

Abram – Calling and promise – Abram and Lot



Genesis : 12, 1-9; 13 : 1-18

The Lord said to Abram: "Leave your country and go to a land which I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you." Abram obeyed God, believed him and travelled with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and all their possessions to the land of Canaan. There he built an altar. Later Abram and Lot parted ways as their herdsmen quarrelled. Lot decided to settle in the more fertile region.

2

The children recognize that the Lord leads and guides us on his ways
and that he fulfils his promises.

Abram, Sarai and Lot wander through the desert. They are followed by many herdsmen, women and children, heavily loaded donkeys, but also by frisky lambs, sheep and goats. All these belong to Abram and Lot. It is hot. Abram and Lot have a long, wearisome walk ahead of them which will lead them over hills and plains, across a few rivers and through endless deserts. They rest at water-holes or on river banks where the animals are relieved of their burdens and allowed to drink. The men pitch the tents in which they live with their wives and children. A few shepherds remain awake at night to watch over the tents and the animals. But over them all God keeps watch and they place their trust in him. Abram is not making this arduous journey voluntarily. The Lord had spoken to him earlier and said: "Abram, leave your country, your friends and acquaintances and go to a land which I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you." Abram obeyed the Lord. That is why he is now en route to this new land. God himself has called Abram and God is his leader and guide. Abram trusts God. He knows the dangers of such a journey. Naturally he also knows that he can depend on his servants. This great number of people and animals progresses only slowly. They leave a broad stretch of tracks from their hoofs in their wake as they move from place to place.

1

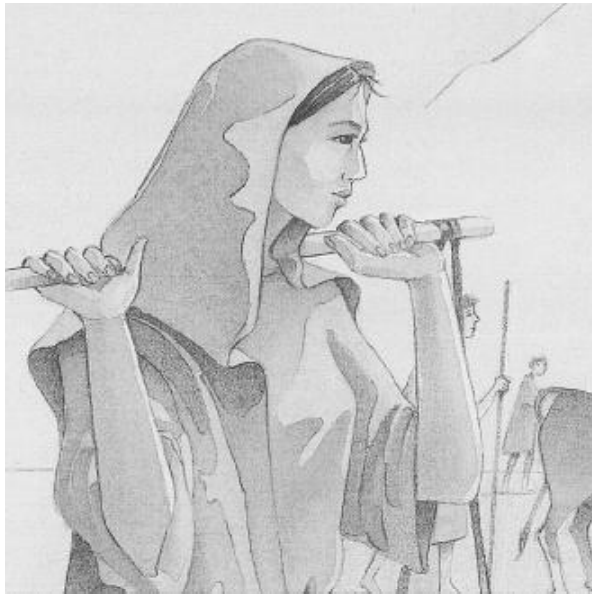
After many days they arrive at the banks of a river. They have to cross this river. Abram looks for a shallow place to make the crossing. The lambs are carried across by the shepherds. They now find themselves in a better country. There are more streams here than in the country they have just left and there are also better pastures for their flocks. Abram orders the tents to be put up. This time not only for one night. The animals are allowed to graze to their fill. Then the Lord appears to Abram once more: "This is the land I will give to your descendants."

2

Your descendants? Abram is seventy-five years old already. He and his wife Sarai do not have any children. Something else also worries Abram: The country is already inhabited by other people and he and his following are strangers here. Abram trusts and believes the Lord, however, although he does not know how all the promises can be fulfilled. Certainly God knows. This strong faith enables Abram to be happy, peaceful and satisfied. Abram travels from one water-hole to the next with his herds. He feels that God's protection is always with them. The herds of Abram and Lot increase steadily. Many herdsmen watch over them. But the peace is often disturbed. Abram's herdsmen and those belonging to Lot, argue every day over the best grazing and about which herd is allowed to drink first in the evenings. Abram hears of these constant quarrels. It saddens him as he is a peace-loving man. He repeatedly admonishes his herdsmen to give in to the others, but it does not seem to help. There is only one solution: Abram takes Lot

God fulfils his promises – Abraham

up onto a mountain. They look across the wide plains. In the east the river Jordan flows through the beautiful countryside. In the south the land is fertile, in other directions not quite so green. Abram says: "It is not good that our herdsmen quarrel with each other. We will divide our herds and will not stay together any longer. If you go to the right, I will go to the left; should you go to the left, however, I shall go to the right." How modest Abram is! Which side will Lot choose? He sees the beautiful plains along the river Jordan. His eyes light up. "There my herds will always be able to eat their fill and multiply," he thinks. "There I will become a rich man!" He therefore blurts



out: "My Uncle, I will take the lowlands," and he points to the fertile region around the river Jordan. There also were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

So Abram travels in the opposite direction. He is satisfied. God has seen everything and says to Abram: "Do not be sad. Look from where you are in all directions. All the land that you see, I will give to you and your descendants. Your nation will be as numerous as the dust of the earth or the sand of the sea." Abram receives the less fertile region. But the Lord repeats his pledge to Abram and this makes him happy.

3

*Abram believes in God.
Those who trust the Lord and believe
in him, he leads wonderfully.*

- 1 We show the children the picture and discuss it. The children reflect on what it means to simply leave one's fatherland with all one's possessions, to fully trust God and to take upon oneself the dangers of such a journey. God blessed Abram on his journey and gave him the strength to fulfil his godly will.
- 2 The children ponder on a godly promise. (A pledge which God has given.) The Lord fulfilled the first promise which he had made to Abram: Under God's protection, Abram arrived in the land promised to him. Abram's great faith in the Lord's promise was rewarded.
- 3 What did the Lord promise Abram? (A nation and a country) We look at the picture once more. Abram had to leave his beloved fatherland. He had to leave and give up that which he loved. In this way, God could bless him. Have we also been promised something?