

Galatians 3:1-9: *Genesis 12 Is Happening*

Main Idea

Paul is not simply teaching us how an individual is saved. He is showing us that, through Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, God is finally fulfilling His ancient promise to Abraham to bless all the nations of the earth. The presence of the Spirit is the evidence that God's promised future, the New Creation, has already begun in the middle of the present evil age.

Looking Back

In my first sermon (Galatians introduction) we saw that Galatians is framed by two bookends:

- **Galatians 1:4** — Jesus gave Himself "to deliver us from the present evil age."
- **Galatians 6:15** — "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; what counts is a new creation."

Paul wants us to read everything in between through those two lenses. The question throughout Galatians is not simply: "*What do you believe?*" but "**Do you know what time it is?**" Or to say it another way, Galatians asks "Has the New Creation begun?" Paul says yes.

This week's passage explains **how we know**.

The Story

- Genesis 11: Humanity rebels together at Babel. God scatters the nations.
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- Genesis 12: God calls Abraham: "I will bless all the families of the earth."
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- Israel: God forms one nation, not as the end of the story, but as the means through which He will bless all nations.
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- Jesus is the faithful Israelite who does what's necessary to fulfill the mission.
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- Pentecost: The Spirit is poured out. Gentiles (like the Galatians) receive the Spirit.



- Revelation 7: People from every tribe, language, people, and nation worship together before the Lamb.
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Key Takeaways

1. Genesis 12 is God's answer to Genesis 11.

Babel divided humanity. God's promise to Abraham begins healing that division. The story of Scripture is the story of God gathering the nations back together under His reign.

2. The promise to Abraham was always bigger than Israel alone.

Abraham was never meant to become merely the father of one nation. He was called to become "the father of *many* nations." Israel's election was never an end in itself. Israel was chosen for the sake of the world.

3. The Holy Spirit is the blessing of Abraham.

Paul's first question is not, "Did you receive circumcision?" or "Did you keep the Law?" He asks, "Did you receive the Spirit?" Why? Because the Spirit is God's evidence that the promised future has arrived.

4. Jesus fulfills Israel's mission.

The New Testament is not the story of God abandoning Israel. It is the story of Israel's Messiah succeeding as an Israelite, for the sake of Israel, and the sake of the world. Jesus fulfills Israel's calling to become a light to the nations. Through Him, the nations are finally coming to Abraham's family.

5. Pentecost begins healing Babel.

At Babel:

- one language
- many peoples
- division

At Pentecost:

- many languages
- one gospel

- unity

God does not erase diversity. He redeems it.

Read the Rest of Galatians Through This Lens

As you continue reading Galatians this week, keep asking: *How does this section help explain God's promise to Abraham?* Instead of asking, "What rule is Paul giving?" Ask, *"How is Paul showing that the New Creation has begun?"*

Read Ahead

Read Galatians 3:10–29 before next Sunday.

As you read, look for these themes:

- Abraham
- Promise
- Law
- Curse
- Spirit
- Inheritance
- Nations

Ask yourself, ***How do these all fit together?***

Discussion Questions

1. Why is Genesis 11 (Babel) important background for understanding Genesis 12?
2. How does Paul's reading of Abraham differ from the way many Christians typically think about Abraham?
3. The sermon suggested that **"The Spirit is proof that Genesis 12 is happening."**

What does that statement mean?

4. Read Galatians 3:8.

Paul says Scripture "preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham."

How is the promise to Abraham itself "good news"?

5. Read Acts 2.

Galatians Discussion Guide

What similarities do you notice between Babel and Pentecost? How are they alike? How are they different?

6. Read Revelation 7:9–10.

How does John's vision complete the story that began with Babel and Abraham?

7. We often think of Christianity primarily in individual terms ("Jesus saved me"). How does seeing yourself as part of God's promise to bless the nations change the way you understand your faith?
8. At one point, the sermon said that every local church is a small preview of Revelation 7.

Where have you seen God bringing together people who otherwise would never belong together?