

Child or Seed of Abraham?

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1. Jesus is speaking to Jews somewhere in the temple. How does Jesus define who a child of Abraham is?

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, you would do the deeds of Abraham. But now you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of sexual immorality; we have one Father: God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:39-44, LSB)

2. What is the apostle Paul saying? What do you observe that explains: a) not all Israel are of Israel, and b) not all are children of Abraham because they are the seed of Abraham? How do you understand: a) in Isaac your seed shall be called, and b) the children of the promise are counted as the seed?

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's seed, but: "through Isaac your seed will be named." That is, the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are considered as seed. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." (Rom 9:6-9, LSB)

3. What do you observe Paul saying about Abraham's seed?

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:28-29, LSB)

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Teacher Notes

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Ask the student: is Jesus saying that there are only two fathers you can be a descendant of?

Jesus indicates that you are either a descendant of the devil or of Abraham.

Ask the student: what is the distinction between the two? Encourage the student to share his observations of the text.

Jesus indicates that descendants of the devil listen and obey the devil. The descendants of Abraham listen and obey God.

2. What is the apostle Paul saying? What do you observe that explains: a) not all Israel are of Israel, and b) not all are children of Abraham because they are the seed of Abraham? How do you understand: a) in Isaac your seed shall be called, and b) the children of the promise are counted as the seed?

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Help the student understand the context of this passage. What does the student observe of, "but it is not as though the word of God has failed?" What failure is Paul alluding to? Hint: review the Abrahamic Covenant.

Then Abram fell on his face, and God spoke with him, saying,

"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you,

And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

And no longer shall your name be called Abram,

But your name shall be Abraham;

For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will go forth from you. And **I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed** after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your seed after you.** (Gen 17:3-7, LSB)

The apostle Paul is lamenting the state of unbelief among his Jewish brethren and the perception of God failing to fulfill His promise to Abraham.

Not all of the nation of Israel are of the believing descendants of Jacob (Israel).

Not all are a believing descendant of Abraham simply because they are a physical descendant of Abraham.

Ask the student: did God make a covenant with Abraham before or after he became a Believer.

God made a covenant with Abraham **after** he became a Believer. And God chose to be God to Abraham's **believing** descendants.

Ask the student: who were the offspring of Isaac? Who carried the covenant with God?

And Isaac entreated Yahweh on behalf of his wife because she was barren; and Yahweh was moved by his entreaty. So Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she went to inquire of Yahweh. And Yahweh said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb;

And two peoples will be separated from your body;

And one people shall be stronger than the other;

And the older shall serve the younger."

And her days to give birth were fulfilled, and behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them. (Gen 25:21-26, LSB)

Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Rom 9:13, LSB)

Esau was hated because he saw no value in his inheritance. Jacob was loved, because he valued the inheritance that his father Isaac had through God's covenant with Abraham.

But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." And Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?" And Jacob said, "First swear to me"; so he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. (Gen 25:31-33, LSB)

Esau is seen as a person of the flesh, not the seed of Abraham, because he sold his birthright. While Esau was still received some blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, he did not receive the inheritance of the Promised Land.

Ask the student: what do you know about Jacob through whom Isaac's seed will be named?

Jacob becomes Israel! There is a special significance for Believers who are physical descendants of Jacob (Israel).

Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the slaves of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those having been sealed, **144,000 sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:** (Rev 7:2-4, LSB)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like precious stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall. It had twelve gates and at those gates, twelve angels; and names have been written on those gates, which are **the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.** (Rev 21:10-12, LSB)

3. What do you observe Paul saying about Abraham's seed?

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:28-29, LSB)

Ask the student: how does the apostle Paul define a person of Abraham's seed? What promise(s) does one inherit?

One method of helping the student is to have him read the following reference verses and allow some discussion.

On that day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram, saying,
"To your seed I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: (Gen 15:8, LSB)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. (John 3:16-17, LSB)

Now Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I lifted you up on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. So now then, if you will indeed listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Ex 19:3-6, LSB)

The promises a Believer inherits are eternal life in the Promised Land with God and His Son free of worry and harm.