

God's Blessing Is for All People

Genesis 12:1-8

March 1, 2026 (Lent 2-A)

St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. (Gen. 12:1-8 NIV)

Dear fellow believers in the Lord, the one true God:

Last Sunday we heard about the first promise of a Savior. After our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell into sin, God promised that an offspring or descendant of the woman would crush the devil's head and defeat him.

Many years passed by. The world got populated and turned evil. It was so evil that God sent a flood to get rid of the wickedness, but in his grace saved Noah and his family, starting over again. But there was no further word about a Savior from sin...until our text came. The Lord called a seventy-five-year-old man named Abram to leave his country, his people, and even his father's household to a new place. Among the many blessings he promised, the one we will be focusing is that promise of a Savior. It assures us, **God's Blessing Is for All People.**

Abram must have felt overwhelmed when he got this call. Even though people lived longer in the days of Genesis, over 2,000 years BC, the age of 75 was still not usually a time to start fresh in a new, unfamiliar land. But the Lord promised a number of blessings—miraculous blessings—for Abram and his wife Sarai. "I will make you into a great nation." Even though Abram and Sarai didn't have any children, God promised that a large, mighty, influential nation would be descended from him. "I will bless you." In this new land, God would make him prosperous and wealthy, and spiritually rich through his Word. "I will make your name great." Abram would become famous and would be honored by generations to come. Abram's name would become "Abraham," meaning "Father of many nations." We know him best by that name too, Abraham.

The Lord promised that Abraham would also be a blessing to the people around him, and those who blessed this man of God would in turn be blessed by the Lord. And then, the greatest blessing of all: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Years later, when Abraham and Sarah finally got their son Isaac, the Lord promised that the blessing of a Savior would come through Isaac's line. The Lord told Abraham, "Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Gen. 22:18).

So the Savior would come through Abraham's family, through Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and a thousand years later David. The Lord had made these promises to them and for all the world because he knew that we were still "snake-bit" from Adam and Eve's sin. No matter how hard we try to keep God's perfect ten commandments and his holy will, we still stumble into sin. We were under the curse of God's law, his righteous condemnation for the sins we had done as well as our sinfulness.

But in his grace the Lord not only made promises—he kept them. At just the right time, Abraham's and David's descendant was born of a virgin named Mary. He was named Jesus, meaning "the Lord saves." Jesus is himself Lord and God, yet he was born of a woman and was a true human being to take the place of all us human beings. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "The Son of Man must be lifted up [placed on a cross], that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3:14b,15).

And Jesus went on with that well-known passage: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." The Lord kept that promise to Abraham. All nations—the world—are blessed by Abraham's offspring, Jesus. For Jesus sacrificed his life to pay for the sins of every single human being. He came to save you and me from our sins too. In Christ you and I are blessed!

This blessing is by grace, his undeserved gift of love to us. So how do we respond? Let's look at how Abraham responded.

"So Abram went, as the LORD had told him." Abraham did what the Lord told him to do. The epistle to the Hebrews comments, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). The Bible calls Abraham's actions *faith*.

Once in Canaan, Abraham must have wondered if this really was the place. As our text points out, "At that time the Canaanites were in the land." Not only was it already occupied; it was inhabited by heathen idol-worshippers. Still, the Lord promised, "To your offspring I will give this land." Abraham took God at his word and built an altar there.

Abraham lived a nomadic life in Canaan, pitching his tent here, then there. But everywhere he went, he built altars to worship and "call on the name of the LORD." That phrase means more than just praying to God. It also meant that Abraham proclaimed his name. He was not afraid to speak out about the LORD to the heathen people around him. Again, he lived by *faith*.

So we learn from Abraham to respond to God's promises and blessings with faith. We learn that faith is not mere knowledge about God, getting the facts right about the trinity, and so forth. Faith is active, it trusts and obeys that Word. To give an example: One person calls himself a Christian. Yet he never attends church, never listens to the Word much less follows what it says, since he thinks he's good enough as he is. Another person knows he's a sinner and admits it, and confesses it to God. He knows he doesn't deserve grace, but he trusts in Christ that he is forgiven. It's that second person who's really a believer. A believer is not just one in name only; a believer is one who trusts in the Lord.

God's blessing is for all people. Christ saved the world from sin. This great blessing is therefore yours, free of charge. Just believe it, respond with faith! Amen.