OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE
Sometimes reduced to a mere slogan, the concept of “Abrahamic faith”\(^1\) is often used in the interreligious dialogues of today, in the context of their difficult position within political reality.\(^2\) “Abrahamic faith” reaches beyond the mere fact that Abraham is a literary figure in the ancient texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. His specific role within the traditions of these religions is of importance, and within all three he has become the symbol for a new and decisive stage within religious history.\(^3\) In this contribution, my focus is on the Hebrew Bible. More specifically, I will address those texts within the Abraham cycle in which Abraham’s relationship to the nations is discussed.

Naturally, the main focus will be on Gen 12:1–3, without doubt the passage within the Abraham cycle which has been most commented upon. This popularity already points to its function as the linchpin of the primeval history and the patriarchal narratives. Whatever their role or stage of the tradition, these verses address Abraham’s relationship with all of the families and nations of the earth. For Judaism, Abraham is the ancestor from whom the Israelite people sprang in accordance with a divine promise. For Islam, Abraham is the father of Ishmael and the grandfather of Esau, the ancestors of the Arab people from which Muhammad sprang. For Christianity, Paul linked Christ and his believers

\[\begin{align*}
2 & \text{ In his inaugural address Representaties van religie in het Nederlandse debat (Groningen; University of Groningen 2008), A.F. Sanders referred to the Islamic initiative “A Common Word between Us and You” (Online: http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=option1) of 138 Muslim leaders and the reactions on the Jewish and Christian sides. In the Netherlands the reactions were minimal. After some time, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands appointed a committee, and “open letters” play a role in the debate now (2009).} \\
\end{align*}\]