

The Bible Vindicated! - 4

Voltaire, in his critical article, Abraham, commented on the words of Abram to the king of Gerar in Genesis 20:12 “But indeed she (Sarai) is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife” - “The Old Testament does not inform us how Sarah was her husband's sister.”

In reply, we note in Genesis 20:12 that Abram’s wife Sarai was one of his father’s descendants, while being through a different wife of Terah than Abram’s mother.

A careful consideration of the facts which are given can be helpful. Genesis 11:28 tells us - “Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans.” This left Haran’s three children under the care of their grandfather Terah until he died –

“And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and” his grand daughter who would become “his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. 32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.”

After Terah’s death, Abram took his nephew Lot under his wing - Genesis 12:5 “Then Abram took Sarai 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, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.” Of Haran’s daughters, Abram was now married to Sarai (accepting the Jewish identification with Iscah), while Abram’s brother Nahor married Milcah.

In Scripture, such relationships as mother, father, daughter, son do not necessarily mean the next generation, but simply a descendant or ancestor of an unspecified generation, e.g., Matthew 1:1 - “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” This would mean that Sarai could still be spoken of as daughter of Terah while actually being Haran’s daughter and therefore Terah’s granddaughter by Terah’s first wife, while Nahor and Abram were born to a different wife of Terah’s than Haran’s mother.

Reviewing the relative ages of Haran and Abram -

- ◆ Genesis 11:26 says Terah was 70 when his first son was born - “Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”
- ◆ Genesis 11:32 records that Terah died at the age of 205 - “So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.”
- ◆ Genesis 12:4 says that after the death of his father, when Abram was 75, he left Haran for Canaan - “Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.” This shows that Abram was born when Terah was 130 - $(205 - 75 = 130)$, which was 60 years after the birth of Terah’s oldest son Haran $(130 - 70 = 60)$ when Terah was 70.

This review of the facts as reported in Scripture show that they are all in harmony. But had there been mistakes made by one who was writing a fictional story, this would not be true. Voltaire set out to discredit Scripture in this case, thinking he had found an error in it. This shows that Voltaire had already made up his mind that the message written by Moses in the book of Genesis is not the word of God. Ironically, Voltaire has instead identified another of the many internal evidences which show that the Bible is truly what it claims to be - divinely inspired.