

PREFACE

Father Abraham Had Many Sons

*“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has **foundations**, whose builder and maker is God.”*

Hebrews 11:8-10

*“Now the wall of the city had twelve **foundations**, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”*

Revelation 21:14

Abraham is an incredibly important figure, so much so that he is mentioned over two hundred times in the Scriptures, sixty-five in the New Testament alone. We all know that he had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, but he actually had eight sons, six more with

Keturah after Sarah had passed away. It should be obvious though, that the “many sons” the song refers to are not those eight.

That simple children’s Sunday school song actually contains enough theology to describe the entire Bible’s main message and thousands of years of history. We believers, both Jew and Gentile, are all Abraham’s children and even a young person knows that this is only possible if we are his children in a spiritually adoptive sense. And spiritual children of Abraham are we...if we belong to Christ.

Woven into the history of the patriarchs is the story of God’s desire to have children and to give them an inheritance. In the historical account, in the failures and successes of Abraham and the successive patriarchs lies the theme and message of the Bible which is the promise of that inheritance passed down through blessings from father to son. With more than one son born to Abraham and Isaac, God creates for us lessons regarding the inheritance. Since it is actually God who has many sons, we’ll see in those accounts the fact that in the end, the inheritance is not gained by being part of a physical bloodline...

*“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, **not of blood**, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”* (John 1:12-13).

...but rather, our way into the family of God is by only one means, and that is through a spiritual adoption.

*“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **adoption** by whom we cry out, ‘**Abba**, Father’”* (Romans 8:15).

Once adopted, we become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. For this reason, John 3:16 and the words of Jesus to Nicodemus look back two thousand years before Jesus to Abraham, where God had promised him descendants from many nations, i.e., spiritual descendants. Along with Abraham's promise came an important lesson certainly for him but ultimately for anyone who reads the Bible, the lesson being that neither human effort nor ethnicity has anything to do with how one becomes a child of God.

Therefore, neither being a law-observing Pharisee, nor being born into the physical bloodline of Abraham was enough for Nicodemus. He needed to be born "again" because "*Flesh gives birth to flesh*" and "*the flesh counts for nothing*" (John 3:6, 6:63). Unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Therefore, the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham, prophetically, was circumcision indicating that in order for Abraham, but ultimately God, to become the Father of *many nations*, that which had to do with the *flesh* would need to be removed or "cut off." However, "flesh" has more than a few meanings, as we'll see.

The creation of God is what we believers will ultimately receive. That is our inheritance, and in the story of Abraham, that very inheritance is foreshadowed and prophesied by a promise and blessing that was passed down through Abraham's sons. God would not allow Abram and Sarai to remain barren because without an heir, what He had promised to Abram was useless. So, God promised him a son and despite Ishmael being born first, Isaac, his second-born, eventually became that son of promise through whom the blessing flowed and in time, Ishmael was removed from the household. When Isaac had his own sons, he

blessed Jacob over Esau and then Jacob, also the second-born, received Esau's birthright.

The New Testament never mentions Abraham's other six sons. Ishmael and Isaac are the focus but for good reason because in the story of the brothers, along with the next generation, Jacob and Esau, is the meaning and message of the Bible itself. That is the very reason why Jacob and Esau are mentioned by Paul in Romans 9, preceded by Ishmael and Isaac. Unfortunately, many completely miss the true meaning of the story of the twins as it relates to Paul's message, causing not only individual misunderstanding but also a rift in the Church. Ishmael and Isaac create an allegory according to Paul. Unrealized by most is that also in Jacob and Esau is there most assuredly an allegory.

End of Excerpt

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