

# GENESIS

Lesson 23 w/Answers

The Call of Abraham

## Abram's Family (Genesis 11:27-32)

<sup>27</sup> This is the account of Terah's family line. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. <sup>28</sup> While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. <sup>29</sup> Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. <sup>30</sup> Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive. <sup>31</sup> Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there. <sup>32</sup> Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran. [NIV]

As we begin our study of Abraham's call to follow God, we will observe early-on the importance of Abraham's family line beginning with Terah his father and his brothers Nahor and Haran (who was Lot's father). In addition to his son Lot, Haran had two daughters, one of whom—Milkah—will marry her uncle Nahor. The passage in Genesis 11 above would lead one to believe that only Abram, Sarai and Lot traveled with Terah, but more probably so did Nahor. We can deduce this from coming passages, where scripture refers to him living in Aram Naharaim—used interchangeably in the Hebrew text with Paddan Aram and Harran, as referenced in Genesis 11:31-32.

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### ***Nahor's family line will play an important role in the Genesis narrative regarding Abraham and his descendants.***

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1. Read the following and note how God used Nahor's descendants in the life of Abraham and his descendants.
  - a. Genesis 24:4
    - i. ANSWER: Abram specifically instructs his senior servant to go to "my own country," and "my own relatives."
  - b. Genesis 24:10
    - i. ANSWER: The servant comes to Aram Naharaim and the "town of Nahor." We clearly see that Nahor relocated there when Terah moved all of them from the Ur of the Chaldees.
  - c. Genesis 24:15
    - i. ANSWER: Rebekah will become the wife of Abraham's only son, Isaac. "She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor." She will eventually give birth to twins, Jacob and Esau.
  - d. Genesis 24:29
    - i. ANSWER: In this verse, we are introduced to Laban, Rebekah's brother.
  - e. Genesis 28:2
    - i. ANSWER: Here we see Isaac following in his father's footsteps, sending his son Jacob to the descendants of Nahor—in this case, Laban—to find a wife. As we will discover later in our study, Jacob agrees to work as a shepherd for Laban in exchange for acquiring Rachel as his bride. However, after working for Laban as a shepherd for seven years, Laban will trick Jacob into marrying the wrong daughter; and then Jacob will have to work another seven years in order to marry Rachel. Jacob's wives and concubines will produce many children, including Joseph who will be sold as a slave for his coat of many colors. Eventually, he will become greater than the Pharaoh in Egypt.

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## Abram's Call from God (Genesis 12:1-3)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

<sup>2</sup> "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." [NIV]

## Abram in Harran (Genesis 12:4-5)

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*The Bible tells us in Genesis 12:4-5 that Abram set out to follow God's instructions by leaving his people and his father's household.*

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2. Read Genesis 12:4-5 and list everyone and everything that traveled with Abram as he left Harran, headed south to Canaan.
    - a. ANSWER 1: Sarai
    - b. ANSWER 2: Lot
    - c. ANSWER 3: "All the possessions that they had accumulated."
    - d. ANSWER 4: "The people that they had acquired."
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The two verses above tell us that Abram and Sarai were wealthy when they left Harran, either from Abram's inheritance when his father died, or from Abram's success as a pastoralist—most likely from both. When we first encountered Abraham and Sarah in the Bible (probably in a Sunday School class), we most-likely pictured two old people. We likely envisioned Abraham as a gray-bearded old man with a staff in one hand, slowly making the long journey that God was going to lead them on. But this is only part of the story. In fact, as we learn more about Abraham, we will observe that he was a wealthy, educated man who raised livestock. We know this initially because of the Biblical reference to "the people they had acquired." He not only owned livestock, tents, and the possessions of the day (e.g., jewelry, clothing, cooking utensils, tents, and so on), but he also owned people. As we will note in coming chapters, God will continue to bless Abraham with wealth—to the point that Abraham is able to raise an army from his own servants. More about this subject will be forthcoming when we study Sodom and Gomorrah.

So, Abram, Sarai, and Lot all set out traveling to the south with servants, shepherds and livestock headed for an unknown land.

*"4So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.<sup>5</sup> He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there." Genesis 12:4-5 [NIV]*

There are three takeaways from this lesson. The first of these is that we understand the importance of hearing God's call and responding. Secondly, we need to recognize that, while living in an idol-filled world, God called Abram—and not the other way around. Prior to God calling him, Abram had done nothing that earned him God's great promise and blessing. It was all from God, it was all out of love, and it was part of the plan that God had for saving His lost creation.

Finally, we see in the life of Abraham the importance of following God in our own lives. When he first began to follow God—and even at the end of his life—Abram could not have envisioned the impact that his obedience to God would have on the entire world. The same is true for us. We do not know the impact that, as Christ-following people, we can have on those around us, or the generations that will follow us.

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***Read 2 Timothy 3:15 and 2 Timothy 1:5 and respond to the following.***

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3. Do you think that Eunice and Lois understood the impact that they were having on a very young lad, i.e., their son and grandson Timothy? What do these two verses tell us about (1) being faithful followers and (2) the impact that we may have on others?
  - a. ANSWER 1: Timothy's mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois were both believers. As a result, Timothy was raised in a Christ-following family.
  - b. ANSWER 2: Because of his mother's and grandmother's teachings, Timothy knew the scriptures "from infancy."
  - c. ANSWER 3: Timothy would go on to work with Paul through much of Paul's ministry, and Timothy would become pastor of the church in Ephesus—all in-part because of his mother's and grandmother's faithfulness.

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As we study the life and calling of Abraham, we need to keep the three previously-shared important points in mind:

1. When God calls us, we should respond and follow. Is God calling you today? Have you responded, and are you following God's call no matter where it might lead?
2. Remember, it is God who calls us; and when He does, it will not be because of anything that we've done to "earn" it. God will do it out of love. (See John 6:44-45 and John 6:65.)
3. If we follow God and accept Jesus as our savior, we are going to impact people in a positive way, perhaps for generations. We should take this responsibility seriously, recognizing that we have the ability to positively affect the lives of our loved ones, our neighbors, our co-workers—and even our enemies—if we are faithful in following God's call.

In the next lesson, we will explore Abraham's experiences in Canaan and Egypt.

Have a good week everyone!

In Christ,

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