

BACKGROUND:

The story of Abram (renamed Abraham) begins the long narrative of the chosen people of God. This passage is only 12 chapters into Genesis, the first book of the Bible. After creation (and Adam and Eve) the stories move quickly from Noah to the Tower of Babel. Beginning with Abraham, the story becomes specific to a person, a family, a clan, and (eventually) the nation of Israel.

In the verses before this passage, Abram and his wife Sarai moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to a new home in Haran. God then spoke to Abram and calls him to take their family somewhere they had never been. Then came the promises of a land (which came to be known as Israel) and a great nation (God's chosen people). These promises shape the rest of the Biblical story.

SCRIPTURE:

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

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. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on by stages towards the Negeb.

- How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?
- How open are they to God's call?
- What might this passage say to our community of faith?