.11)**

**A. Life, Death, and Exodus (11.27–13.18).**

**1. Moving Out Of Mesopotamia (11.27–12.5a)**

**a. Life and Death in Ur and Haran (11.27–32)**

**1. ABRAM LIVES IN UR OF THE CHALDEES (27-29)**

*Who is Terah?*: significant to understanding Abram's life before he is called by God.

Terah is in the line of Shem—remember, *the name* line—specifically through Peleg and Eber (father of the Hebrews). Line of promise, line of prophets (much like found in Gen 5). As “sons of God” they have responsibility to live and proclaim righteousness in the culture.

The family has been corrupted. Cf. Josh 24.2, 14. Terah was an idolator.

*My three sons*: The listing of the three sons at the end of this genealogy is setting up hope. Cf. Gen 5.32

Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Here again we are being prepared for some bad news and good news. The bad news is that the sons of God are once again corrupt. The good news is that God is calling out one of that line through whom he will redeem the world.

*Abram the father?*: Abram is a living irony. His name means “exalted father,” but Abram has no children.

Abram will become an “exalted father,” and even more than that “a father of many nations”—which is the meaning of Abraham.

His name, though, sets us up for how the children of Israel were and we are to look at his life. I want you to understand that even from the beginning here, Abram is a father whose example is followed in the life of his seed; i.e., children.

Abram's life becomes a pattern of the events in the life of Israel, his children. Abram is proto-typical Israel.

We will see in a moment that there is an exodus from the land of Ur and a death of the older generation in the wilderness. We will also see that Abram is driven down to down to Egypt from Canaan because there is a famine in the land of Canaan. Abram goes down to Egypt, his wife is attacked, God sends plagues on Egypt, and Abram comes up out the land with great spoils (12.10-20).

Israel was to read the history of their father and learn from it; both from the positive as well as the negative patterns of life. Cf. 1Cor 10.11.

*Abram the replacement*: Abram fits a pattern himself of the younger son replacing the older or firstborn son.

We have seen this earlier. This whole replacement theme is rooted ultimately in the fall of Adam. Adam is the firstborn son who sins and needs to be replaced by a second. Ultimately this is realized in Christ himself. Paul not only calls Christ the last Adam, but also the second Adam (1 Cor 14.45, 28 respectively). He is the replacement for the first Adam.

We see it first in the fact that Cain is the firstborn and replaced by Abel and then by Seth (after Abel is murdered). This is made evident in the way the text traces the line of Adam through Seth in ch. 5. Japheth, the firstborn is replaced by Shem (cf. 9.24; 10.21).

Ishmael will be replaced by Isaac, Esau will be replaced by Jacob, and Manasseh will be replaced by Ephraim (i.e., the two sons of Joseph).

11.26 - Terah had his first son when he was 70 years of age. Abram was 75 years of age when Terah died. Terah died when he was 205 years of age. That means that Terah was 130 years of age when Abram was born (205 - 75 = 130).

The significance of this is that it is to the firstborn that the double-portion of the inheritance is given. He inherits the promises. When he is replaced, that replacement then becomes the heir and positionally the firstborn.

*Ur of the Chaldees*: “beyond the River,” the Euphrates. *Of the Chaldees* is the important part here. *Chaldees* are *Babylonians*.

We have already learned in both chs. 10 and 11 that this is Babel. Terah and his family are located in the land and culture of Babel.

**Husbands and wives:** “Sarai” = “my princess”

Milcah is the daughter of Haran, Nahor’s brother. Yes, Nahor married his niece. Milcah will become the grandmother of Rebekah and Laban, both significant in the story told in Genesis.

## 2. SARAI IS BARREN (30)

**Death as unfruitfulness:** The exalted father has a barren wife. The deadness of Sarai’s womb (and this is the way that Paul describes it in Romans 4) is also a characteristic of the land of Babel, or Ur of the Chaldees. Death reigns there.

**Barrenness of the woman:** this state becomes characteristic of the woman who is promised to bear the seed. (Remember Ge 3.15? The seed will be the seed of *the woman*.) This becomes a prominent theme in Genesis and throughout Scripture.

God gave man—man + woman = Adam—the mandate in the beginning to be fruitful and multiply, filling the earth. This was the *blessing* of God: life. Sin brought death (cf. Ro 5.12)

Just as with the land that became unfruitful for man because of sin, so man’s seed would fall upon unfertile soil in the womb of the woman; that is, unless God did something to raise the dead. Sarah’s barrenness is reflective of the curse. Remember, after the fall, it appears that the woman (at least temporarily) lost the ability to bear children.

Sarai’s barrenness is reflective of the fact that she is a new woman who will eventually be a new Eve. Remember, her name is changed just as the woman’s name is changed. And it is changed when the promise of a seed is given to her. Sarai is being set up here to be the new woman.

## 3. ABRAM LEAVES UR OF THE CHALDEES (31-32)

11.31-32 “answer” the first section of this text. In the first section Terah and his offspring are described. He and his family *live* in Ur of the Chaldees and Haran dies. Abram and Nahor *take* wives. Now, in reverse order, Terah *takes* Abram and Lot. They all *leave* Ur of the Chaldees and settle in Haran. Terah dies.

**Exodus from Babylon:** Cf. Act 7.2-4; God spoke the words in 12.1-3 *before* Abram lived in Haran.

Stephen’s words are interesting in this respect as well, he speaks of *the God of the glory*. It could very well be that God’s Shekinah, the glory cloud, came and spoke to Abram.

The purpose of the journey is beyond doubt: they are leaving Babylon in order to go to the land of Canaan (11.31).

**“settled” in Haran:** Terah is associated with Babel here by “settling” in the land of Haran; cf. 11.2

Looking forward to the exodus from Egypt that is to come, the people of God are delivered and they refuse to go into the Promised Land—the land of Canaan.

Because of this refusal the older generation must die in the wilderness before the younger generation can enter into the Promised Land.

That is precisely what happens here. It is in Haran that Terah, the older generation, dies so that Abram can go forward into the Promised Land. And this is precisely where the story is headed as is indicated in chs 12 and 13.

**Application: (1)** Finish well.

**Application: (2)** God is the God of resurrection.

**Application: (3)** Life is to be lived by faith.