

Was Terah dead when Abraham left Haran? Views on the meaning of Acts 7:4

Andrew Sibley

This paper discusses several views on the lifespan of Terah in relation to Abraham's departure from Haran to Canaan. There seems to be an anachronism between Stephen's speech in Acts 7:4 and the Masoretic Text of Abraham and Terah in Genesis 11:26, 32. The first consideration in response to the reference concerning the death of Terah is that Abraham left Haran when his father was *spiritually* dead. However, this doesn't appear to accord with a plain-sense reading of the text. Ussher's approach added 60 years to the time in Terah's life when Abraham was born. But, while numerically possible, this doesn't accord with the views of historical commentaries, whether Christian or Jewish, which weakens its status. Two alternative approaches were then considered. Bruce points to correlation between Acts 7:4 and the Samaritan Pentateuch and Philo. According to Bruce, this suggests that there existed a textual recension in first century Judea that agreed with the Samaritan text. While the preferred solution, textual evidence is limited to fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls, so further research will be necessary to render it more conclusive. Augustine's argument was also discussed, that the text does not intend to imply the *settlement* of Abraham in Canaan until Terah's death. But, while possible, it doesn't seem to flow from the most straightforward reading of the text.

There is a chronological difficulty regarding the date of Abraham's birth in relation to the age of Terah. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of responses offered by theologians, although this is not an exhaustive study. Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin (figure 1), recorded by Luke in Acts 7:4, states that Abraham left Haran after Terah had died. Terah's family moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran, then Abraham departed from there to the promised land of Canaan when he was 75 years of age (figure 2). If the period recorded in the Old Testament Masoretic Text (MT) from Terah's birth to Abraham's (then Abram's) birth (70 years) is integrated with the time Abraham left Haran (75 years), a period of only 145 years for the life of Terah would be established. But the information given is that Terah died at the age of 205 years, leaving a gap of sixty years. The relevant Old Testament verses (ESV) are as follows, with Hebrew MT inserts:

“When Terah had lived 70 years [שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה]; šib-‘im šā-nāh], he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran” (Genesis 11:26).

“The days of Terah were 205 years [יָמֵי תְרָח עָמְדוּ עֲמֵת עֲמֵת שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים וְחָמֵשׁ]; qmṯy wšršm wḥmš and Terah died in Haran” (Genesis 11:32).

“Abram was seventy-five years [שִׁבְעִים וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנָה]; šbšm wḥmš old when he departed from Haran” (Genesis 12:4).

And in the New Testament Acts 7:2–4:

“And Stephen said: ‘Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, “Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.” Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans

and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living.”

Acts 7:4 reads in Greek as follows:¹

“τότε ἐξελθὼν ἐκ γῆς Χαλδαίων κατοίκησεν ἐν Χαρράν. κάκειθεν μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ μετόκισεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν γῆν ταύτην εἰς ἣν ὑμεῖς νῦν κατοικεῖτε.”

The speech of Stephen would seem to be at odds with the MT of Genesis if Abraham really had left Haran after Terah had died. Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, written in the late first century AD, follows the chronology of the Septuagint (LXX), and in this regard records the same ages and periods as the MT:

“For Therrus begat Abraham at the age of 70 [ἑβδομήκοστῷ; hebdomékosto, LXX ἑβδομήκοντα; hebdomékonta]. ... they all migrated to Charran in Mesopotamia, where Therrus also died and was buried, after a life of 205 [πέντε και διακόσια; pente kai diakosia, LXX διακόσια πέντε; diakosia pente] years.’ And 1.7.1 ‘Now Abraham, having no legitimate son, adopted Lot, his brother Aran’s son and the brother of his wife Sarra; and at the age of seventy-five [εβδομηκοντα και πέντε; hebdomékonta kai pente, LXX πέντε εβδομηκοντα; pente hebdomékonta] he left Chaldaea, God having bidden him to remove to Canaan, and there he settled, and left the country to his descendants.”²

In response to this apparent anomaly several solutions have been proposed, and these are discussed below. Bishop Ussher suggested that the MT does not say Abraham was



Figure 1. Painting by Mariotto di Nardo, 1408. Originally a predella panel in Pieve di Santo Stefano in Pane in Rifredi, near Florence. It represents the defence of Stephen before the High Priest and Elders of the Sanhedrin. Now located in the National Museum of Western Art, Ueno Park, Taito, Tokyo.

born 70 years into Terah's life, but that Terah started having children when he was 70, and Abraham was actually born 60 years later when Terah was 130 years old.³ Another position, argued for by F.F. Bruce, is that Stephen might have been following the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), which records that Terah lived to only 145 years (Genesis 11:32), or, as a related claim, that an earlier version of the Greek text that Stephen was referencing also recorded a date of 145 years, but has subsequently been lost.⁴ Genesis 11:32 (SP) reads as follows:

“And the days of Terah were hundred and forty five years [חמש שנים וארבעים ומאת שנה; ḥā-mêš šā-nîm wə-ʾar-bā-ʿîm ū-mā-ʾaṭ šā-nāh]: and Terah died in Haran”⁵

There are several other possibilities discussed in the historical literature: for instance, the proposal that Terah died *spiritually* prior to Abraham's departure in the Midrash Rabbah on Genesis (*B'reshith Rabba*),⁶ and a couple of notable proposals by Augustine in *The City of God* (*De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos*).⁷ Although Augustine's comment that Abraham's birth might be a reference to passage through the fire of the Chaldeans is not convincing. This paper assumes that Stephen's speech, and Luke's recording of it, was intended to be taken literally and based upon real chronology. While it has been suggested that Stephen might have made an error, the evidence suggests that Luke was a careful historian who wrote intentionally.⁸



Figure 2. Painting by József Molnár, *Abraham's Journey from Ur to Canaan*, 1850, located in the Hungarian National Gallery, Buda Castle, Budapest

Did Terah die spiritually in Haran?

Several Jewish commentators have elaborated on this passage, but for different reasons. It is suggested, for instance, in the *B'reshith Rabba* that Terah might have been reckoned dead in his lifetime because of his idolatry (see also Joshua 24:2). There was concern among the rabbinical commentators that it would break a Mitzvah (commandment) for Abraham to leave his father before he had died, except that God's calling provided an exemption for Abraham

because his father was *counted* dead, even though living.⁹ This is alluded to in Rashi's commentary on Genesis 11:32: he wondered why Terah's death was mentioned in Genesis before Abraham departed for Canaan, and suggests it implied the spiritual death of Terah.¹⁰ However, it should not be forgotten that the later rabbis were somewhat detached from first-century Judea.

The view that one might be counted dead while still living is not evident elsewhere in the early chapters of Genesis despite references to some very notorious characters such as Cain and Nimrod, who were greater rebels than Terah. And there is some suggestion that Terah repented of his idolatry, as Lightfoot recorded.¹¹ It should be noted that Jewish sources had little interest in trying to defend Stephen's speech as they believed him to have been in error. They were more concerned with trying to defend Abraham from the charge that he abandoned his father. However, a few Christian commentators have taken the idea of spiritual death and proposed that use of the word *ἀποθανεῖν* [apothanein] in Acts 7:4 does not necessarily imply physical death, but more likely the spiritual death of Terah. However, this is not really borne out in the context as Meyer points out.¹² The predominant usage of this verb in the New Testament implies physical death (exceptions are possibly found in Galatians 2:19 and 1 Corinthians 15:31).¹³

A related claim by some neologists, such as Johann David Michaelis, is that the text of Genesis was not meant to be taken as strict chronology because it arose through different sources and was written for spiritual or prophetic reasons, not as comprehensive history. Although Michaelis did not believe the Bible was incorrect, he considered that it was not factually complete.¹⁴ However, this period saw the beginning of a compromise in German theological thought that led to higher biblical criticism and eventually the rejection of Christianity. The separation of the spiritual from physical reality also has echoes of Gnosticism. But the carefully recorded chronology of Genesis supports quite the opposite (a literal understanding of the text) and reveals a faith grounded in reality. The likelihood is that Stephen, in his speech, as relayed by Luke in Acts, intended to imply the physical death of Terah.¹⁵

Ussher's additional 60 years

The solution offered by Ussher is found in his *Annals of the World*, produced in the mid-seventeenth century. This work follows the timeframe of the MT, but adds 60 years to the period leading up to Abraham's birth. He does so by concluding that it was just the elder son, Haran, who was born seventy years into the life of Terah and that Abraham (the youngest of the three) was in fact born when Terah was 130 years old. Ussher writes:

“When Terah was 70 years old, his oldest of three

sons, Haran, was born. Ge 11:26 Abram was not born for another 60 years. ... Abram was born. He was 75 years old when Terah his father died at the age of 205 years.”¹⁶

As well as trying to resolve the problem of Acts 7:4, one of the reasons for Ussher's addition was a belief that a rounded 4,000 years should complete the period from creation to the birth of Christ, assuming, as he maintained, Jesus was born in 4 BC. This is, however, different than the earlier chronology of Bede, who placed the creation epoch in 3952 BC.¹⁷ Other theologians, writing prior to Ussher, calculated the period from Creation to Christ as between 3,929 and 4,000 years, as William Perkins, for instance, noted. There were only a few, however, who saw the need to complete 4,000 years.¹⁸ But in other respects Ussher followed Bede by adopting a similar approach that followed the text of the MT instead of the LXX, although it may be noted that no attempt was made in Bede's work to address the problem that arises from Stephen's speech in Acts 7:4.

Several commentators have come to accept Ussher's calculations. A contemporary of Ussher, John Lightfoot, also allowed an additional 60-year period in his chronology.¹⁹ Among modern Christians who hold to a literal reading of Genesis, Jonathan Sarfati finds it attractive,²⁰ as do several others with the suggestion that the 60 years might even be a minimum value. The further proposal is that it is possible to assume an additional 50 years from Terah's death to Abraham leaving Haran for Canaan.²¹ However, not all evangelical Christians of the 20th century have found Ussher's correction convincing; the well-known scholar and Christian apologist F.F. Bruce suggested it was an ‘improbable expedient’ and preferred a different solution (discussed below).²² James Barr, who does not support Mosaic inerrancy, also thought that Ussher's reading does not follow naturally from the text, and that it forced an extra 60 years onto the subsequent chronology through the rest of the Old Testament.²³ We may also wonder why Abraham would consider it unusual to be childless into his nineties if he was born when his father was 130 years old. There is also a need to at least acknowledge Jewish and rabbinic commentaries on Genesis (even if one questions their accuracy) that suggest that it was Abraham who was born 70 years into the life of Terah, for instance Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* and the fourth-century *B'reshith Rabba*. The later medieval *Sefer haYashar*, which may be regarded as a later rabbinical commentary of unknown origin, has Haran and Nahor as twin brothers, born when Terah was 38 years old.²⁴

Samaritan Pentateuch shortens Terah's life

The alternative solution of Bruce asserts that Stephen, in his speech, was probably following a Greek Old Testament

recension that was in agreement with the Samaritan Pentateuch on this matter, even though no known copies of such a text remain.²⁵ As noted, the SP places the end of Terah's life at 145 years old, instead of the 205 years of the MT and LXX, which would overcome the apparent anachronism and offers a modified chronology that is closer to Bede than Ussher.²⁶ Bruce's commentary also points out that Philo, the Greek-speaking Jewish academic of the first century, seems in agreement with Stephen in Acts 7:4 and the SP in asserting that Abraham left Haran after Terah had died. Philo writes:

“‘And Abraham was,’ he says ‘seventy and five years old when he went out from Haran’ (Gen. xii. 4). ... No one versed in the Laws is likely to be unaware that at an earlier date Abraham migrated from Chaldea and dwelt in Haran, and that after his father's death there, he removes from that country also.”²⁷

Trying to piece together Hebrew and Greek Old Testament manuscripts from the second temple period is problematic. Fitzmyer points out that evidence from the Qumran caves suggests greater diversity in early first-century manuscripts than previously thought, and that the LXX in fact represents an older Hebrew text-type.²⁸ There is evidence that both the LXX and SP may have been derived from a commonly used Hebrew version. Cohen writes:

“The Dead Sea scrolls decided these issues, by showing that there was indeed a Hebrew text-type on which the Septuagint-translation was based and which differed substantially from the received MT. These findings also confirmed that most of the textual phenomena in the Samaritan version (aside from ideological changes) were part of a Hebrew text-type in common use outside of the Samaritan community as well, during the Second Temple period in the Land of Israel.”²⁹

This evidence from Qumran offers support to Bruce's position that there were earlier text types that were similar to the SP, but somewhat different to the MT, and provided the foundation for both the LXX and SP. However, even though some passages of Genesis have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, none have yet been found or published of this specific account, except perhaps fragmentary evidence in the form of a paraphrase of Genesis 12:4–5 from Cave 4 (4Q8b).³⁰ Bruce's view has some attractions and has gained support from research and textual evidence found among the Dead Sea scrolls.

Augustine claims Abraham did not settle in Canaan

Augustine offered a number of solutions in the *City of God*, although the first of which seems rather *ad hoc* and is not overly convincing. Firstly, he proposed that the time in Abraham's life when he left Haran might be “reckoned from the year in which he was delivered from the fire of

the Chaldeans ...” and not from the time of his birth.⁷ The second proposal in Augustine's work may have more substance and suggests that the implied meaning of Acts 7:4 is that although Abraham left for Canaan while Terah was still alive, he did not *settle* in the promised land until after his father had died:

“... he does not say, after his father was dead he went out from Haran; but thenceforth he settled him here, after his father was dead. ... But he says that his settlement in the land of Canaan, not his going forth from Haran, took place after his father's death.”³¹

This latter view of Augustine does gain some support from Peter Pett in his recent commentary on Acts 7:4.³² He comments that Abraham may have wandered the Promised Land with his flocks while his father lived in Haran, but that it would not be considered appropriate to describe the settlement of Abraham in the new land until after his father's death in the old home town. With this perspective, Abraham would have been considered living as part of his father's household, even though wandering and living in tents in Canaan. In further response to Augustine's view, the context and terminology of the passage in Acts needs to be considered.

The Greek text uses the phrase ‘he removed him’ [μετόκισεν αὐτὸν / *metōkisen auton*] into the land. It may be seen that the root of the word *metōkisen* comprises of ‘meta’, with the implied meaning of *after* or *change*, and ‘oikos’, meaning *dwelling place*. It can be translated as ‘remove to another place’, ‘migrate’, or ‘carry away’. So, when did Abraham change his dwelling place and settle? The next verse (Acts 7:5) tells the reader that Abraham was not able to take possession in the land that was given to him [οὐδὲ βῆμα ποδός, *oude bēma podos*, not even length of a foot]³³, but that it was a promise for his offspring. Instead he was a wanderer upon his promised acreage, even though it was to be the inheritance of his descendants. This supports Augustine's point (even though Augustine's knowledge of Greek was limited). The point Stephen makes is that Abraham was looking for another land that is not of this world, just as Stephen's own mind was focused upon the glory of God. So, did Abraham actually settle in the land? It would seem that Augustine considered that Abraham only settled in the land when he purchased a field for Sarah's burial (Genesis 23:3–4).³⁴

“Then Abraham bought a field, in which he buried his wife. And then, according to Stephen's account, he was settled in that land, entering then on actual possession of it,—that is, after the death of his father, who is inferred to have died two years before.”³⁵

The dates given in the MT imply Sarah's death was two years after Terah had died, reflected in some Hebrew commentaries, for instance the *Seder Olam Rabbah*.³⁶ In this regard Abraham was 137 years old when Sarah died at 127 years old, and so Terah died when Abraham was 135

years of age. The *Book of Jubilees* also offers some support to Augustine's view as it suggests that the initial travel of Abraham from Terah was for the purpose of finding a place of settlement for the whole family, with the intention of bringing Terah and Nahor into it:

“And if thou seest a land pleasant to thy eyes to dwell in, then arise and take me to thee and take Lot with thee, the son of Haran thy brother as thine own son: the Lord be with thee. And Nahor thy brother leave with me till thou returnest in peace, and we go with thee all together.”³⁷

If that is close to a true account, the fact that Abraham did not send for his family to join him suggests he had not at that time settled. Unfortunately, *Jubilees* does not tell us when Terah died, and the calling of Abraham included the commitment to leave the rest of his family behind.

On a related point, the original text doesn't actually say directly that it was God who removed Abraham to Canaan, even though some modern texts inform the reader that it was. But, as noted, the text reads that after the death of his father, “he removed him” [μετώκισεν αὐτὸν / *metōkisen auton*]. Who is this referring to? There are three persons in this passage: God, Abraham and Terah, and there is some uncertainty over the reference. Gill, for instance, points out that some translators had different opinions. The Ethiopic version, for instance, has “he removed himself”, implying Abraham removed himself, while the Syriac version has it as “God removed him”.³⁸ So, given this ambiguity one might be able to make a case that the verse ought to be rendered to imply that Abraham carried his father into the land after his death and buried him there, and that that was the time of settlement. The “he removed him” would not then be an action between God and Abraham, but between Abraham and Terah's post-mortem body. However, the view that Terah was buried in Canaan by Abraham does not appear in Jewish commentaries, for instance Josephus,³⁹ and local tradition holds that Terah is buried in Haran, both of which undermine this secondary argument.

Summary

This paper has discussed a problem that arises with Stephen's speech, which is recorded by Luke in Acts 7:4. For those committed to biblical inerrancy the problem involves an apparent anachronism that relates to the time of Terah's death with respect to Abraham's departure to Canaan. Stephen suggested Terah had died before Abraham left, while Terah's lifespan given in the MT indicates otherwise (Genesis 11:26, 32). Several possible solutions have been discussed.

A few 18th-century Christian commentators followed rabbinical thought in proposing that Terah died *spiritually* in Haran, although it may be noted that the rabbis had different motives than the Christian theologians. However, spiritual death doesn't seem to be indicated by a plain-sense reading

of the text of Acts 7:4, and the likelihood is that Stephen and Luke intended to imply Terah's physical death. This position is not argued for by more recent Christian commentators. Ussher's approach, which added 60 years to the birth of Abraham, is at least numerically consistent with the MT, but it is a novelty, and not supported by earlier Christian or rabbinical thought and this potentially weakens its validity.

Other than Ussher's novel approach, there are two main feasible alternatives that deal with Terah's physical death. The more promising one is along the lines of Bruce's suggestion that there existed a textual recension that correlated with the SP's 145-year lifespan of Terah and supported Philo's commentary and Stephen's assertion. In support of this, several Dead Sea scroll scholars maintain that the Qumran evidence points to the prior existence of such a textual tradition in early first-century Judea. Unfortunately, much of this recension has been lost, even though some fragmentary evidence has appeared among the Dead Sea scrolls that demonstrates correlation. At present knowledge of such a recension is incomplete; further research may well shed light upon it.

The other solution discussed here was outlined by Augustine in the *City of God*. His argument holds that the intent of the text is not to tell us when Abraham left Haran, but when he *settled* in Canaan. This settlement occurred following the purchase of land by Abraham in which to bury his wife Sarah. It may be possible to make a case for this from the meaning of the Greek word *metōkisen*, and the text of Acts 7:5, even though it is not firmly established that this was Stephen's intended meaning. Overall, Bruce's position seems to offer the strongest solution and may be strengthened by further research into textual traditions that existed in the second temple period.

References

1. From the Nestle-Aland 28th edn text, sourced from nestle-aland.com. This verse is identical in the Textus Receptus, for instance the 1550 *Editio Regia* of Robert Estienne (Stephanus) τότε ἐξέλθων ἐκ γῆς χαλδαίων κατοίκησεν ἐν χαρραν κακειθεν μετα το αποθανειν τον πατερα αυτου μετωκισεν αυτον εις την γην ταυτην εις ην υμεις νυν κατοικειτε.
2. The LXX periods are from Rahlfs, A. and Hanhart, R. (Eds.), *Septuaginta* (Editio Altera), Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2007; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, translated by Thackeray, H.St.J., Books I–V, William Heinemann and Harvard University Press, London & Cambridge, MA, 1.6.5, pp. 73–75, 1966.
3. Ussher, J., *The Annals of the World*, translated by Pierce, L. and Pierce, M., Master Books, Green Forest, AR, pp. 22–23, 2003.
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5. This has been sourced from sites.google.com/site/interlinearpentateuch/home, and is based on Walton's Polyglot of 1657.
6. Midrash Rabbah on Genesis (*B'reshith Rabba*), Transl. and edited by Rabbi Freedman, H. and Simon, M., vol. 1. 39:7–8, The Soncino Press, London, pp. 314–315, 1939.
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8. See, for instance, Koivisto, R.A., Stephen's Speech: A Theology of Errors? *Grace Theological J.* 8(1):101–114, 1987; MacArthur, J.F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Luke 1–5*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, p. 14, 2009.
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10. The Judaica Press *Complete Tanach with Rashi* (in English and Hebrew), translated by Rabbi A.J. Rosenberg, 1998, available at chabad.org.
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12. Meyer, H., On Acts 7:4; in: Christie, P. and Crombie, F. (Trans. and Eds.), *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (from 6th German edn), T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, UK, 1880. Meyer references this view to Johann David Michaelis' *de chronol. Mos. post diluv.* sec. 15.
13. In Galatians 2:19 Christians are said to die to the Law, and in 1 Corinthians 15:31 Paul says he dies daily.
14. Reill, P.H., *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, p. 83, 1975.
15. Koivisto, *Stephen's Speech*, ref. 8.
16. Ussher, ref. 3, 58 and 63, pp. 21–25.
17. *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, Wallis, F. (Trans.), Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, UK, p. 165, 1999: "Terah at the age of seventy begat Abraham, and lived thereafter 135 years. ... 2023 [AM] Abraham ... was 75 years old when he left his native country at God's command and went to the land of Canaan."
18. Perkins, W., *An exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles*, printed by John Legatt, printer to the University of Cambridge, UK, pp. 60–61, 1595, "Some say there bee 3929. from the creation to Christes birth as *Beroaldus*: some 3952 as *Heirome* and *Bede*: some 3960 as *Luther* and *Io. Lucidus*: some 3963 as *Melancton* in his *Chronicle*, and *Functius*: some 3970. As *Bullinger* and *Tremellius*: some towards 4000. as *Buntingas*." This was also noted by Hall, D.W., A Brief Overview of the Exegesis of Genesis 1–11: Luther to Lyell; in: Mortenson T. and Ury T.H. (Eds.), *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, 2008.
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23. Barr, J., Why the world was created in 4004 bc, *Archbishop Ussher and Biblical chronology*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 67: 575–608, 1984–1985.
24. Midrash Rabbah on Genesis, ref. 6: "For Terah was seventy years old at Abram's birth, whilst Abram departed from Haran at the age of seventy-five; hence Terah, whose age at death was two hundred and five, died sixty-five years after this command, and yet it is narrated before." Josephus, ref. 2: "For Therrus begat Abraham at the age of 70 [ἑβδομῆκοστό; hebdomékosto]". Sefer haYashar, Parry, J.H. (Ed.), Parry and Company, Salt Lake City, UT, 1887, Claimed 1st edn 1552 Naples, surviving printed edn from Venice 1625 CH 7.22: "and Terah was thirty-eight years old, and he begat Haran and Nahor".
25. Bruce, ref. 22 and Kahle, ref. 22. Leaving aside political disputes, the SP was in fact seen as an acceptable popular recension of the Hebrew Text in first-century Judea.
26. Similarity between Stephen's speech and the SP has been noted by some scholars to the point where it is suggested that Stephen was in fact a Samaritan (Anderson, R.T. and Giles, T., *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to its Origin, History and Significance for Biblical Studies*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA, 126–130, 2012; and Spiro, A., appendix v, Stephen's Samaritan Background; in: Munck, J. (Ed.), *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible, Garden City, NY, pp. 285–300, 1967). More likely Stephen was a Greek-speaking Jew. Bruce comments that such a link to Samaria is not warranted, even though there are a number of places in Acts 7 that seem to follow more closely the beliefs and texts of the Samaritans: for example, mention of Abraham's purchase of land in Shechem (Acts 7:16), and inclusion of the plural *Fathers* instead of *Father* in Acts 7:32 (cf. Exodus 3.6: MT has *father*, אָבִי versus SP *fathers* אֲבוֹתָיךְ. The Greek *Fathers*, πατέρων, paterōn Nestle-Aland 28th edn) (see Bruce, ref. 22). These assertions, included in Luke's careful historical account, seem to be deliberate according to Koivisto, and are probably a response to the accusation that Stephen was corrupting the writing of Moses (Koivisto, ref. 8, Acts 6:8–15).
27. Philo, On the Migration of Abraham, XXXII; in: Yonge, C.D., (Trans.), *The Works of Philo*, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, pp. 176–177, 270, 1992. See Bruce ref. 22. Marshall also suggests Luke's account was based upon a first-century source that agreed with the SP, but is now lost. Marshall, L.H., *Tyndale New Testament Commentary, Acts*, IVP, Leicester, UK, p. 135, 1996.
28. Fitzmyer, J.A., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 7, 2000: "The Qumran biblical texts thus show that the Greek translation in the LXX was not carelessly done but represents a different text tradition, which is now known."
29. Cohen, M., The Idea of the Sanctity of the Biblical Text and the Science of Textual Criticism; translated from *HaMikrah V'anachnu*, (Eds., Uriel Simon, HaMachon L'Yahadut U'Machshava Bat-Z'manenu and Dvir, Tel-Aviv, 1979.
30. Fitzmyer, ref. 28, p. 30. Davila '8.4Q8', DJD12 61-64, as 4Q Gen^{b-parr} is a paraphrase of Genesis 12:4–5.
31. Augustine *City of God*, ref. 7, NPNF, 16:15.
32. Pett, P., Commentary on Acts 7:4; in: *Peter Pett's Commentary on the Bible*, sourced at studylight.org. 2013.
33. From the Nestle-Aland 28th edn text, sourced from nestle-aland.com (and same with Stephanus TR *Editio Regia*). Acts 7:5 ESV: "Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child."
34. Genesis 23: 3–4—"Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, 'I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so that I can bury my dead.'" But note Stephen's assertion that Abraham also purchased land in Shechem (Acts 7:16).
35. Augustine *City of God*, ref. 7, NPNF, 16:32.
36. Rabbi Jose ben Halafita (Trans. Guggenheimer, H.W.), *Seder Olam Rabbah: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD, p. 18, 1998.
37. *Jubilees* 12:30–31; in: Charles, R.H., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, 1913.
38. Gill, Commentary on Acts 7:4, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, 1746–1748.
39. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.6.5., ref. 2.

Andrew Sibley works as a meteorologist in the UK. He has a B.Sc. (Hons.) and completed an M.Sc. in Environmental Decision Making in 2003 with the Open University, and finished an M.Phil. in theology at a UK university in 2012, which looked at the science and theology of Intelligent Design. He is an occasional speaker and writer with the Creation Science Movement based in Portsmouth, England, and the author of *Restoring the Ethics of Creation*.