

Pleasant Springs Church

WDGW? — *What Does God Want?* • Lesson 3 of 6

Lesson 3 — God Picks One Family

Tuesday, June 16 -- 6:00 PM

After Michael S. Heiser, *What Does God Want?* · Septuagint (LXX) & ESV side-by-side

KEY TEXTS

Genesis 12:1-3 - Genesis 15:5-6 - Genesis 17:7-8 - Exodus 19:5-6 - Deuteronomy 7:6-8 - Isaiah 49:6 - Galatians 3:7-9, 28-29

THE BIG IDEA

Genesis 12 is the second great hinge of the Bible (Genesis 3 is the first). The world has just been disinherited at Babel. God now reaches into the disinherited nations and picks one family — Abram, a Mesopotamian moon-worshiper's son, with a barren wife — through whom **all the families of the earth shall be blessed**. The rescue mission has a name. Israel is not God's only love; Israel is God's *instrument* for loving the world back into the family.

INTRODUCTION

If lesson 2 ended with the world handed over at Babel, lesson 3 begins with the very next move: God starts the long, patient process of getting the family back. The same Father who would not abandon Eden will not abandon the disinherited nations. He chooses one childless man in his seventies and makes him a promise so audacious that the whole rest of the Bible is its outworking. Genesis 12:1–3 is the seed of the gospel.

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PART ONE

The Call of Abram

Genesis 12 - a barren old man becomes the rescue mission

Abram is seventy-five. Sarai is barren. They live in Haran, a city of moon worshipers (Joshua 24:2 says even his father worshiped other gods). There is nothing about Abram that recommends him for the job. That is the point. God chooses the weak and unpromising so that *all the credit goes to Him* when the promise is fulfilled.

And the promise is staggering. Three movements: **land** (“to a land I will show you”), **seed** (“I will make of you a great nation”), and **blessing** (“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”). The third is the key. Israel is not the end of the story. Israel is the *means* by which the disinherited nations are gathered back to the Father.

Genesis 12:1-3 - The Call of Abram

Septuagint (LXX)

¹καὶ εἶπε Κύριος τῷ Ἀβράμ· ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς γῆς σου καὶ ἐκ τῆς συγγενείας σου· δεῦρο εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἄν σοι δείξω.

²καὶ ποιήσω σε εἰς ἔθνος μέγα καὶ εὐλογήσω σε καὶ μεγαλυνῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου, καὶ ἔσῃ εὐλογημένος.

³καὶ εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε, καὶ εὐλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.

English Standard Version

¹Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.

²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

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PART TWO

Credited as Righteousness

Genesis 15 - the chapter Paul could not stop quoting

Genesis 15 is the chapter where the gospel logic first appears in clear daylight. Abram has no son. God brings him outside and tells him to count the stars. Then comes the verse Paul will quote in Romans 4 and Galatians 3: **“Abram believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”** Not by circumcision (which has not yet been given). Not by Torah (which has not yet been given). Not by ethnic descent (the nation does not yet exist). By trust.

What follows is even more striking. God puts Abram into a deep sleep and passes alone between the pieces of the covenant animals (Gen. 15:17). In the ancient world, both parties walked between the pieces — meaning, “if I break this covenant, may I be cut in half like these animals.” God walks alone. He swears the covenant on Himself. Two thousand years later, at Calvary, He pays the price He swore.

KEY INSIGHT

Galatians 3:7–9. Paul reads Genesis 12 the way the angels in Job 38 read creation: with shouts of joy. “Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham... the gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’” Genesis 12 is the gospel in seed form.

Genesis 15:5-6 - Counted as Righteousness

Septuagint (LXX)

⁵ ἔξήγαγεν δὲ αὐτὸν ἔξω καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ·
ἀνάβλεψον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἀρίθμησον τοὺς
ἀστέρας... οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμά σου.

⁶ καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραὰμ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη
αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

English Standard Version

⁵And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

⁶And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

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PART THREE

A Kingdom of Priests

Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 7 - what Israel was for

At Sinai, God reminds the descendants of Abraham why He picked them. They are to be a **basileion hierateuma** — a kingdom of priests — for the rest of the world. A priest stands between two parties. Israel is positioned between Yahweh and the disinherited nations, holding up Torah, Temple, prophet, and sacrifice so that the world can see what living with God actually looks like.

Deuteronomy 7 says it bluntly: God did not pick Israel because Israel was impressive. He picked them because He loved them and was keeping the oath He swore to their fathers. Election is grace. It is not a privilege to brag about; it is a commission to embrace.

KEY INSIGHT

1 Peter 2:9. Peter takes the words spoken to Israel at Sinai — *basileion hierateuma, ethnos hagion, laos eis peripoiēsin* — and lays them on the church. The vocation Israel carried, the church now shares in Christ. Same God, same mission, same family — now extended to all nations through Jesus the Messiah.

Exodus 19:5-6 - A Kingdom of Priests

Septuagint (LXX)

⁵καὶ νῦν ἐὰν ἀκοῇ ἀκούσητε τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς καὶ φυλάξητε τὴν διαθήκην μου, ἔσεσθέ μοι λαὸς περιούσιος ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν...

⁶Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον.

English Standard Version

⁵Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

⁶and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

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PART FOUR

A Light to the Nations

Isaiah 49 - the rescue was never just for Israel

By the prophets the mission is explicit. Isaiah says it is “too small a thing” for the Servant to restore only Israel — God will make him “a light to the nations,” so that salvation reaches to the end of the earth (Isa. 49:6). Simeon will quote that verse over the baby Jesus in Luke 2:32. The arc bends from Abram's tent to the manger to the empty tomb to the ends of the earth.

Galatians 3 closes the loop: in Christ, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female all belong to the one family of Abraham — *heirs according to the promise*. The single family God picked in Genesis 12 has now opened its doors to every disinherited nation Babel scattered.

Isaiah 49:6 - A Light for the Nations

Septuagint (LXX)

καὶ εἶπέ μοι· μέγα σοί ἐστί τοῦ κληθῆναι σε παιδᾶ μου τοῦ στήσαι τὰς φυλάς Ἰακώβ... ἰδοὺ τέθεικά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

English Standard Version

And he said, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob...; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Galatians 3:28-29 - Heirs According to the Promise

Greek New Testament

²⁸ οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην... πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

²⁹ εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

English Standard Version

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

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DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. Why did God pick Abram — old, unimpressive, with a barren wife — instead of a charismatic young leader of a powerful tribe?
2. Genesis 12:3 ends with “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” How does that single line shape the whole rest of the Bible?
3. Genesis 15:6 says Abram was credited righteous by *trust*, before Torah, before circumcision, before the nation existed. Why is that significant for the gospel?
4. Israel is called a “kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:6). What does it mean to be a priest *for* someone else?
5. Deut. 7:7–8 says election is grace, not merit. Where in your own life do you still treat being chosen as something to brag about?
6. Isaiah 49:6 says it is “too small” for the Servant to restore only Israel. What does that say about God's heart for people outside your circle?
7. Galatians 3:29 says “if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring.” What does it change about your identity to think of yourself as part of the family that began in Genesis 12?

A PRAYER IN RESPONSE

*Father of Abraham, you reached into a world of moon-worshippers and made one barren couple the beginning of a rescue mission that has reached us. Thank you for keeping the promise you swore to yourself on a starlit night four thousand years ago. Make us faithful members of the family of faith, priests for our neighbors, and a blessing to every nation our lives touch. We pray in the name of Jesus, the offspring of Abraham. **Amen.***

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

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