

## THE CALL OF ABRAM

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss

*Lesson: Genesis 12:1-9*

You heard the story of how the Lord called to Abram, and told him of the wonderful things He was going to do for him, his children and his children's children. At that time, Abram was living in Haran, a city a long way north of the land of Canaan, and he had never been anywhere near Canaan; he didn't know about it. He was married to Sarai, and he was already getting to be an old man—75 years old—but they had had no children.

Then the Lord called to him and told him to leave Haran, to leave his land, and those with whom he was born, and to leave his father's house, and go where the Lord would show him. And the Lord said that He would show Abram a land that would be his very own, and his children, and Abram's children would become a great and important nation. This was a very big promise for the Lord to make, and Abram realized that he had to do what the Lord said. So he left his home. He gave up all the things he had in Haran, and then he took his wife and his brother's son, Lot, and they took their belongings, their cattle, goats and sheep, and took the long journey to the land of Canaan. They must have gone by camels, with all their goods on the camels, and with the children perhaps and the herdsmen driving the sheep, goats and cattle. And for days they journeyed, until they came to the land of Canaan, the land that the Lord had promised him. And there Abram and Sarai his wife lived, except for two short journeys, until they died, and there Isaac their son was born.

If you stop to think about it, you will see that what the Lord said to Abram must have been a big surprise to him, and a very exciting one. For he was just an ordinary man, living his life in Haran, and then suddenly the Lord spoke to him, and told him that he was going to have a special land all to himself, and that his child would have children, and they would have children, and a great nation was going to live in this special land. You can imagine that Abram was rather excited when he got together all the things he had and went to go into the land of Canaan—even though he knew that instead of living in a big house, he was going to have to live in a tent for the rest of his days. But he knew that his children and grandchildren would have a special land that was all their own. If he had stayed comfortable in Haran, they would have been nobody.

Now each one of us is like Abram, although in a different way. For the Lord calls to each one of us too, and shows us a land that will be ours. It isn't a land in this world, it is a part of heaven. For the land of Canaan stands for heaven, and to each one of us the Lord calls out of His Word, and tells us to come into heaven, doesn't He? He tells us that we're going to have to leave this world, so

we must follow where He leads, and He will take us into a much better world, a world which will be ours forever, the world called heaven. He tells us to leave certain things behind us, too, when we start to follow Him to heaven. We must leave behind our selfish thoughts and ugly feelings, we must cast them out on this earth, because there will be no room for them in heaven. These things we must leave behind, just like Abram left his house in Haran. But we can take all our happy feelings with us, and all our brains, and strength, and thoughts which are good—just like Abram took his wife and his furniture, camels, sheep, goats and cattle with him.

And just like the Lord led Abram safely into the land of Canaan, so He leads each one of us into the heavenly Canaan, into a beautiful and good land where we can live forever.

That's why the story of Abram and his children is in the Word, because in an inner meaning it tells about the way that the Lord leads each one of us to heaven. When we read about the Lord calling Abram, and saying to him, "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you," we can think that the Lord is calling to us, too, telling us to leave behind selfish and ugly feelings, and come with Him to heaven. And when we read that Abram did as the Lord had said, and took all his things, and went into the land of Canaan, we can think of how the Lord will lead us, safely, if we will follow Him, on the long, sometimes hard, journey to His heavenly kingdom. *Amen.*