

Genesis 12:1-4aⁱⁱ

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.

ⁱⁱAbout the First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

At this point in the book of Genesis, the focus changes from the story of all humanity to the story of one man, Abram, and through him to the story of a chosen people. The LORD takes the initiative and calls Abram (Abraham) out of his family structure and the social and cultural security of his present location in Haran to go to the unknown land God will show him. His response is the first of the trustful acts that define him as preeminently the Old Testament man of faith.

Abraham and his descendants are chosen to inherit a land, become a great nation and mediate blessing to all the world. The story of Abraham shows how God acts in history through the responses of individuals and peoples. Abraham's decision to yield to the will of God no matter the sacrifice demonstrates the nature of the friendship he had with God.