

Genesis 11:27-32

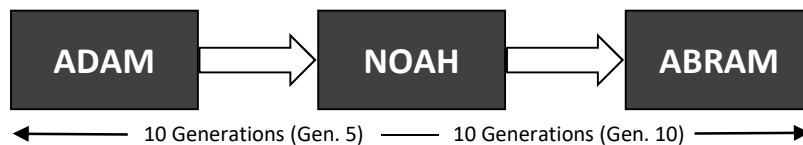
INTRODUCTION

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

In the gray dawn of history the first great biblical character that captures our attention is Abraham. Abraham commands our notice for this reason, if for nothing else, that he is spoken of as the “friend of God.” Surely it is well worth our serious consideration to study the inner life and outward conduct of such a man of God. From his life we discover that we, too, in our smaller measure may become not God’s servants only but God’s “friends”... [Abraham’s] portrait is drawn with such detail that it lives before us with the same hopes and fears, golden hours and hours of depression, that are familiar factors in our own lives. Then, also, Abraham is so constantly referred to in both the Old and New Testaments that it would seem as if the right understanding of his life is necessary to give the clue to many difficult biblical passages and many sacred doctrines of our faith. Nor can it fail to interest us to discover that the wild Bedouin and the modern Englishman, the conservative East and the swift-moving West, the Muslim and the Christian can find in the tent of the first Hebrew a common meeting ground, and in Abraham a common origin.

—F. B. Meyer (1847-1929)

Genesis 1-11 gives us the early history of the world. God creates a very good world. He gives humanity the gifts of relationship and rulership, marriage and sex, pleasure and purpose, work and rest. He bestows on them His glory and His goodness. BUT humanity chooses to disobey, to reject God, to go their own way. Sin, death, and the curse corrupt the world and all of humanity. Lies, deception, greed, pride, sexual immorality, violence, and murder are the fruit of humanity’s rejection and rebellion against God. God has every right to destroy the earth but instead makes a promise to redeem it. His work of redemption runs through the seed of Abraham.



WHY STUDY THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM?

- He is the _____ of three major religions of the world—Jews, Christians, and Moslems (~4.5 billion people).
- He is a model of _____ for all followers of God.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

- He is called a _____ of God (Is. 41:8, Jm. 2:23).

ABRAHAM CHRONOLOGY

2296 BC	Birth of Terah
2166 BC	Birth of Abram
2091 BC	Departure from Haran
2080 BC	Birth of Ishmael
2067 BC	Destruction of Sodom
2066 BC	Birth of Isaac
2029 BC	Death of Sarah
1991 BC	Death of Abraham

Without the blessing of God, the situation of humanity is without hope: that seems to be the chief thrust of the opening chapters of Genesis.

—Gordon Wenham

The Babel account is not the end of early Genesis. If it were, the story would conclude on the sad note of human failure. But as with earlier events in Gen. 1-11, God’s grace once again supersedes human sin.

—Kenneth Mathews

Abram. Hebrew, “exalted father.” Possibly used of one with a noble birth or of one dedicated to God.

Have you been asking God what He is going to do? He will not tell you. God does not tell you what He is going to do; He reveals to you Who He is.

—Oswald Chambers

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS ON ABRAHAM

1. He was born into a prosperous, _____ city.

“You are the Lord God, who chose Abram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Abraham.” (Neh. 9:7)

2. He grew up in an _____ family.

Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.’” (Joshua 24:2)

3. He experienced the _____ of his older brother.

4. He received a call from God to leave his home and homeland.

He said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’” (Acts 7:2-3)

5. He settled along the way in Haran with his father and family.

6. He struggled with the _____ of his wife.

7. He finished his journey to Canaan after the death of his father.

He came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. (Acts 7:4-5)

THOUGHTS FOR THE JOURNEY

- The life of faith is not an easy one.
- All the “heroes” of the Bible will fail...except one, Jesus Christ.

Ur of the Chaldees is located in present-day southern Iraq. It was the largest city in the world from ~2030 to 1980 BC. The Great Ziggurat of Ur still stands today.

Several of Abram’s relations have names that suggest adherence to lunar worship (Sarah, Milcah, Laban), a cult that was prominent in Ur and Haran. —Gordon Wenham

Terah, lacking the vision, lost the will to persist; the lesson is drawn that only faith will stay the course. —Derek Kidner

Influenced by Abram, Terah and the other members of the family also felt an inner urge—yet not sufficiently strong or clear—in the spiritual direction towards which Abram was set with all his heart and soul. But they did not succeed in overcoming completely the attraction of idol worship and were unable to abandon the world of paganism; they did, in truth, set out on the journey, but stopped in the middle of the way. —Umberto Cassuto

Barrenness is the way of human history. It is an effective metaphor for hopelessness. There is no foreseeable future. There is no human power to invent a future. —Walter Brueggemann

This dark introduction profiles God’s grace. Terah is steeped in pagan idolatry. One of his sons dies... another is married to an infertile wife, and Terah himself will die, having settled for a land short of Abraham’s heavenly vision. Against this hopelessness, God’s sovereign call of Abraham offers bright hope. —Bruce K. Waltke