

98-09-13b

We're back now from our break and resuming our study in Genesis chapter 12. We covered in the first lesson the fact that we wanted to make something of a correction to our understanding of Terah. And there were two, hopefully, there were two main points that came out of that.

One, in understanding that Terah died in Haran and that Abram left afterward, this resolves what would otherwise be an apparent inconsistency in our scriptures between what Stephen says in Acts 7 and what Genesis says in chapter 11. Secondly, it gives us some additional background. The same principles that we observed before are still valid.

Terah could have and perhaps should have proceeded on to the promised land. He certainly had that opportunity because God had spoken to Abram in Ur, in Mesopotamia, just as Stephen affirms over in Acts chapter 7. And Terah was apparently aware of this because when Abram said, God has spoken to me and I'm going to go to the land that he will show me, Terah sort of took over the project and said, okay, fine, we'll all go. And he packed everything up and decided the itinerary and they got up there to Haran and then Terah said, well, let's all stop here and catch our breath.

And then he never went any further. And he, in fact, ends up dying there. But the other thing that it straightens out for us is what I had alluded to in the first lesson in the verses 27 through 30 of chapter 11.

Terah begot these three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. In the order there, it would appear that Abram might be the oldest. But when we straighten out the birth and death years of Terah, we realize that dying at the age of 145 and Abram leaving at that point, we know that Abram is 70.

So that tells us that Terah was 75 when Abram was born, which means that one of the other brothers, either Haran or Nahor, was older than Abram and was, by rights, Terah's heir. I think that it was probably Haran. I think Haran was probably the firstborn.

Haran begot Lot. But Haran died either through disease or accident. We don't know from the scriptures what caused his decease.

But he died in verse 28, before his father Terah, in his native land in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram and Nahor took wives and had these daughters. Nahor winds up marrying his brother Haran's daughter.

He winds up marrying his niece Milca. And there is no record here of any children other than Lot, who is the son of the dead Haran. This suggests to us the idea of heirship, of carrying forward the line.

You've had in the preceding chapter the line of Shem all the way down through Terah to

the three sons of Terah, Abram, Haran, and Nahor. Haran has died. Abram is childless.

Nahor, there's no mention here of his children at this point. And so the only male representative of the next generation is Lot. Well, the line has come down through Terah, and Abram and Nahor at this point apparently don't have any sons.

We know that for sure of Abram. So what are our expectations for Lot? Well, based on what we know of the lifespan of Terah now, this helps us understand because Haran, as the eldest son, would be Terah's heir. Once Haran inherits everything from Terah, he is now able to pass it on to his son, Lot.

However, because of the fact that Haran dies before his father Terah in his native land in Ur of the Chaldees, Terah is still alive and in possession of all of his stuff, and he still has the requirement to pass his stuff down to the next generation, which is either going to be Abram or Nahor. So Lot, because of the early decease of his father, is cut out of the inheritance line here. Who determines lifespans? Who determines when and where people are born and where they fit into the chronology of human history in terms of generations and nations and families and so forth? Obviously God determines when and where we will be born, where we fit in.

There is a reason why Lot is the son of Haran and why he does not inherit. As we go forward in Genesis, because this question is raised right here. What about Lot? Lot is a male descendant, second generation from Terah.

Why is he not the heir? Why doesn't he participate in the covenant blessings and promises that are made to Abram and to his descendants Isaac and Jacob? He is the first representative of that generation, and yet he misses out. Why is that? Well, this idea is suggested to us in the mention of Lot here and in his accompanying Abram to the land. Why can't Abram just sort of adopt Lot and have him be the heir? This is going to occur to Abram.

So the idea of issue or of the heirs of promise, continuing the line of Shem, is really introduced here. Secondly, when we look at the beginning part of chapter 12, the Lord had said to Abram, and then we have the words of the Lord to Abram, and we'll return to these in just a moment, but look down at verse 4. Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

Well, now see, I've just recognized that I made a chronological goof. I think I said Abram was 70 when he departed. He's 75.

So, at any rate, Abram took Sarah, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran. How did they acquire these people and goods in Haran? Well, apparently Abram

inherited these at the point of Tira's death. Otherwise, if he were a younger son or if his father were still alive, the bulk of the family's wealth would have remained with Tira in Haran.

So, this is another secondary sort of corroboration of the fact of Tira's death, that Abram takes this huge amount of wealth with him when he departs. It's not a matter of dividing with his father or doing like the prodigal son and going to the father and saying, giving my inheritance and let me go, that apparently this came to Abram legitimately as the heir of Tira, either because he is the firstborn or because he is now in line for the inheritance because of the death of Haran. So, if we go with the chronology of the Samaritan Pentateuch and of Philo, if Tira is 145 years old and Abram is 75, then it is possible for Abram to have been the firstborn since he would have been born in Tira's 70th year.

But Abram took Sarah his wife, Lot his brother's son, all their possessions that they had gathered and the people whom they had acquired in Haran and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So, they came to the land of Canaan. Now, this word that God had spoken back when Abram was in Ur, what was it? It's recorded for us in verses 1 through 3. The Lord had said to Abram, Get out of your country, from your family and your father's house to a land that I will show you.

It's indeterminate. It's unclear exactly where or what this land is. It requires a step of faith for Abram to get up and depart at this point.

There is a sevenfold promise made conditioned on this obedience. If Abram obeys the Lord, God says in verses 2 and 3, seven things will happen. One, I will make you a great nation.

Very interesting here that the word for nation is *goy*. The word that later will always be used of the nations in contradistinction to Israel. It says, I will make you a great *goy*.

I will make you a great nation. And this is nation in the sense of having a territory, a government, an identity in comparison to other nations of the world. Secondly, I will bless you.

Promise of personal blessing from God. And it's a general statement of blessing. It doesn't say how or in what way.

It's just a promise of God's blessing. Thirdly, I will make your name great. We looked at this a little bit last time as it compares to the statement God makes to David, that he would make a great name for him in a house, in a dynasty.

The fourth statement is, you shall be a blessing. Now, in the English here, it sounds like this is sort of a predictive future, that this is something else that God is going to do for Abram. But in Hebrew, this is an imperative.

This is, you shall be a blessing. It's in the same construction as go. Get out of your country.

Go up out of your country, from your family, from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. Be a blessing. It's an imperative.

It's a very unusual construction in Hebrew. It has sparked a great deal of analysis and argument for one view or another. But it is, in fact, an imperative.

There isn't any way to get around it. It is a command. Go be a blessing.

Verse 3, the fifth statement here, I will bless those who bless you. The sixth statement, I will curse him who curses you. Seventh, in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

So there's a seven-fold statement here. And at the center of it, at the place of emphasis in this seven-fold statement, is the imperative, be a blessing. Grammatically, the first three statements take one form.

You have the imperative in the middle, and then the last three take a grammatical form. So there's emphasis on verse 2b or c there. You shall be a blessing.

Be a blessing. Go and be, and I will do these six things. Great nation.

Blessing. Great name. Bless those who bless you.

Curse those who curse you. In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And you can see on each side of that pivotal statement, be a blessing, before it are the personal or national blessings for Israel.

The great nation. Blessing from God.