Genesis 12:2-4 2”I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse anyone who dishonors you. All of the families of the earth will be blessed in you.”

I think all of us have heard that interesting question, “If you could sit down and talk with any figure of history who would it be?” To me, that is really an unfair question. As a Christian, I would think that any Christian would automatically and fervently declare: “I would speak and visit with Jesus!” Seriously, why wouldn’t you want to speak with the one person who has literally changed the entire world? C’mon, after centuries his Book is still the number one best seller!

So here is the question I would like to think about as a Christian. “After you get to visit with Jesus, who are the next people on your list?” Now let’s not choose any lightweights to speak with. So who is on your list of people to speak with? (Yes, obviously I have given this some thought!)

First on my list would be Adam and Eve. Here are the two people who made one of the biggest, most earth altering decisions ever! They had one rule to follow and despite the fact that they were holy and perfect, they went against everything they were and ate of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. I can tell you as an “older” person, today I would be much more compassionate than when I was younger. As a young man I used to say, “When I get to heaven I am going to grab Adam and demand, “What was your problem?’’ Today I understand much more the dilemma and the dastardliness of what Satan brought on them. To just sit down and speak with Adam and Eve, to get into their minds and understand what drove them to disobey the Lord would be so interesting.

Next on my list I think would be Moses. This guy was called **“the friend of God.”** To just be able to sit and directly hear from him about his life and interaction with God would be absolutely fascinating. Now after Adam and Moses, from there on it becomes a virtual tie as to who to speak with. What do you think? Noah? Enoch? David? Solomon? John the Baptist? Peter, actually any one of the disciples, but maybe especially those disciples we know little to nothing about? John, especially John so we could discuss Revelation. Don’t forget Mary and Joe! And the Apostle Paul!

Now did you see what I did? I kind of lead you away from one of the other important figures of history who should have obviously been on your list. I am speaking, of course, about the man of our text, about Abram, later to be called Abraham. We will get to speak about him and look at what he means even for our lives today. Our theme will be: **ABRAM, MAN OF FAITH.**

Now, just stop and contemplate this important fact right from the beginning. Abram is 75 years old at the time this text and this calling from God comes. His wife is 65 years old. And back then is not like today. He wasn’t going to pack the truck and trailer and move. It was going to be traveling by foot, with your herds and animals being driven along and at this point, heading to, actually, you don’t know where you are headed to! Abram has like 7 years on me. But get this, when I determine to step down and retire that is the end of my full time public service to the Lord! I am moving maybe an hour south! Abram at 75 is just now being called to be the full time servant of the Lord and moving some 500 miles away.

Why? Because the Lord called him. The Lord somehow, we are not told exactly, appeared to Abram and told him and his family that they were now moving. By the way, when I move, I am moving closer to my family but Abram. God says, **“Get out of your country and away from your relatives and from your father’s house and go to the land I will show you.”** That information flies in the face of what we like and want to do. A complete life change. All because the Lord said so. The Lord has asked you to do this. Do you have the faith that Abram did? I ask because I want you to grasp, Abram packed up and went!

Now, I suppose this is a bit easier when you have the Lord God appear to you, again that is what the text indicates to us. Does Abram know this God? The answer would be, “Yes.” The truth and facts of God would have been passed down to Abram through his family. The truth about Eden. The truth about the flood. The truth about the confusion of languages. The truth of the one true and only God. And now, because God chose to do this, God appears to Abram and will forever change this man’s life and yes, even the ways of the world. Because God’s call is really the very next step in the promise of a Savior, in the promise to deliver the world from sin and death!

Why was Abram chosen? I suppose you could argue that Abram was a good man, a solid man, a man who had a good faith in God. But I would be careful in that judgment. I will tell you that one of the reasons Abram gets called and told to leave country, family and father’s house is because those things are beginning to have a negative impact on the faith of Abram. If Abram stays I am inclined to believe that his faith and trust in God dies. Because the world around him was eating away at his faith. You and I, we are also warned time and time again not to make the world and the things and ways of the world a part of our lives, but we have a tendency to think we know better. Abram is literally the visible lesson for us to run, keep away from the world around you, yes, maybe even family and friends who are working against your faith. Fact, Abram was chosen because that’s the grace and love of God in action.

And, again, honestly, I think that is one of the reasons Abram up and leaves. Because Abram knows his faith is being hurt by the world around him. Leaves so he can focus on God. Well, leaves because God tells him that from now on his focus is going to be God. It really is pretty neat to grasp the grace and mercy of God. Don’t get me wrong, I applaud Abram for up and leaving, for hearing and actually listening to the Lord God. But in truth, I think any one of us would have done the very same thing. Here is why I say that.

First, God himself appears to you. There is no doubt, you are interacting and speaking with God! We are not told how this was revealed to Abram or given any of that information, but the truth of what I have just said is obvious. Abram goes because He knows, absolutely knows that it is God speaking and directing him. And better yet, God lays down a series of promises that make following Him even better and more appealing. So think of this for yourself. God appears to you. God wants you to do this travel thing. But God gives you promises of blessings galore! Remember, you have been shown and absolutely know that it is God, the true and only God. Trust me, none of us here is going to ignore the Lord under these circumstances. Just like Abram, we act because of the grace and promises of God! Isn’t that still the basis of our faith?

What blessings or promises does God give to Abram and indirectly to us? There are seven of them before us. Let’s look at each one for what it says.

Promise One. **“I will make you into a great nation.”** Remember God is talking to a 75 year old who at this point has no children. By the way, this is one of things that helps me grasp that here is the work of God. Any other made up religion would have this promise and from that point you would read. “And Sarah got pregnant and had triplets. And Sarah got pregnant and had quintuplets. And Sarah became pregnant again and had another six! And before you know it, Abram and Sarah had 25 kids and Sarah still looked as young and fresh as could be!” You know that’s what the world of false religion would do. Especially if you grasp that most of the false religions of old were very much involved in fertility things. God choses this barren couple and then promises to make them a great nation!

Yes, this promise is kept. You know how it goes. At 100 Abram gets one kid, Isaac. Within the next 400 years that one kid will become a family of around 2 million people who will be lead out of Egypt for the purposes of God. God does things His way and so it is to be with us! We are to do things God’s way. Just follow Him and his blessings are found!

Promises Two and Three. **“I will bless you and make your name great.”** Just a few simple facts here. Abram leaves and it is clear that Abram becomes a tremendously wealthy man, blessed with stuff beyond measure. Yet that is just minor compared to the fact that here we are some 4,000 years later and we still speak of Abram, his family, foibles and his faith! You have to admit, that is absolutely fantastic and could only be because of the promises of God.

Promise Four. **“You will be a blessing.”** This is actually one of my favorite of the blessings of the Lord. This blessing especially comes true as we see what Abram does as he arrives on scene. Our text spoke of it twice. Here is the second mention, **“There he built an altar to the Lord and proclaimed the name of the Lord.”** Abram publicly worshipped and publicly proclaimed the truth of God to those around him. You bet people were blessed by this man. They were brought to faith. They were told the truth and wonder of God. An eternal blessing given to them by Abram. Simple isn’t it. If you know the truth of God, you tell others about Him! And that wasn’t all. Think of how Abram rescued the people taken captive, how he prayed on behalf of people and simply was an example of faith.

Promise Five. **“I will bless those who bless you.”** For those people who “blessed” Abram, God says he would bless them. Many Old Testament scholars believe these words mean that those who entered into business with Abram prospered, those who aligned with Abram prospered and so on. So not only would Abram be recognized as a spiritual man, a preacher of the true God but Abram would be recognized as a man you wanted to be associated with because the good he got would literally come your way. It really is a pretty neat blessing because well, people are going to favor you.

Promise Six. **“I will curse anyone who dishonors you.”** Here is the opposite side of the last one. God simply says that if people don’t treat Abram nice they will end up on the bad side of the Lord. I think of both times that Abram in weakness of faith passed off Sarah as his sister and she ended up in the harems of other powerful men. But God totally protects Sarah and in both cases misery and problems galore fell to those households. In both situations they figured out it was because of Abram that these troubles fell upon them. Again, what a unique way for God to protect Abram. Soon, everyone grasps that to stand against Abram is just not a safe thing to do, for God was protecting and watching over him.

Finally Promise Seven. **“All the families of the earth will be blessed in you.”** This is, of course, the most important of the blessings. This blessing is directly tied to the promise of a Savior to come, the promises of eternal life and salvation from the sin and death that infected the world. From the direct lineage of Abram, the Savior would be born. Here is the whole reason God is acting and moving with Abram. God has picked Abram to be the carrier of His promises of salvation and heaven, promises ultimately fulfilled in Jesus!

This last promise is so important. We now know how God is going to act and move in the world. The descendants of Abram will carry forth faith in the true God. The descendants of Abram will become the beacon of God’s light and love because of the revelations God will give through His prophets who are of this people and nation. It is true. Under Jacob and Joseph this family will end up in Egypt. It is while they are in Egypt that the family grows at least 2 million strong. And then will come Moses, specially trained by the Lord for the task. Moses who will be God’s instrument in setting up the Law and the faith that clearly and repeatedly points to the coming Savior and the salvation the Savior will bring.

Think about this. What did the resurrected Jesus say to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus? They were disheartened because of Jesus’ death. And here is Jesus walking with them. They were prevented from recognizing him. But Jesus says this: **“How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”** God’s plan had been revealed. God’s promises of life and salvation were in motion. The next step in God’s plan is this man Abram and what God will work through this man and his wife. A Savior will come and the entire world will be blessed in Jesus! Abram is the continuation of the promises of the Savior who will be the hope and confidence of Life and salvation!

This is the God we worship and praise! This God has given these promise long ago and fulfilled them. Today He continues to grant us his love and grace as He promises us that faith and trust in Jesus still brings us the gift of life and salvation. I pray you know that faith. I pray that the gift of Jesus is yours! I pray that the new life given in Jesus, that sanctified life, that brings the joy of eternal life blazes in your heart. Thank you Lord, for your gift of Abram and through him, Jesus. Amen.