

**2. December 2020**

**The Long Road to Bethlehem, Part 3  
“Abraham and Israel”**

God's love finds those who do not close their heart. Not all turn away from Him, not all walk indifferently through their time on earth, not all remain asleep and keep their ears closed to the call of God. There are also the faithful!

God finds Abraham, the father of believers!

*“Yahweh said to Abram, Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country which I shall show you; and I shall make you a great nation, I shall bless you and make your name famous; you are to be a blessing! I shall bless those who bless you, and shall curse those who curse you, and all clans on earth will bless themselves by you.” (Gen 12:1-3)*

*“And I shall maintain my covenant between myself and you, and your descendants after you, generation after generation, as a covenant in perpetuity, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.” (Gen 17:7)*

And Abraham was seen worthy of the covenant. His love for God was tested (*cf. Gen 22:1-12*), and in Abraham the light of the one who was to be born in Bethlehem and was appointed by God to be Lord over all nations were already shining.

Abraham becomes the friend of God and pleaded to God that the sinful Sodom is not destroyed (*cf. Gen 18:20-33*), just as much later the Messiah wants to save the whole sinful human race.

From the descendants of Abraham the people of Israel is formed with the twelve tribes.

God goes his way with Israel and prepares the coming of his son. It is a long way that leads through the desert, a story of God's faithfulness and the frequent apostasy of His people. It is a true love story! It is the everlasting wooing of the divine Bridegroom for his Bride. He wants to take her home and give her a share in his fullness, but she does not really understand this love. She often turns her heart to other gods. But the faithfulness of the Lord remains unbroken:

*“But look, I am going to seduce her and lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. When that day comes- declares Yahweh- you will call me, 'My husband', no more will you call me, 'My Baal'. I shall banish the names of the Baals from her lips and their name will be mentioned no more. When that day comes I shall make a treaty for them with the wild animals, with the birds of heaven and the creeping things of the earth; I shall break the bow and the sword and warfare, and banish them from the country, and I will let them sleep secure. I shall betroth you to myself for ever, I shall betroth you in uprightness and justice, and faithful love and tenderness.” (Hos 2:16.18-21)*

It is this faithfulness of God which far exceeds our infidelity. His love is greater than sin and weakness. It is the heart of God in which the love for His people never dies. This is our true happiness!

This love brought him to Bethlehem when time has come!