

## **KEY TEXT**

### **Genesis 11:31-32 (ESV)**

**Verse 31- Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.**

**Verse 32- The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

***Full Conception and gestation***

***Title***

## **SPIRITUAL ABORTIONS AND MISCARRIAGES**

### **Outline:**

- What is spiritual abortion and miscarriage and its effects?**
- Terah- A man who might have been**

- When spiritual abortion occurs?
- How to avert spiritual abortion?

## MAIN POINTS

### (1) WHAT IS SPIRITUAL ABORTION AND MISCARRIAGE AND ITS EFFECTS?

In literal term, **ABORTION** is a term that refers to the termination of a pregnancy by the **CHOICE OR THE WILL** of the mother to be.

And **MISCARRIAGE** is simply called a **SPONTANEOUS ABORTION**.

But in a figurative sense, a **SPIRITUAL ABORTION** is:

- Any fruit or produce that does not come to maturity because it has been forced into a premature birthing process
- Anything that fails in its progress because it did not wait for God's timing
- Failure to produce the intended effect because of **WILFUL DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S PLAN**.

**A great thing at the wrong time can result in a spiritual abortion.**

**Spiritual abortions leave scars on our life and even on the church.**

**In spiritual abortion, the fault lies with the **RECIPIENT** or the **CARRIER** of the vision or the plan of God.**

**Spiritual miscarriage, on the other hand, is defined as:**

- **UNFORTUNATE OR UNFORESEEN TERMINATION OF AN UNDERTAKING**
- **TO FAIL OR SUFFER DEFEAT, APPLIED TO PERSONS, UNDERTAKINGS AND THINGS.**

**Spiritual miscarriage has to do with failures and defeat of life and ministry not by the willful disobedience by the recipient but simply by **fallenness of life or by the demonic forces.****

**Whether it is spiritual abortion or spiritual miscarriage, the common traits we see here are:**

- **PREMATURE TERMINATION** of the conception
- **WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN** does not come to pass
- An endeavor, a vision or an obedience was only halfway through and never reaches **FULL TERM OR COMPLETION**

## **EFFECTS**

- Shame,
- Regret,
- Anger,
- Depression,
- Guilt
- Numbness

And for spiritual miscarriage, there will be an obsession to stimulate vision just to feel normal again.

## **(2) TERAH- A MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN**

Terah, a man who had experienced spiritual abortion and miscarriage.

He is well-known today as a halfway Christian – a man who might have been.

## WHO IS TERAH?

Terah is known in the Bible as the father of Abram (known later as Abraham).

Terah is mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in **Luke 3:34**.

If Terah is known at all, it isn't because of anything he ever did.

He is in fact overshadowed by his descendant.

Terah was the son of Nahor, who was of Noah's son's Shem's line.

Nahor fathered Terah at the young age of 29 years (**Genesis 11:24**) but Terah was 70 years old before his three sons, Abram, Nahor and Haran were born (**verse 26**).

Haran was the father of Lot, Abram's nephew and traveling companion but Haran died during Terah's lifetime (**verse 28**).

After Haran's death, Terah uprooted his family from their home in Ur of the Chaldeans and set out for the land of Canaan.

Terah never made it to their destination.

### THE LIFE AND JOURNEY OF TERAH

Terah, whose name can either mean “**delay or wanderer**”.

“While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth.”

Haran died before his father.

Normally the parents are the ones who are supposed to die first.

But if that wasn't bad enough, some translation like ESV reads like this, “**Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans.**”

So, it is quite possible that not only did Haran die time wise before his father (constituting a **spiritual miscarriage** experience for Terah), he actually died before or in the presence of his father.

Terah actually watched his son die.

**THE DEATH OF HARAN, THEN COLORS EVERYTHING ELSE IN TERAH'S LIFE, EVERYTHING ELSE IN HIS JOURNEY.**

This is where Terah gets up, takes his family and heads out on a journey from his homeland to Canaan.

Why did he decide to leave his homeland?

It could be God originally called Terah to go to Canaan with the same promises that were later given to his son, Abraham.

It could also be that the death of Haran loosened Terah's attachment to his homeland.

Maybe he began to view Ur as **unlucky**.

Maybe Terah was designed to fulfill the one meaning of his name and **WANDER**.

But whatever the reason, the fact remains, Terah got up, took his family and headed off to Canaan.

It was the design of Terah to settle in Canaan.

And so, he set out from a **PLACE OF HURT** to a **PLACE OF HOPE**.

So, Terah headed off towards Canaan.

The route from Ur to Canaan was 1000 miles and it went directly through the town of Haran.

Haran was 600 miles away from Ur and 400 miles away from Canaan, which was about **HALFWAY** between Ur and Canaan.



Haran was apparently a settlement that had been established by Terah's son Haran, or to which at least his name had become attached.

The family was originally from there before they moved to Ur.

And no doubt coming to the town that bore the name of his dead son caused Terah to relive the pain of losing his son.

All these emotions and pain that he tried to push down, resurfaced.

And it is this pain and loss that **DERAILED HIS JOURNEY.**

It is this pain that caused him to **ABORT** the call of God upon his life to go to Canaan.

Terah had to pass through a place that reminded him of his greatest **RELATIONAL PAIN.**

To get to the **LAND OF HOPE**, he had to again go through **THE LAND OF HURT**.

The next scene we see is that when they arrive in Haran, they settle there and that is where Terah died, **NEVER ENDING HIS JOURNEY IN CANAAN**.

The word “**settle**” indicates that they **remained there for an extended period**.

And so, Terah lives up to the second meaning of his name, “**DELAY**”.

He settled in Haran, **DELAYING** God’s call till he lost it.

Why Terah’s journey to Canaan was derailed? Why did Terah abort the call of God upon his life?

- Maybe it was that he came down with a disease and could physically go no farther.
- Maybe his journey got stuck
- Maybe he just thought that he didn’t deserve to hope, to have a better life

- Maybe he thought, *“This is all there is and I should stop dreaming and just settle.”*
- Maybe according to the definition of **“Haran”** (modern Syria) which means **“caravan route”**, was conveniently located on the Euphrates River.

Compared to Ur (Iraq), which was a desert land, Haran looked better.

Compared to Canaan which was undeveloped and full of unknowns.

Terah opted to play it safe, *“Why risk an adventure into Canaan. Just settle in this comfortable city.”*

So it could be that once Terah and family lost their momentum by stopping, they just got **COMFORTABLE.**

**INERTIA** (an object at rest tends to stay at rest) took over so they just settled in.

**Maybe Terah felt comfortable enough that he just did not feel the need to sacrifice more in order to be blessed.**

**Terah is a picture of man who caught a sense of something more, of something new but stopped along the way and settled and never reached it.**

**His journey never made it to Canaan, the **LAND OF HOPE**.**

**Terah's lack of faith and leadership kept him out of the Land of Promise and from fulfilling the call God undoubtedly put on his life.**

**Terah ABORTED the call of God willfully.**

**He obeyed God **PARTIALLY** which is also **DISOBEDIENCE**.**

**He was lured by his own idolatrous heart for **COMFORT** (remember - he and his whole family were idolaters).**

He settled for less. His **LOSSES BEGAN TO DEFINE HIM.**

His **RELATIONAL WOUNDS** overcame him and stagnated his journey.

His pain derailed the journey to the land of hope.

**Application:** How many of us in our lives mirrored what happened to Terah?

Maybe we began this faith journey with hope, excitement and passion but now we are stagnant, bitter, disillusioned with people and the church and we are stuck.

Maybe we have some significant relational wounds. Maybe we have witnessed the physical death of someone and it has shaken us or maybe we have witnessed the relational death of some relationships that at one time were strong and those relationships were helping us to continue with the journey.

**And now we feel like settling for less.**

**Maybe God put a vision, a dream, a goal in our life and we dreamt, planned and took steps toward those things but now it seems like we are stuck.**

**That our dreams are dead and dying.**

**That we have lost hope or we are in the midst of losing it.**

**Maybe you are feeling stuck in your journey and you don't know how to get it unstuck.**

### **(3) WHEN SPIRITUAL ABORTION OCCURS?**

**When do Christians abort the plans, the will and the calling of God halfway?**

**When do people stop short of doing everything God asks?**

- **WHEN THEY FEEL THEY HAVE DONE ENOUGH?**

Terah traveled at least 600 miles to Haran with a big family over difficult terrain and it could be when he got to Haran, he said, *“That’s enough”* and settled there.

**E.g.** Old and long serving Christians who have lost their zeal.

- **WHEN THEY FEEL THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH**

In other words, when they are worn out, stressed out and weary.

- **WHEN THEY FEEL GOD IS ASKING MORE THAN THEY CAN GIVE**

**E.g.** Harry and Christine

Terah never reached Canaan.

He stopped in Haran, lived there for many years and finally he **“died in Haran”**.

**Application:** Another definition for **“Haran”** is **“parched and barren”**. Many Christians because of

spiritual abortion, aborting the plan prematurely die barren and parched spiritually.

#### **(4) HOW TO AVERT SPIRITUAL ABORTION?**

- **UNDERSTAND THAT CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A NEGOTIATED CONTRACT BETWEEN US AND GOD**

Christianity is not a contract.

It is a **total surrender** of our lives.

Jesus said, **“Those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples” (Luke 14:33).**

Commitment to Jesus is complete.

It is laying down our life.

It is following His call no matter where it takes us.

It is accepting His will whether it is for better or for worse.



**It is about going through every stage and circumstances of life until we draw our final breath in this world and first breath in the next.**

**It is not something we try to see if it works out for us.**

**It is not for as long as it feels good.**

**It is not a deal which can be renegotiated when we find it is too tough.**

**It is giving over your life:**

- **Every breath**
- **Every thought**
- **Every intention**
- **Every plan**
- **Every principle**
- **Every relationship**

**It is giving our hope to become and our everything to Almighty God and saying, “Do with me according to your will and purpose”.**

That is not an elite standard of faith.

That is the only standard of faith Jesus considered viable. **“Those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”**

- **UNDERSTAND THAT GOD DETERMINES THE CALL AND NOT US**

God’s plan for our lives...

- Who we will share it with
- What we will do
- Where it is
- How long it is
- How hard it is
- How fruitful we will be....

....all of these things are **GOD’S BUSINESS.**

Often service to God and ministry feel too demanding.

Maybe people have hurt us or frustrated us or disappointed us.

And so, we say to ourselves, *“It’s too much. I’m going to quit. I’ll settle for a less demanding ministry.”*

Now God is saying to us, *“Who said it would be easy? Who called you? Who decides when it’s all over?”*

Today, let’s look beyond our border to many missionaries overseas....

These are just some of the many tough places missionaries serve.

But they are still there.

Why?

*“Because God called me and He hasn’t called me away to anywhere else.”*

**GOD’S CALL – NOT OUR COMFORT, NOT THE RESULTS WE SEE, NOT THE OPPOSITION WE FACE, NOT EVEN**

**OUR WEARINESS – THAT IS WHAT DETERMINES OUR SERVICE.**

**Terah set out for Canaan but COMFORT CULTURE OR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS MEANT HE NEVER GOT FURTHER THAN HARAN.**

**The call of God for us is not to a half marathon.**

**It is for the WHOLE MILEAGE.**

**THE CALL IS TO COMPLETE SURRENDER AND THE CALL CONTINUES AS LONG AS GOD DETERMINES.**

**Now this seems like a crushing call to all of us.**

**It is a tough call and how many of us today are willing to pay this costly price of discipleship and to go all the way with Jesus till the end?**

**Today, let's visualize the life the Jesus one more time.**

**Jesus conceived the plan of God for the salvation of mankind.**

**He was born with a great calling in a humble and smelly stable.**

**He was raised as a human, pregnant with the purpose of God.**

**He underwent all kinds of temptation in the desert, one of which is where the devil used “Haran” to tempt him to abort the plan of God by bowing down before him but Jesus did not succumb.**

**When He set his face to go to Jerusalem, Peter, being used by the devil, tried to stop him from going to cross.**

**This is another attempt of the devil to ABORT the plan of God but Jesus rebuked the devil behind Peter’s suggestion.**

Jesus carried the plan of God all the way to the cross and was crucified on it.

There was the **MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE** for that death sentence which was pronounced upon Jesus.

After the crucifixion, his disciples were all so disillusioned by this **“spiritual miscarriage”**- they felt that Jesus had failed in his mission as Israel’s Messiah.

They murmured, **“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel”** (Luke 24:21).

Hopelessness, grief and disillusion crowded their spirit.

But little did they know that the cross was not a period, a full stop but a semicolon because resurrection followed after the third day and the plan of God in the form of **redemption, justification and propitiation** were carried to the fullest by the death

**and resurrection of that One Man, who did not come down from the painful and humiliating cross halfway.**

**He went all the way in His suffering and He went all the way down to the bottom- Hades so that today by us looking at how much Christ has fully suffered for us, we will not give up nor be a halfway disciple of God but that we will yoke with Christ's endurance to see the plan and the calling come to complete fruition in our lives.**

**We will not be the one to determine when to abort the plan of God in our lives but we will commit fully to God in the degree we grasp how much Christ is fully committed to us on the cross.**

**And even though we may be in relational pain now, we will always see how Jesus himself experienced his fair share of relational pain and wound – betrayal by his beloved disciples and abandonment by his own Father so that we today can claim His comfort, healing, companionship in any relational wounds we are undergoing now.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**Have you unwisely and deliberately aborted the plan and the calling of God upon your life today?**

**Have you shrunk back from your commitment to the church because of hurt and relational wound?**

**Then repent and by faith, receive the healing of Jesus and let Him rebirth within you hope and love again.**

**And for some of you, have you experienced a spiritual miscarriage – where you failed in a certain undertaking which you know for sure God has asked you to enter?**

**Then let your spiritual womb rest for a while first.**

**Let the Holy Spirit come in to heal your spirit man.**

**Don't be in a hurry to conceive another new vision.**



**Wait upon God and in due time, He will call you and speak to you again.**

**Terah had to die first before God spoke again to Abram to continue the first call God gave to Terah.**

**At your Haran, let God expose all your wrong idols of comfort – a spirit of ease and crucify them there so that a new vision can be birthed in you again.**

**Recommit yourself fully and wholly to the calling of God, the plan, the vision and the will of God for your life and you can only commit in the degree you see Christ committing himself fully to you at the cross.**

**end**