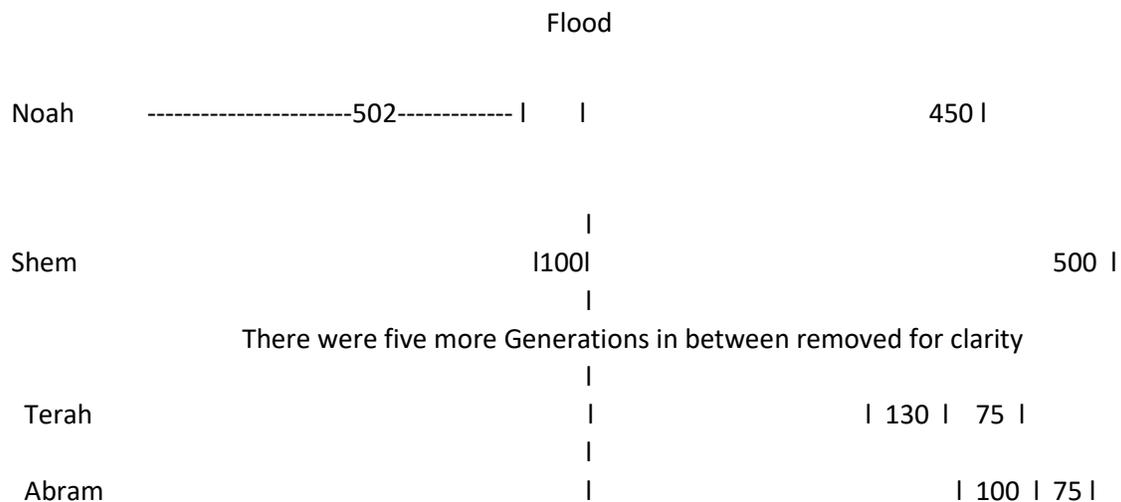


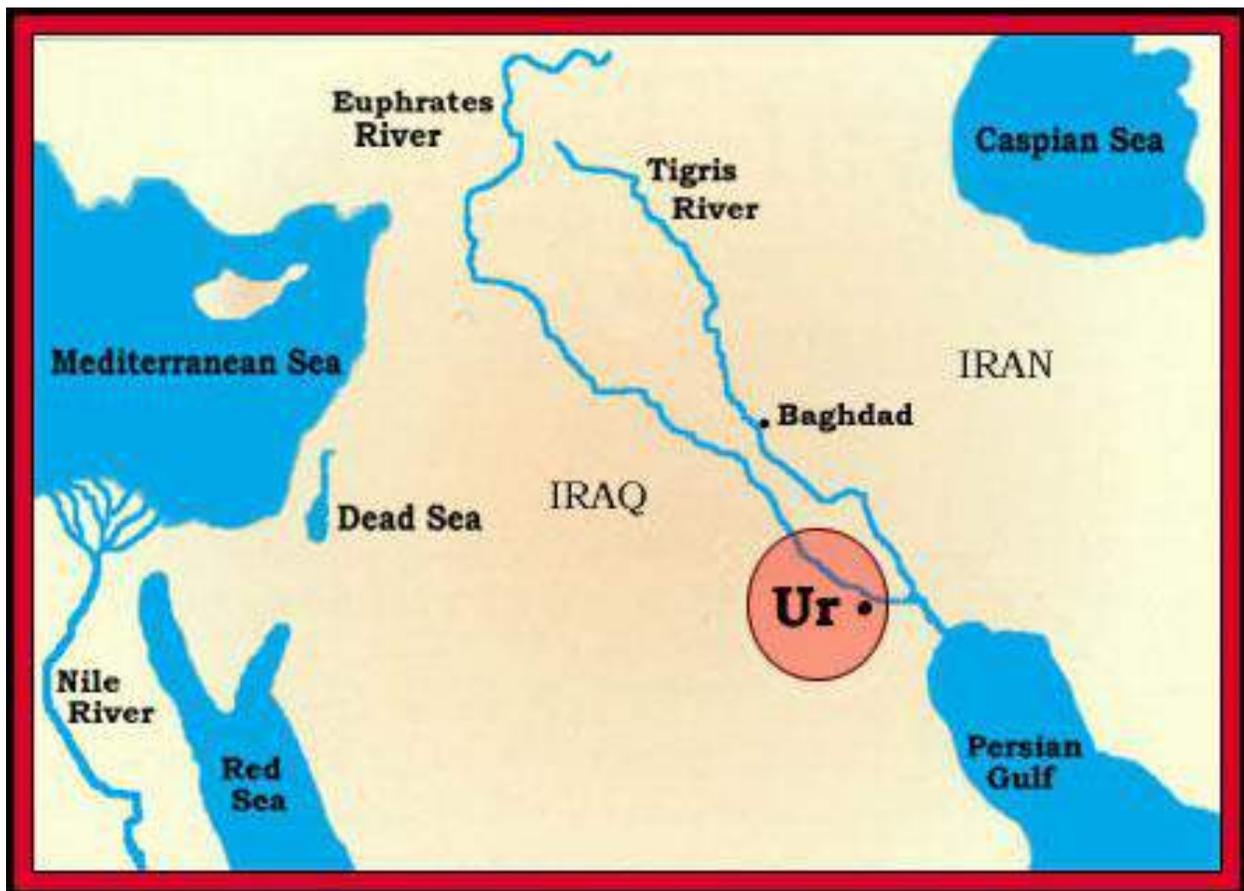
## Scripture Genesis 11:10-32

As I mentioned last week, this week we will begin a series of discussions about the father of our faith, Abraham. Actually, the father of our faith starts out as Abram, and his name is changed to Abraham a number of years later. When Abram is 99 years old, God makes a covenant with his servant and changes his name to Abraham. But for now, we will call him Abram. The Biblical discussion of Abram starts in Genesis, chapter 11. The first part of chapter 11 is about the Tower of Babel. Then the conversation turns to a discussion about the lineage of Abram. The lineage in this account starts with Noah. Including Noah and Abram, there are 11 generations connecting these to giants of our Biblical narrative. I am certainly not going to go through every generation between Noah and Abram, but Abram was descended from Noah's son Shem. You may remember that in the account of Noah, it said that Noah lived to be over 900 years old. In this account given in Genesis 11, one can do the math and figure out that Noah was still living for a significant portion of Abram's life. And Shem was too. And as it turns out, Noah and Shem may have played a significant part in Abram's story.

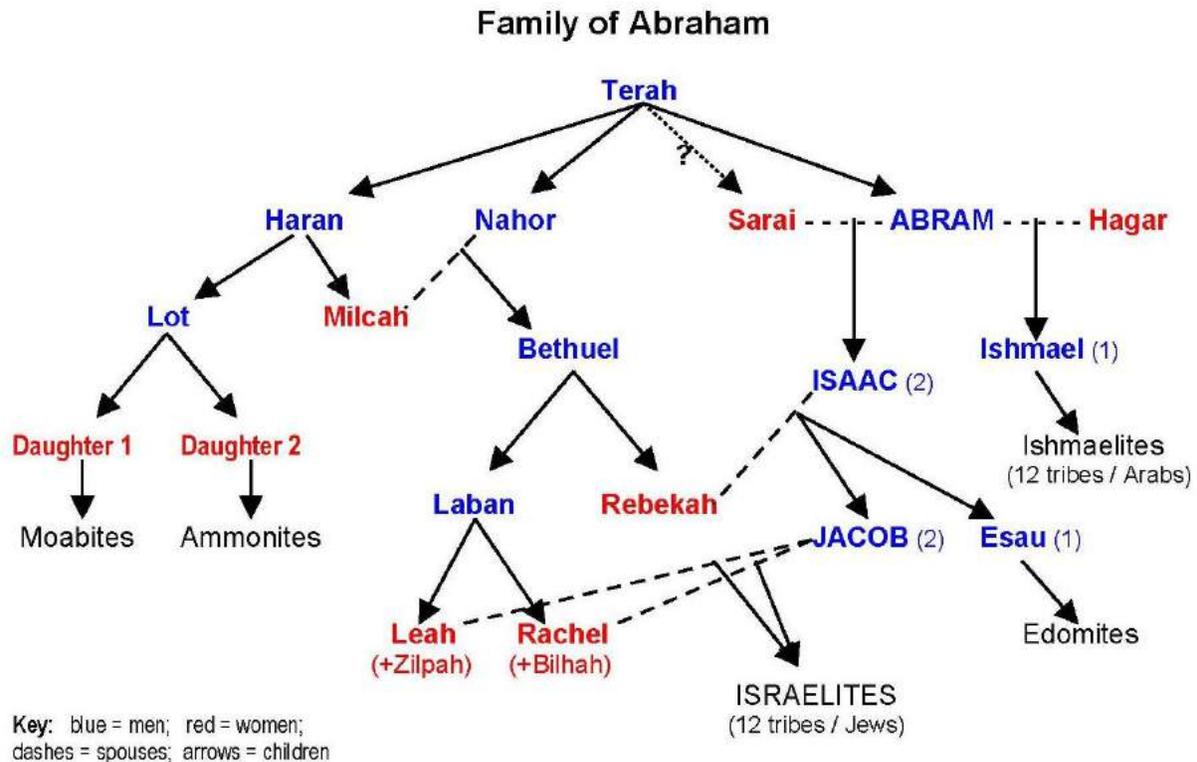


Let me show you what I mean. From the account in Genesis 11 where it gives ages at the time of people's birth and death, we just crunch the numbers. As this chart shows, Shem and Noah were both contemporaries of Abram and Terah. (Terah was Abram's father.) Let's look at the chart above. By the way, I took out five generations in Between Shem and Terah to make this a little clearer. We can

look at the chart and see Noah at the top. You can see where the flood happened, and the birth of Noah's son Shem, and Terah and Abram at the bottom. If you draw a straight line down from Noah's death to the time line for Abram, you can see that Noah lived until Abram was about 70, and Shem actually outlived Abram. So, when Abram was born, there were many generations of Abram's extended family gathered in a place called Ur, or more completely, Ur of the Chaldeans.



Ur was located in what is now the southern portion of Iraq along the Euphrates River not far from the north end of the Persian Gulf.



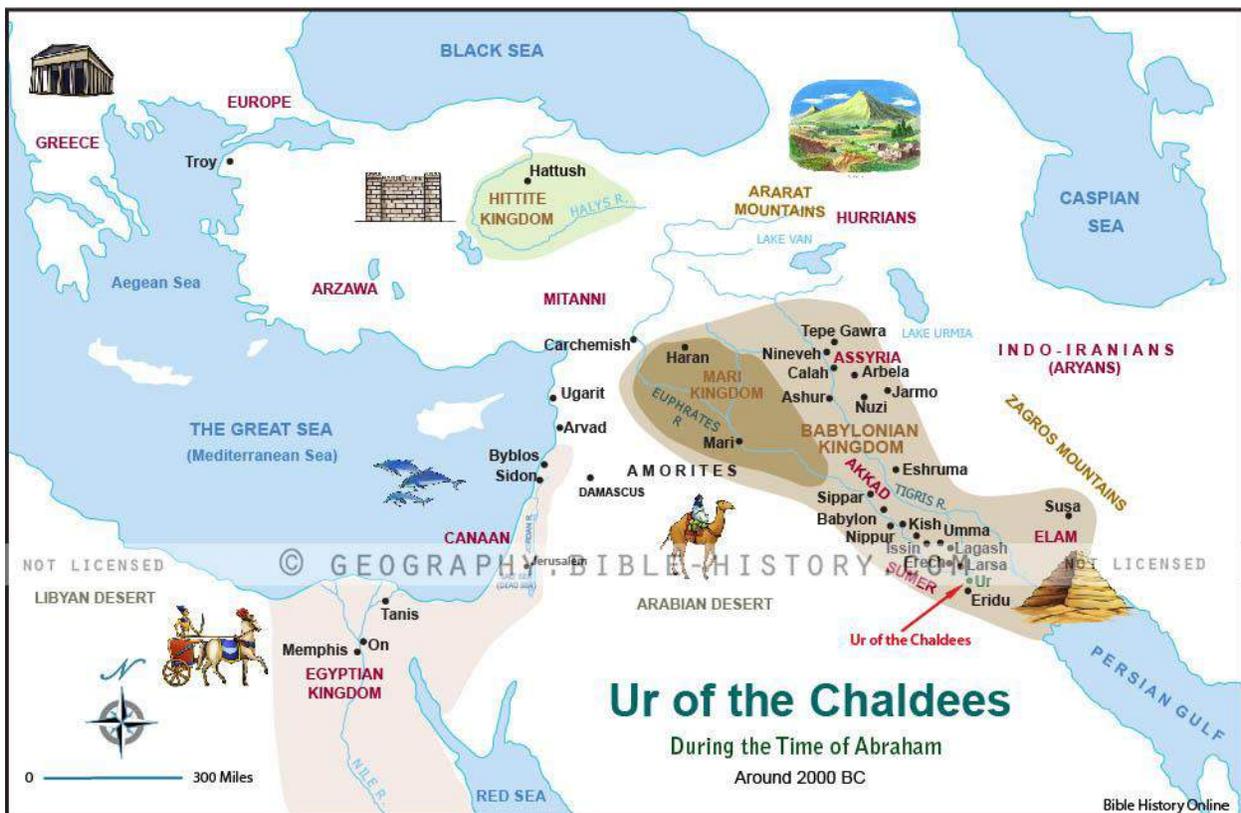
Now let's look at Abram more specifically. And we see in this family chart here that Abram was the Son of Terah. Terah had 3 sons, Haran, Nahor and Abram. It is believed that Haran had four children, and two of them play an important role in the story of Abram. Haran was the father of Sarai (Sarai is not shown at Haran's daughter on the chart) who eventually became the wife of Abram. Haran, who was Sarai's father, was also the father of Lot who, as we will discuss, traveled with Abram and played an important part in the Biblical narrative which we will discuss in future weeks.

The scripture account in Genesis is brief about the reasons why Abram left Ur. The account tells us that Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. The account says that Terah was still alive when they left Ur and that Haran died in Ur. The Genesis account says that Abram and Nahor married. Abram married Sarai and that she was Barren. And, it says that Nahor married Milcah. Then the Genesis account says that Terah took his son Abram, his Grandson Lot, 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 Caanan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. And, the account tells us that Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

That is all the information. We are given about Abram and his departure from Ur. There are some writings contemporary to Genesis that make some suggestions and fill in some blanks as to the details of Abram's life before they parted for Caanan. The Book of Jasher is said to have been written by Jasher, the son of Caleb, who was in the company of Moses. The book covers Biblical history from creation to Jasher's own days, in the time of Moses. This book is not a book of the Bible. We have to understand that. The Book of Jasher is, however referenced in the Old testament. It is mentioned in the book of Joshua, 10:12-13. Jasher is also in the Book of II Samuel 1:18. Since the authors of Joshua and Samuel were using the Book of Jasher as a reference that perhaps give it some credibility. If Jasher is a reference to Joshua and Samuel, perhaps we can give it some credibility as well. Much of the contents of Jasher confirms the Biblical narrative, and very little in the book contradicts the Biblical narrative. The story offered about Abram seems to fit, and seems to explain, and seems to clarify. So, in the absence of details in the Genesis account, at the very least, this writing gives us some ideas to reflect on and some possibilities when it comes to the story of Abram.

According to Jasher's narrative, on the night of Abram's birth, there was a bright star in the sky and it was noticed by many wisemen in the land. The wisemen thought that the king would deal harshly with them if they did not share this information about the star with him. If the King then found out about the star from another source, they would be in trouble with the King. So, they were compelled to tell the King about the bright star that accompanied Abram's birth. The King spoke with his advisors about the star and they recommended that Terah, the father of Abram should be compelled to turn Abram over to the King so that Abram might be slain, and thus not be a threat to the authority of the King. Terah asked the King for three days to consider the Kings request. And the three days was granted. After some thought, Abram's family turned over a baby that was born from a union between Terah and a servant woman of Terah's house. Abram was hidden in a Cave for ten years. Upon coming out of the cave, he went and stayed with Noah and Shem for thirty-nine years, and while he was there, he learned from Noah and Shem all about the ark, and the flood, and word of God. In the meantime, the world around them had forgotten all the lessons of the Flood and had become extremely ungodly. When Abram left the house of Noah,

he found that his father was worshipping a whole host of Gods who were simply idols. Abram tried to show his father how foolish it was to worship any other god than the God who created the world and all that is in it. In the process, Abram destroyed a number of Terah's idols. This made Abram's father angry so, Terah went and told the King about the real identity of his son Abram. He told the King that Abram was the one that the King intended to slay some 50 years ago. The King was very angry and put Abram in Prison and then had him thrown into a fiery furnace. But, because of Abram's faith, God rescued Abram from the flames. Abram's brother Haran was thrown in the furnace also, because he believed in Abram's God. Haran's faith was not complete and perfect like Abram's so, he did not survive the flames. But the fact that Abram survived the flames made a believer of Terah, Abram's father. After this series of events, Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot left Ur and Headed for Caanan, just like it says in Genesis 11.



They followed the Euphrates River Valley way to the north, until they arrived in Haran. They got as far as Haran and settled there. While they were there, Terah reached the age of 205. And he passed away.

Just like we are often called to leave our former lives behind in order to answer our call to serve God, it appears that Abram gave up his family so that he would be in the place where God could use him to accomplish his purpose. And this sets the table for next week, when we will open the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis where Abram answers, Or, perhaps, continues to answer his call to serve the Lord.