

Genesis 11:10- 13:18

Bible Study

The family of Shem (11:10-26)

Genesis 11:10

¹⁰This *is* the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood.

Shem himself most likely recorded this genealogy

Shem lived for 75 years after Abraham entered Canaan

The list serves as a preface to the story of Abraham

(Expositors) “The list (genealogy of Adam) in chapter 5 reveals a highly developed **theological** reflection on the promise that had been made concerning the seed of the woman in 3: 15...

Noah would survive and his offspring would carry the hope of the promise.”

“The same theological reflection on God’s promise lies behind the list of ten names” (of Shem’s descendents v. 10-26)

Verses 11-26

Traces the line of election from Shem to Abraham (purpose of the verses)

The information that is given about these men: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor is really brief



We are given their names, age at which their first child was born and how long they lived:

Genesis 11:12-13 (example)

¹²Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah.

¹³After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

Line of Shem

(Given twice: chapter 10 and 11)

Gen.10: 24, 25

Eber

|

Joktan

|

Babylon

Gen. 11: 14, 16

Eber

|

Peleg

|

Abraham

Description of Shem's line
leading up to Babylon in
chapter 11

A shift in focus in the line of
Shem—**away from**
Babylon

Jer. 51: 6 “Flee from the
midst of Babylon”

7th book in Genesis

Covers scripture from 11:27- 25:11

2016 BC

Genesis 11:27

²⁷This *is* the genealogy of Terah:
Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot.

Terah—Abraham's father

➤ Characteristic of Genesis narratives to mention the father but focus on the son

Lot—Abraham's nephew would accompany him much in his travels

Genesis 11:28

²⁸And Haran died before his father Terah in **his native land**, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Haran (Abraham's brother) died an early death...so Abram adopts Lot

Modern day southern Iraq

Map of Ancient Near East



Ur of the Chaldeans



Abraham's family home

Genesis 11:29-30

²⁹Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah.

³⁰But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

V. 30 A digression from the genealogy with special significance

Genesis 11:31

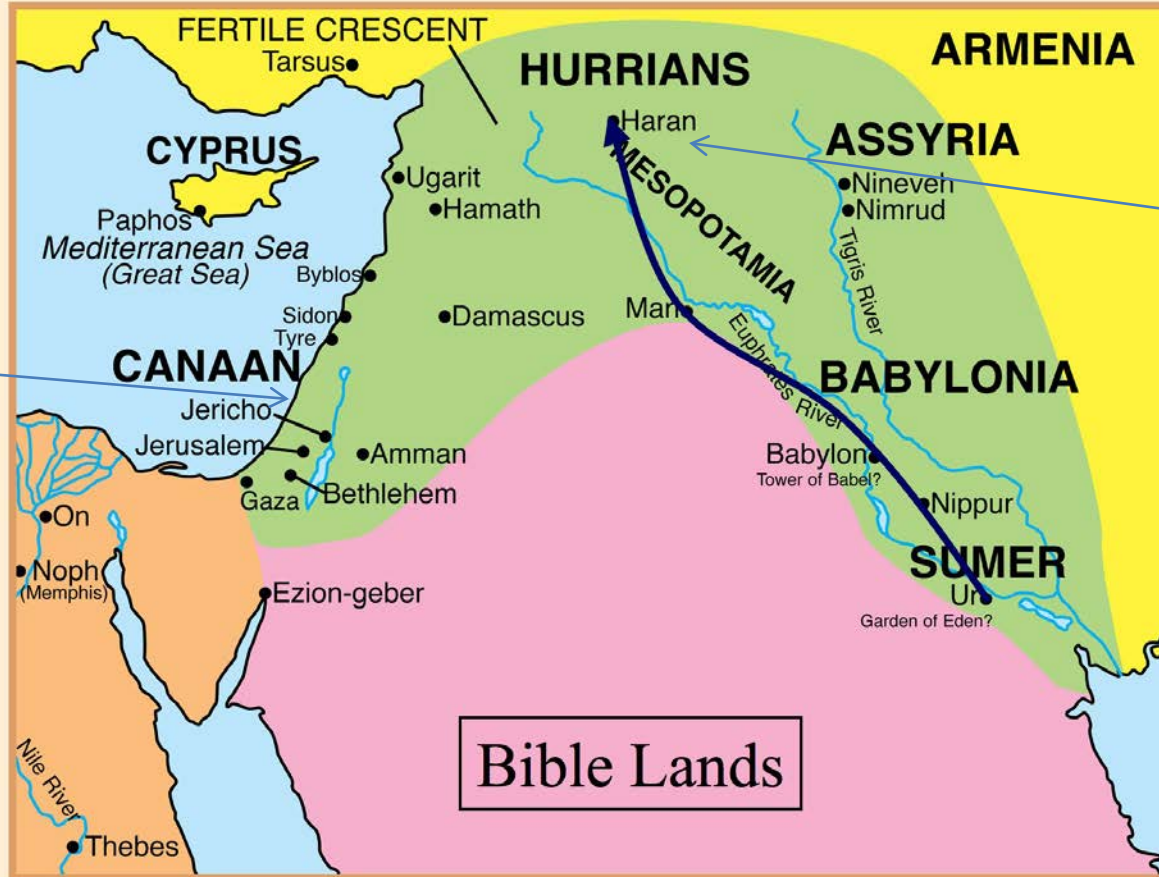
³¹And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and **they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan**; and **they came to Haran** and dwelt there.

Terah as head of the family leads them out of Ur of the Chaldeans

Genesis 11:32

³²So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

v. 31 “and they came to Haran”



Famous center of moon worship

600 miles NW of Ur

400 miles NE of Canaan

Bible Lands

Discrepancy?

Description of the trip before the call in Chapter 12: 1

Hysterologia

A figure of speech in the Bible

“A figure by which that which is put last, ought, according to the usual order, to come first” (Bullinger: Figures of Speech Used in the Bible)

- Genesis 10 and 11: the dispersion of the nations (Ch.10) is put before the cause of it recorded in chapter 11
- Genesis 12:1 the call of Abraham is put, by Hysterologia, after the obedience to it (ch.11:31)
- (Acts 7: 2-4) Stephen clarifies the account of Abram's call

Acts 7:2-3

²And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, **before he dwelt in Haran,**

³and said to him, ‘*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*’[£]

⁴Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, **when his father was dead,** He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

“from there when his father was dead, He moved him to this land....”

(Bullinger) “showing that Terah, his father, was the **hindrance** to Abram’s complete obedience.

The figure (of speech hysterologia) thus calls attention to the fact that in his day, as well as our own, **family ties** often hinder full obedience to God”

Chapter 12

Genesis 12:1

¹Now the **Lord** had said to Abram: “Get out of your **country**, From your **family** And from your **father’s house**, To a land that I will show you.

1) Get out of your country

2) From your family

3) From your father’s house

Genesis 12:1

“Get out of your country”

Were idolaters—had lost the knowledge of God

Worshipped the powers of nature: sun, **moon** and stars

(Expositors): “by putting the call of Abraham within the setting of UR of the Chaldeans, the author aligns his narrative with themes that will prove central in later prophetic literature”fleeing from Babylon

Isaiah 51:6 “Flee from the midst of babylon....do not be cut off in her iniquity”

Jeremiah 50:8 “Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans”

Genesis 19:17 Lot was told: “escape for your life” from Sodom and Gomorrah

“Ur of the Chaldees”

Ur means: “the moon goddess”



In southern Babylonia

One of the largest and wealthiest cities

The entire activity of the city—commercial, social as well as religious revolved around the cult of the **moon-god**

Ziggurat at Ur



- Shrine of the moon-god “Nannar” on it’s upper stage
- Shrine contained the statue of the god

“Nannar”: the moon-god and “Ningal” the moon-goddess



- ‘Ningal’ :moon-goddess of Ur
- Her most common name was: Ishtar
- Ishtar=‘Easter’ of our day

Astarte/Ishtar



Genesis 12:2 “From your family”

Jewish tradition and legends state that Abraham was persecuted as a child for not worshipping idols

“Several of Abram’s relations have names that suggest adherence to lunar worship”
(Word Biblical Commentary):

Sarah: means ‘princess’ — *Sarratu* was the wife of the moon-god

Milcah: means ‘queen’ — *Malkatu* was the daughter of the moon

Genesis 12:2 “And from your father’s house”

‘Terah’ is probably from the same Hebrew root as ‘moon’

Abraham’s father ‘Terah was an idolater: (Joshua 24:2)

Joshua 24:2

²And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of [£]the River in old times; and they served other gods.

Haran, where Terah led the family to, was another center of moon worship...Terah was probably as comfortable there as in UR of the Chaldees

Genesis 12:2

² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

Physical promises made to Abraham for his obedience



A great nation

Great name

A blessing

Genesis 12:3

³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**



Promise of the coming of Christ (spiritual blessing)

Genesis 12:4

⁴ So Abram **departed** as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* **seventy-five** years old when he departed from Haran.

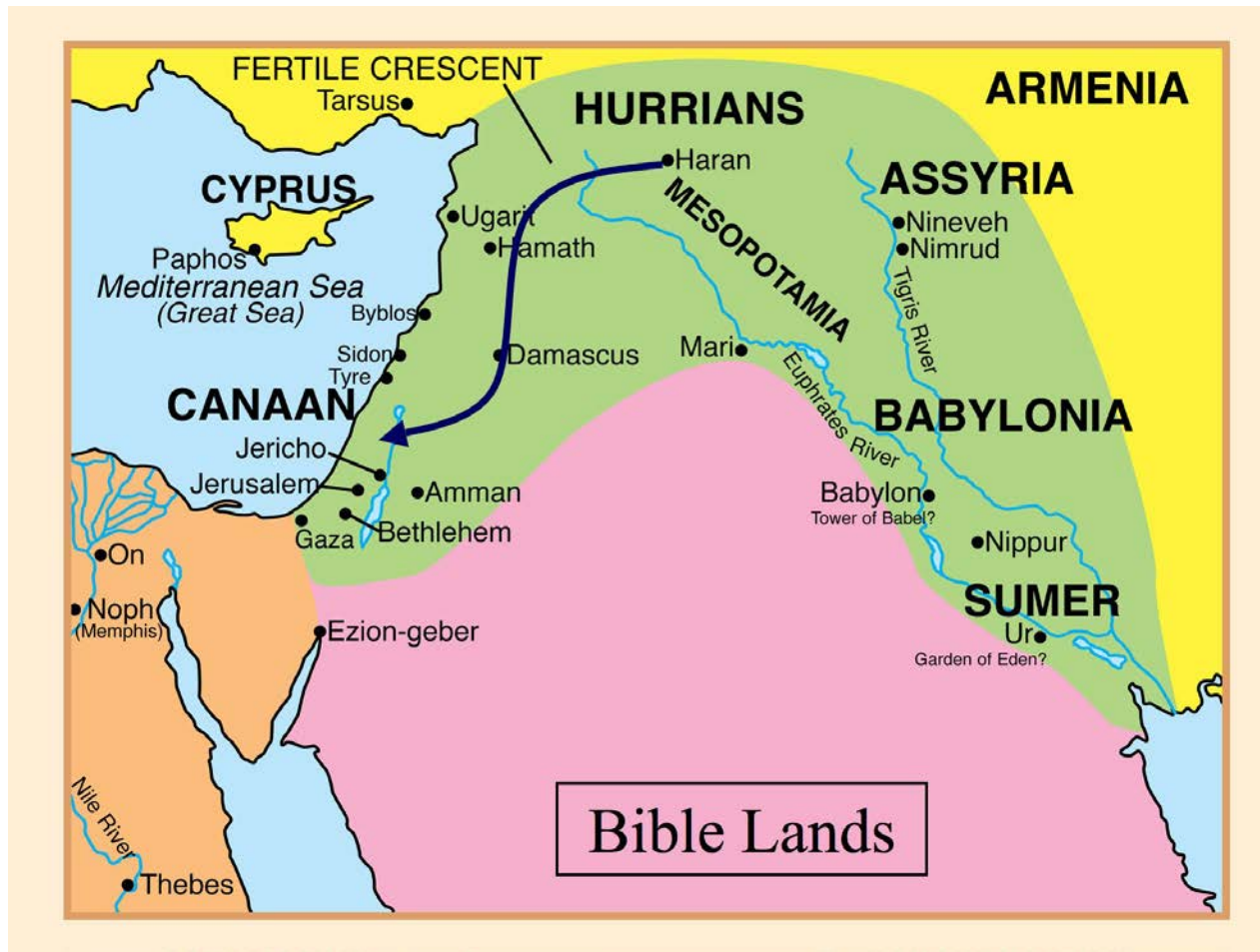


Abraham's obedience

(Barnes) "The call was given when he was seventy...five years before he entered the land of Canaan"

(NSB) "The Bible rarely indicates a person's age when events occur, but it does so several times for Abram. As we will see, this testifies to God's mighty works in Abram's life at his advanced age"

v. 4 “Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran”



(Chapter 11:31) “and they came to Haran and **dwelt there**”

Abraham was there long enough to acquire ‘possessions’ and ‘people’ (Barnes)—al most five years in Haran

Genesis 12:5

⁵Then 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.

➤ Possessions (Heb.)= movable property—Herds

➤ People= servants

Abram had become more wealthy—he had been blessed as God had said

v. 5 last part
'they came to the land'



Northern Galilee

Not immediate
possession

Of Canaan

A tree of stature and beauty that
would become a meeting place
for religious purposes

Genesis 12:6

⁶Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as [£]the terebinth tree of Moreh.

And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

“Shechem” (OKJ ‘Sichem’)
(Companion) “The place of Abram’s first altar and Christ’s first mission [John 4]; also of
Jacob’s altar [Gen. 33: 20]

Genesis 33:18, 20

¹⁸Then **Jacob** came safely to the city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan....

²⁰Then he erected **an altar** there and called it El Elohe Israel.[£]

V. 6 last part

“and the Canaanites were then in the land”—but Abram would not waver his faith and
receives special assurance from God in the next verse



Genesis 12:7 (first part)

⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.”

The first recorded appearance of God to anyone in scripture

“**to your descendants** I will give this land”

(Word) “This monumental statement, the shortest of all the promises, yet names both people and land,

and unites them by the verb **give**, here uttered for the first time”



Abram's **first act** upon reaching the land of promise...as Noah did when he left the ark



v. 7 (last part)

“And there he **built an altar** to the Lord, who had appeared to him.”

Sacrifice on the altar was the common way of worship in the OT

Altar on the place where God appeared which was hallowed

(Word) “Abram built an altar to show that he believed the promise of the land.

In building it, he symbolically demonstrated his conviction that one day it would belong to his descendants.”

Genesis 12:8

⁸And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he **pitched his tent** *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there **he built an altar to the Lord** and **called on the name of the Lord**.

“pitched his tent”—suggests he may have been there a good while

“built an altar to the Lord”—the second time

“Called on the name of the Lord”
(Word) “this implies more than simple prayer. It implies that Abram **worshipped in a regular formal way**”

Genesis 12:9

⁹So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the [£]South.

“journeyed, going on”—the grammatical construction suggests a series of encampments
(Word)

The same word was used in Israel’s wanderings

“south” (Heb. Negev)= hill country

The Negev marks the southern border of the land of Canaan

Abram had traveled through the promised land from the north to the south, having walked through it, camping in it and worshipping in as well



Shechem

Bethel

Negev

Genesis 12:10

¹⁰Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt **to dwell there**, for the famine **was severe** in the land.

Canaan was known for fluctuating rainfall....food shortages and famine was common

The Nile River valley was fertile and was not dependent so much on rainfall



Nile River
valley
irrigation



There is a parallel between Abram's journey to Egypt and the events of the Exodus

Genesis 12:11-13

¹¹And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife,
“Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance.

¹²Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This *is* his wife’; and
they will kill me, but they will let you live.

¹³Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that [£]I may live
because of you.”

Apparently out of fear Abram schemed to tell a half truth about his half-sister wife

(BKC) “In enemy territory a husband could be killed for his wife”

“But if Abram were known as her brother, someone wanting her would have to **make marriage arrangements with him**, which would possibly **give him time** to react in his own interest” (BKC)

Genesis 12:14-16

¹⁴So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful.

¹⁵The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.

¹⁶He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

The twist was that Pharaoh wanted her and he did not need to bargain for her and simply had her taken

v. 16

Abram became wealthy because of the good treatment by Pharaoh for Sarai

Most likely Hagar the Egyptian handmade was acquired at this time

Genesis 12:17-18

¹⁷But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

God delivered Abram and family by means of plagues that mirrors the Exodus episode
(Word) Hebrew 'plagues'-- "often refers to skin diseases" i.e.(boils)

¹⁸And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "**What is this you have done** to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife?"

"What"—is emphatic

"What is this you have done?"—was put to Eve (Gen. 3: 13)

"What have you done?"—to Cain (Gen. 4:10)

v. 18 (last part)

"Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"—could have involved the king in adultery, which in the ancient world deserved the death penalty

¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She *is* my sister’? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way.”

²⁰So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Pharaoh was lenient with Abram in judgment—only deportation

v. 19 The sentence contained four Hebrew words: Here...wife...take...go

v. 20 “sent away”—contains overtones of expulsion...but is the verb used often to describe Israel’s exodus from Egypt

(BKC) “In spite of the trouble Abram caused for himself, God was faithful to his word and did not let the foolishness of this man throw his plan into jeopardy.”

“God’s servants should trust him completely and not resort to self-directed schemes”

Genesis 13:1-2

¹Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the [£]South.

²Abram *was very rich* in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

v.1 “the south”= Negev—extreme southern border

v. 2 First time mentioned of financial assets...the Israelites were also given gold and silver upon leaving Egypt...this foreshadows what would happen in the future

Genesis 13:3-4

³And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

⁴to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

Abram returns to the place he had been at the beginning, to the altar he had built and renews his worship of the Lord

Genesis 13:5

⁵Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.

Lot was blessed with wealth just as Abram was...but their great wealth creates a problem

Genesis 13:6-7

⁶Now the land was not able to support them, that they might **dwell** together, for their **possessions were so great** that they could not dwell together.

⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then **dwelt** in the land.

“dwell together” –is key because grazing space was limited...the Canaanites and Perizzites occupied much of the land

Genesis 13:8-9

⁸So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be **no strife** between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; **for we *are* brethren**.

⁹*Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.”*

v.9 Abram’s solution to the matter—he gave Lot first choice...while exercising faith that God would bless him

Genesis 13:10

¹⁰And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.

The Jordan valley was well watered, fruitful and beautiful...’like the garden of the Lord’

The bad news was that Sodom and Gomorrah was also there...it was apparently more fertile before the destruction of the two cities



Jordan River

“the plain of Jordan.....well watered”

Genesis 13:11

¹¹Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed **east**. And they separated from each other.

Lot's choice was selfish and went east, which in Genesis generally leads to judgment

Genesis 13:12-13

¹²Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom.

¹³But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.

(Word) “The theological geography of Lot’s decision is interesting. ...though offered a share of Canaan he is depicted as turning his back on it.

Lot is stepping out toward the territory that his descendents the Moabites and Ammonites, would eventually occupy in Trans-Jordan”

Verse 13

Men of Sodom—exceedingly wicked and sinful ...description of the world before the flood

Genesis 13:14-15

¹⁴And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

¹⁵for all the land which you see I give to you and your [£]descendants forever.

The promises of the land and his descendents are much more **explicit and full**

1) The land is defined: (v. 14)

He is to look around, as the four points of the compass and see all the land

2) The land is given to **him** and **his descendants**

3) **Forever**

Genesis 13:16-17

¹⁶And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered.

¹⁷Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.”

v. 16

Nations in ancient times were relatively small...the promise here is that they will be uncountable, of such great numbers

v. 17

(NSB) “Abram’s walk in the land is a symbolic act of taking possession. Abraham himself would not take possession of the land, his descendents would”

Genesis 13:18

¹⁸Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by ^εthe terebinth trees of Mamre, which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the Lord.

Hebron would be one of the principal places where Abram would stay, but in tents
He continued building altars to worship God (3rd one)

Lessons

1) Abraham was called out of the world of his day, just as we are today

2) Abraham faced tests and trials (just as we do)

3) God helped Abraham –he helps us



Isaiah 41:10

¹⁰ Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

4) God makes good on his promises

John 10: 28

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish”