The Apparent Conflict

When reading Genesis, a timeline issue may seem to arise regarding Abram’s departure from Haran and the death of his father, Terah.

> *Genesis 11:26*
> “When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”
>
> *Genesis 11:32*
> “The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.”
>
> *Genesis 12:4*
> “So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

At face value, if Terah fathered Abram at age 70 and Abram left Haran at age 75, Terah would have died at 145 (70 + 75), not 205. Yet Scripture clearly states Terah lived to 205. This raises the question:

Did Abram leave Haran before or after Terah died?

The New Testament Clarifies It

To resolve this, we turn to Acts 7:2–4, where Stephen recounts the story of Abraham:

> *Acts 7:2–4*
> “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.”

Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, confirms that Abram left Haran after the death of Terah, which supports Genesis 11:32’s statement that Terah died at age 205.

Reconciling the Timeline: Who Was Born First?

The misunderstanding comes from assuming Abram was Terah's firstborn son, born when Terah was 70. However, that's not necessarily the case.

Genesis 11:26

> "When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran."

But this is a summary verse, not a birth order statement. The three sons are listed with Abram first not because he was the eldest, but because he is the most significant in redemptive history.

Evidence That Haran Was the Eldest

There are strong contextual clues that suggest Haran was older than Abram:

1. Lot, Haran’s son, was an adult when he traveled with Abram (Genesis 12:5).
2. Milcah, Haran’s daughter, married Nahor, Abram’s brother (Genesis 11:29). This means Haran had grown children before Abram and Nahor married—suggesting Haran was older.
3. Terah’s oldest son was likely Haran, born when Terah was 70. If Abram was born significantly later, say when Terah was 130, this would align the timeline correctly.

There is no contradiction. The Bible harmonizes perfectly when understood in its historical and literary context. The confusion arises only if we assume Abram was the eldest child, which Scripture does not state.

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