

“TERAH’S MYSTERIOUS DETOUR”

(Genesis 11:27-32)

Text: *“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.”* (v. 31, 32)

Introduction

“Detour” is defined as:

1. “A road used temporarily instead of a main road” and,
2. “A deviation from a direct course of action.”
 - Terah is one of the greatest examples in Scripture of what it means to be “detoured”.
 - He speaks to every man, woman, boy and girl.

The Setting Of Our Text

1. Terah is mentioned 11 times in the Bible.
2. Terah was the father of Abraham, Nahor and Haran. (11:26)
3. Terah’s name means “wandering”.

Terah’s Directions

1. Terah received instructions from God to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go into the land of Canaan.
2. Terah started out well (11:31), journeyed about four months, probably stopped at Babylon and then did something very strange.

It’s A Mystery Until This Day

- Terah turned north of his route to Canaan.
- Terah traveled 150 miles out of his way.
- Terah was “**detoured**” to a place called Haran.

Why Did Terah Go To Haran?

- Haran was a commercial city located on the Belikh River, 60 miles from the Euphrates River.
- Haran was located on a busy caravan road connecting Nineveh, Asshur and Babylon in Mesopotamia with Damascus, Tyre and other cities in the southwest.
- Haran was also a center of the moon god cult.
- Haran was a place of idolatry, lust, sin and sensuality.
- Haran was a place you’d want to get out of and not stay in (a city to avoid in the first place).

Questions Needing Answers

1. What happened to Terah in Haran?
2. Why did Terah stop here?
3. Why did Terah get “**detoured**” half way to Canaan?
4. Why did Terah forfeit his future inheritance?

Remember:

Terah arrived at Haran at age 185 and died there at age 205. His short layover turned into a 20 year detour!!!

And God Records In Joshua 24:2

“Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Nachor, and they served other gods.” (Joshua 24:2)

Question: Why did Terah serve “other gods”?

Question: How did he get “swallowed up” in Haran?

Question: What ruined his life and legacy?

Question: How does Terah’s detour speak to us today and save us from destruction?

Reasons Why “Terah Died In Haran”

I. Terah Was Blinded To The Tricks Of Satan

Fact: Haran was a weakness to Terah (a comfortable location).

Fact: Haran was a place to relax and water his herds.

Fact: Haran was the foothold of the enemy to weaken Terah’s heart.

- *“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”* (Luke 22:31)
- *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”* (II Cor 11:14)

In Other Words

- Know who is behind the raging battle in the unseen world!
- Know who it is that never shows you the consequences of sin!
- Know who it is that lies to you in every temptation!

In Fact – Know The Definition Of Temptation:

“All temptation (in essence) is a lie of the devil, promising you something that it cannot deliver.”

(In Other Words)

Temptation is of the devil to rob you and detour you from your God given potential.

II. Terah Compromised By Going In The First Place

Fact: Terah ran all the red lights.

Fact: Terah ignored the sirens along the way.

Fact: Terah forgot Song of Solomon 2:15: *“The little foxes spoil the vine.”*

Illustration

Moths, who investigate burning candles, singe their wings for life.

Illustration

It only takes one hole to sink a boat. The Titanic, the largest passenger vessel in the world sank on April 15, 1912 and 1,595 of the 2,340 passengers died. Why? One whole from an iceberg just before midnight.

Question: How did Terah become weakened through compromise?

Answer: Because he forgot two things:

1. "Every evil thought is sin in its embryo stage" and,
2. "Sin that is destroyed in our minds will not become a part of our history."

III. Terah Tried To Have The Best Of Two Worlds

- Abraham's eyes were fixed on the Promised Land.
- Terah's eyes were fixed on the present system.
- Abraham's journeys were characterized by two things:
- Wherever he went he **#1. Pitched a tent** and **#2 He built an altar.**
- Wherever he moved he **#1. Took the tent** and **#2 He left the altar.**

(Why?)

1. In removing the tent he said: "I am not a citizen here, I'm only a pilgrim."
2. In leaving the altar he said: "I belong to a place called heaven who's builder and maker is God."

Question: How many of you know where your citizenship really is?

John Said:

"The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I John 2:17)

Paul Said:

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20)

Jesus Said:

"If you were of the world, the world would love his own, but you are not of this world." (John 15:19)

Remember Matthew 6:24

"No man can serve two masters."

IV. Terah Became "Entangled" With The Weeds Of Sin

Fact: Terah ended up "serving other gods".

Fact: Terah couldn't "shake off" the influence of Haran.

Fact: Terah became attached to those he got too close to.

Fact: Terah lost heart in his endurance race to Canaan.

Fact: Terah forgot the principle of weeds:

- **Weeds start small**
A compromise, a questionable activity, evil thoughts entertained, one bad habit, one bitter attitude, etc.
- **Weeds sap your strength**
They drain you spiritually, physically and emotionally; they steal the joy and enthusiasm of a clear conscience.
- **Weeds hide the fruit**
If left unattended, people will see the weeds in your life and not the fruit.
- **Weeds spread**

Weeds beget weeds; fail to remove them and they multiply rapidly.

How To Kill The Weeds

1. **See their seriousness** “*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*” (Galatians 5:9)
2. **Identify them by name** “*Weights and sins that so easily beset us.*” (Hebrews 12)
3. **Get going, choose to get rid of them today** “*Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.*” (II Corinthians 7:1)
4. **Stay out of other people’s gardens** (Why?) Because you cannot be weeding your own garden when you are next door searching for weeds! “*Examine himself*” “*Search me*” “*Create in me*” “*Own eye*” “*Take heed unto thyself*” (I Corinthians 11:28; Psalm 139:23; Psalm 51:10; Luke 6:41; I Timothy 4:16)

Question: What is sin?

Answer: It is a willful transgression against the known will of God.

Question: Why is sin so destructive? Because...

1. Sin **never satisfies** the one who sins!
2. Sin always leads to **more sin!**
3. Sin **enslaves** the one who sins!
4. Sin **robs** you of all joy and confidence!
5. Sin **hurts** the sinner’s family and friends!
6. Sin **offends** the weaker conscience!
7. Sin (un-repented of) may cost you your **salvation!**

Let’s Take A Holy Inventory

1. Is my Bible dusty or prayer closet empty?
2. Am I enslaved to pornography on the internet?
3. Have I been reading illicit material that is sensual in nature?
4. Are there addictions to tobacco or alcohol that I haven’t dealt with?
5. Have I become a slave to television, sports, gambling, or hobbies of any kind?
6. Am I dominated and manipulated by the love of money?
7. Am I paying tithes and giving offerings or am I possessed with a spirit of greed?
8. Have I been neglecting my wife and children?
9. Do I underscore (or undercut) those in spiritual authority in my life?
10. Do I harbor any unforgiveness towards anyone that has hurt me?
11. Am I a workaholic and find it very difficult to get quiet and still before God?
12. Do I pretend in any way at anytime and am I willing to repent before God with godly sorrow for deep change?

v. Terah Resisted All The Calling Voices

- Abraham pleaded, “Come on dad, let’s get out of here.”
- Sarah pleaded, “Come on pop, let’s get out of here.”
- Lot pleaded, “Let’s go.”
- God pleaded, “Get out before it’s too late.”

Fact: The longer Terah stayed, the worse it got!

Fact: The longer Terah delayed, the worse it got!

Fact: The longer Terah hesitated, the worse it got!

- Terah lacked in conviction, in courage and in determination.
- Terah could have had rich fellowship with God, but was enjoying too much social fellowship with man.

Why did Terah die in Haran?

1. He was blinded to the tricks of the enemy.
2. He compromised by going in the first place.
3. He tried to have the best of two worlds.
4. He became entangled with the weeds of sin.
5. He resisted all the calling voices.

What were the results for Terah?

1. He failed to receive the blessings Abraham received.
2. He missed the privilege of serving God.
3. He lacked the satisfaction of a life well spent.
4. He blew his chance to be his son's hero.
5. He is remembered as the father who served "**other gods**" in Joshua 24:2

Terah illustrates to us all that the devil will...

- Take you **further** than you want to go.
- Keep you **longer** than you want to stay.
- Make you **pay more** than you want to pay.

Notice Genesis 12:5

"And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their substance that they had gathered and the souls that they had gotten in Haran and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:5)

It's no secret that...

- It is God's will that your family serve God together.
- It is God's will that you serve God wholeheartedly.
- It is God's will that you take people with you to heaven.
- It is God's will that you live "otherworldly" and reject all the voices calling you to Haran!

Conclusion

Question: You ask: "Will God restore me and give me another chance"?

Answer: When Jonah ran from God and was intercepted, something amazing happened.

1. In Jonah 2:1 *"Then Jonah prayed to God out of the fish's belly."* (And)
2. In Jonah 3:1 *"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time."*

In other words,

- Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.
- God specializes in forgiving those who truly repent.
- God is the God of a second chance.
- If we confess us our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness!!!

Amen!
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