

**Series: God & Abraham #1115**

**Title: Genesis 11.26-32**

***The People & The Places (Part 2)***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I want to open with this.

If I were to write a biography about your life, I would sit down with you and ask you to identify for me the people and the places that have impacted you. I would want to know some thing about your date and place of birth, your family (parents, siblings, extended family, your lineage), and surely I would ask you about the places that influenced you, such as where you lived and played and went to school, especially if you moved around a lot. What happened to you and within you during your formative years will be a foundational chapter in my biography of you.

I want to paint a picture of you and your surroundings to give readers insights into the true you. Speaking of childhood and the things that shaped us, this reminds me of the song I used to love when I was a child. They sung it on the television show on public broadcasting called *Sesame Street*. And I am speaking of the 1970s version of *Sesame Street*. I understand these are different times now and (sadly) no parent can assume anything is wholesome when you plop your child down in front of the TV or the computer screen.

Anyway, on the children's television show *Sesame Street* the human actor Bob teamed up with the puppets The Grocer and The Doctor and they sang this little jingle about *The People in Your Neighborhood*. They sang about the people that you meet when you're walking down the street, they're the people that you meet each day. Do you remember that show and that song?

I *loved* that tune, and all these years later I still sometimes hum it when I am walking down the street each day! *The People in Your Neighborhood*. They're the people that you meet when you're walking down the street, they're the people that you meet each day. Well, we want to turn to the Scripture now and meet the people in Abram's neighborhood. Who is it that he met as he was walking down the street? And what can we learn about his neighborhood, as we continue our discussion about people and places here on *God Is*?

Last time we read in the biography of Abraham, written by Moses, about five men and three women. The men are Terah, Abram, Nahor, Haran, and Lot. The women are Sarai, Milcah, and Iscah. That's eight names. Then, we talked about their relationships. Let me repeat that so your brain hears it twice.

Terah is the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. I suspect he had other children, but these are the names of the three boys we have here in Genesis 11. Then, this man Lot was the son of Haran, so Lot is the grandson of Terah. And he is also the nephew of Abram. Haran is also the father of Milcah and Iscah. So Lot is the brother of Milcah and Iscah. Or, another way to say this is Milcah and Iscah are the sisters of Lot. Then, this woman Milcah marries Nahor. And yes, Nahor is her uncle. Another way to say that is Nahor married his niece. And our last name is Sarai. The text says Sarai married Abram. And we learned, from later in Genesis, that Sarai is also Abram's half sister (they have the same father, Terah, but different mothers). That is what we know.

Now let's talk about what some of these names mean. The most difficult of these names is Nahor. We do not really know what his name means, although one scholar suspects it as "panting." Does Nahor mean panting? Maybe. But scholars largely agree that Abram means high or exalted father, or the exalted one is my father. Note the relationship between Abram and father, because of what will unfold later in the story. Abram's father, Terah, we do not know what his name means either.

Lot means covering or veil. And the other male name, Haran, means mountaineer. (Mountaineer.)

When we come to the women's names their names are descriptive of both beauty and intelligence. Sarai means princesses (plural) or princess (singular). Sarai means princess. And she was quite a princess when we look back on what her life has meant for subsequent generations. Milcah means Queen. The name Milcah means Queen. So we have a princess and a queen, etymologically speaking. We do not know what Iscah means. In fact, there is the question as to why her name is even mentioned in Genesis 11, verse 29. Jewish commentators have long thought that Iscah was Sarai (they are the same person), but that cannot be true because, as we have already established, Sarai was the daughter of Terah, whereas as Iscah was the daughter of Haran.

A bit of personal opinion here: I love the names Milcah and Iscah. Any of you pregnant mothers out there, expecting a baby girl? What about these names? Don't they sound beautiful? Nothing against Sarai, renamed Sarah, I have a very good friend named Sarah and it does mean princess, after all! That's a great name also for a baby girl.

And then, connecting names to places, let me highlight that two of the men's names are later associated with cities in Mesopotamia (and I will soon describe where Mesopotamia was). These names are Nahor and Haran. Nahor was actually named after his grandfather. Genesis 11, verse 24 says, **"24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah."** And, as we know Terah is the father of Nahor. So Terah's father and son were both named Nahor.

Then, in Genesis chapter 24, when Abraham's servant seeks out a bride for Isaac, Genesis 24, verse 10 says, **"10 Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor."** There's Nahor.

And then in Genesis chapter 28 we read about Jacob's journey in which he **"went toward Haran."** There we have the place name Haran. So with these two men we can associate their names with places or locations (with cities).

While we are on this topic of people and names, I want to show you something intriguing in the Scripture. Here, I will reference and connect something in Genesis chapter 5 with Genesis chapter 11 if you want to open your Bible to both chapters. When we flip back to Genesis 5 we read a genealogy. Verse 1 begins, **"This is the book of the generations of Adam."** And we read down through to verse 32, taking in name after name after name. Then, at Genesis 5, verse 32 we read this, **"32 Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth."** That verse names Noah and his three sons.

Well, Genesis 11, verse 26 does the same. I am reading Genesis 11, verse 26, **"26 Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran."** This verse names Terah and his three sons. Do you see, do you hear the similarity?

Henry Morris, who I quoted yesterday, he picks up on this and wonders if Terah, perhaps by divine revelation, did he think that a new period, or a new dispensation was to begin with his three sons? So that you have those generations between Noah and Terah as a set, and then Terah's son Abram begins a new time for these people. What has to be true is that Terah had the records of the genealogy from Shem, Noah's son, down to his own father and then to himself. These records must have been kept somewhere, likely in the family tents that will soon be on the move from Ur of the Chaldeans all the way to Canaan.

And then, following this through the Bible, Isaac will be the next in line to record the genealogy between Terah, Abram, and himself. Let me read to you Genesis chapter 25 and verse 19, **"19 Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son..."** When Abram leaves Haran (we will get to that) he must have taken the records of these genealogies with him after his father Terah died, and then they end up in Isaac's possession after Abraham dies. And down and down through the generations go these records until Moses gets a hold of them or is told of them (orally) and writes them down for us.

To me, and I hope for you, this is fascinating. Of course, God superintends all of this. He sovereignly sees to it that we know what He wants us to know. But when we come down to the human level, to the plain of history, how does historical data and information get moved? We saw this recently with the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. And now, within the pages of Scripture, we observe the records of the genealogies moving from

one person within the family to the next and on and on they go. These have been long preserved for our instruction. This is why we should *not* skip over and ignore names, lists of names.

Alright, there is more we will uncover about who these people are, but to begin with we know their names. These are the people in Abraham's neighborhood, in his neighborhood! These were the people that he met when he went walking down the street each day. And next week we will learn about his streets so to speak. We get into geography: the places. This week the people, next week the places as we dialogue about people and places in Genesis chapter 11.

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for these names long preserved. We are grateful that You have given them to us in this, Your Word. Every single word in the Bible is meaningful. You have not wasted a single word. Help us to cherish this, and to treat the Scripture with the highest respect. Thank You again for these Hebrew people. Teach us what You want us to learn from their lives and their experiences with You and with one another.

Go with us now into the weekend. Protect us from the evil one. Draw us together in worship. And please bring us back together on Monday for more of these precious minutes, discovering *You*. Amen. I'll talk to you on Monday on God Is.

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