

Abraham The Father Of Many Nations

'The name of Abram's wife was Sarai' ... Abraham said, "Sarai is my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother and she became my wife" (Genesis 11:29; 20:12).

The bloodline of Abraham had to be pure for Jesus, the Son of God to be born into the descendency chosen by God. The Lord chose to create the Jewish people for Himself and gave them the Land of Israel. 'Thus says Yahweh Who created you Jacob, He Who formed you Israel, "Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are Mine"' (Isaiah 43:1). When Abram married Sarai his half sister, their bloodline was perfect for God to create His nation (Romans 4:13) that would later bring forth Jesus. God changed their given names from Abram (honoured father) and Sarai (princess) to Abraham (father of nations) and Sarah (princess, mother of nations) (Genesis 17:5, 15 & 16). Noah was pure and righteous (Genesis 6:9). Noah's son Shem behaved righteously (Genesis 9:23) and from Shem we get the name 'Semites' the race from where Jewish people are descended. Abraham is a direct descendent of Shem (Luke 3:34 to 36) so he was born into a pure bloodline.

God created a holy family line that would increase to become the greatest nation on earth. Israel is the only nation to be chosen by God (Deuteronomy 7:6), to have a covenant with God (Genesis 15:18), to give humanity His oracles (Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2) and our Saviour (John 4:22). 'When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared him and said, "I am God Almighty. Walk before Me and be blameless. I will make My covenant between Me and you and will multiply you exceedingly ... As for Me, behold My covenant is with you ... Your name will no longer be Abram but your name will be Abraham for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land where you are travelling, all the land of Canaan (now Israel) for an everlasting possession"' (Genesis 17:1 to 8). The Lord also renamed Jacob, Israel. 'God said to him, "Your name is Jacob. Your name will not be Jacob any more but your name will be Israel." God named him Israel' (Genesis 35:10).

'Terah took Abram his son, Sarai his daughter-in-law and Lot his grandson, the son of Haran. They went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan but they came to Haran and lived there ... Terah died in Haran' (Genesis 11:31 & 32). Abraham's place of origin was in and around the Ur of the Chaldees, Haran and near Babylon. That area was filled with idolatrous people who practiced an evil religion so God had to move Abraham and his family away from the area. They were heading to Canaan but stopped in Haran where Abraham's father Terah died. The Canaanites were the descendants of Ham, son of Noah (Genesis 9:18). The entire area was called Canaan. 'The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon ... to Gaza ... toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim to Lasha' (Genesis 10:19). The Canaanites also practiced an evil religion and God had already decided to judge them. He would use the nation of the Hebrews, the Children of Israel to do it, little by little, tribe by tribe' (Exodus 23:23 to 33).

God chose the Land of Israel and especially Jerusalem to use as a dwelling place for His name, character and His oracles to be passed on to all people on earth (2 Chronicles 6:6; Romans 3:2). The Jewish people have done an excellent job giving mankind the Bible for everyone on the earth to read, if they choose to study it. God did tell Abraham, all people on earth would be blessed by him and his descendants (Genesis 12:3). Abraham was a Hebrew (Genesis 14:13). It was always God's plan to use the Hebrews and later the Jewish nation to prosper all of humanity. Israel is where God told Abraham to build his family. It is the place where the Lord's merciful redemptive plan for humanity was to begin – at the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus our Messiah at God's appointed time (Galatians 4:4). God gave us the Bible to help us with our individual walk with Him. The Jewish people are still looking for the salvation of their entire nation, not just individuals. 'All Israel will be saved. As it is written, "There will come out of Zion the Deliverer. He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob (secular Jews). This is My covenant to them when I will take away their sins." ... The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable' (Romans 11:26, 27 & 29).

Abraham was an example of the Father. Isaac was an example of the Son, Jesus. Although Abraham had an illegitimate son Ishmael, God disregarded Ishmael completely and referred to Isaac as Abraham's only son. God gave us His only Son Jesus (1 John 4:9), the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13) as a holy atoning sacrifice (1 John 4:10) as the pure male Lamb of God (John 1:36) or a young ram. 'God tested Abraham and called out to him, "Abraham!" He answered, "Here I am."

God said, "Take your son Isaac, your only son whom you love and go into the land of Moriah. Offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you."

(We need to take note here, Abraham did not tell Sarah or Isaac about any of this. They walked three days away from Sarah.) Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey and took two of his young

servants with him and Isaac his son. He split the wood for the burnt offering and went to the place where God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place far off. Abraham told his young servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go yonder. We will worship and come back to you." (Abraham was speaking in faith. He was not lying about returning with Isaac.)

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. He took in his hand the fire and the knife. They both went together. Isaac asked Abraham his father, "My father ... Here is the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham said, "God will provide Himself the Lamb for a burnt offering my son." So they both went together. (Abraham again spoke by faith and prophetically about Jesus.)

They came to the place God had told him about. Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order, bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on the wood. Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to kill his son. (We can only imagine how terrified Isaac was!) The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham out of the sky and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" He said, "Here I am."

The Angel of the Lord said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy neither do anything to him. For now I know you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me."

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son ... The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of the sky. "I have sworn by Myself," says the Lord, "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will bless you greatly and I will multiply your descendants greatly like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will possess the gate of his enemies. In your descendants will all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:1 to 18). Notice here, the Angel of the Lord was referring to Himself as God so by this we know the Angel of the Lord was in fact Jesus long before he came to earth.

This narrative of the intervened sacrifice of Isaac was a preview to the sacrifice of Jesus the Son in the exact same location, Mount Moriah, two thousand years later. God intervened before Isaac lost any blood. Abraham had faith to believe, even if Isaac did die, according to the promises of God He could raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham's actions regarding Isaac were a 'prophecy in action'. 'By faith, Abraham being tested offered up Isaac. Yes, he who had gladly received the promises was offering up his one and only son about whom it was said, "In Isaac will your seed be called," concluding that God is able to raise up from the dead. Figuratively speaking, Abraham did receive Isaac back from the dead' (Hebrews 11:17 to 19). When Jesus was sacrificed, He actually did rise from the dead in Jerusalem after three days and further to this, Abraham and Isaac travelled for three days journey away from Sarah.

Jesus was titled, "King of the Jews" (Luke 23:38). Two thousand or so years after He was resurrected, He will return to Jerusalem as King of the entire world and will rule from Jerusalem with great strength and authority called a 'rod of iron' (Revelation 19:15). People will not be able to get away with sin like they do now. In order for people to be able to accept Jesus as a blood sacrifice, God had to institute a substitute, that is the sacrificing of animals. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God so all animal sacrifices had to stop when Jesus died. God used the Romans to destroy the temple to force the end of animal sacrifices. Jesus was a Sacrificial Lamb in human form who took on Himself all of the evils, violence, sin, hunger, thirst and anything else humanity in its fallen state could throw at Him and He responded by saying, "Father forgive them. They do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). The Roman soldiers who tortured Jesus did not comprehend Who they were torturing and planning to kill. Had they known they would not have done it (1 Corinthians 2:8). We must always remember it was the Roman soldiers who arrested, tortured, scourged, speared then nailed Jesus to the cross. The Jews living there played no part in the actual death of Jesus. Some jealous Jewish leaders called for His death but there were multitudes who followed Him and did not want Him to die. 'Great multitudes followed Jesus and He healed them there' (Matthew 19:2).

Sadly, Israel was divided over Jesus. Instead of accepting the thousands of prophecies concerning His first coming as a baby, where He would be born, live, travel and everything foretold about Him, many Jewish people rejected Him and still do. On the opposite side, thousands of Jewish people accepted Jesus as the Messiah Who was sent to them and because they believed, they were able to spread the Gospel message to many more thousands of people, Jews and Gentiles alike, so the saving Gospel message has gone to every country on earth, just as God told Abraham. That does not mean every person who has heard about Jesus accepts Him. God calls millions of people but many reject their calling. 'Many will be called but only a few will be chosen' (Matthew 20:16).

Returning to Abraham the father of many nations. God said the number of descendants Abraham would have would be more than could be counted. 'I will make your offspring as many as the dust of the earth so if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your descendants may be numbered' (Genesis 13:16). Abraham would have more descendants than the grains of sand on a beach and more than the number of stars in the sky (Genesis 22:17). Abraham would have millions of descendants as the Hebrews and Jewish people were

scattered around the earth. That prophecy has already come true. In this day of DNA testing, many thousands of people who believe they are Gentiles have DNA proof they have Jewish or Hebrew blood and have one common ancestor (Abraham). They are in the group of the millions of Abraham's descendants. Finding out they are Jewish can be life changing for some people because they realise they are part of God's promise to Abraham.

All Jewish people are Hebrews but not all Hebrews are Jewish. Abraham was a Hebrew but the Jewish bloodline flows only through Isaac, Jacob and Judah. The name 'Jew' is derived from the name Judah and the area called Judea. Abraham's seven other sons, Ishmael born to Hagar (Genesis 16:15) and his six sons with his second wife Keturah (1 Chronicles 1:32) were all Hebrews but were not Jewish. Esau the twin brother of Jacob (Genesis 25:26) was a grandson of Abraham so he too was Hebrew but not Jewish. Abraham's nephew Lot had two sons (Genesis 19:30 to 38) who were Hebrews but they were not Jewish. These ten men plus any unnamed daughters would all have been Hebrews and there would be millions of their descendants scattered around the world but they mainly live in and around the Middle East. There would be millions of Arabs who are the Hebrew descendants of Abraham but who are not Jewish. These people would carry the DNA of Abraham or his family, as many as the innumerable stars in the sky or grains of sand, just as the Lord promised Abraham but none of them are Jewish.

Through Abraham, the Jewish people are God's spiritual 'Olive Trees'. Jewish people are the biological blood family of Jesus. Through the saving blood of Jesus, genuine born-again Christians are grafted supernaturally into the 'Olive Tree' family (Romans 11:16 to 25). Gentiles have been 'adopted' into the biological family of Jesus (Romans 8:15) and we need to be eternally grateful to the Jewish people for giving us the Bible and for giving us our Saviour. Jewish people do not have to become Christians nor do they need to be 'converted'. They already believe in God. Unsaved Gentiles are the ones who need to become believers. Gentiles do not need to become Jewish. They can walk with God by accepting Jesus as their Saviour and by embracing Christianity's Hebraic roots. Judaism is the foundation of Christianity and Christianity is an extension of Judaism. It is not a 'religion' on its own. What began with Abraham and his obedience to the Lord has been fulfilled by Jesus and His obedience to God right up to His cruel death on the cross. It was God the Father Who planned the redemption of mankind but through Abraham's obedience, Gentiles can now have salvation. Although there are millions of Abraham's biological descendants, believers who accept salvation and who are grafted into the Jewish family by the blood of Jesus become the adopted children of Abraham. Truly, Abraham has lived up to his name as the father of many nations, nationalities, ethnic groups, kings and his descendants are as numerable as the stars and grains of sand. 'As Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, know therefore those who are of (Jewish and Christian) faith are children of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham by saying, "In you (and his descendent Jesus) all the nations on earth will be blessed"' (Galatians 3:6 to 8).

Amen and God bless you.

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