

Blood of Abraham, Part 1

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The man Abraham is a pivot point in history. He represents the complete change from the patriarchal era that went before to a new patriarchal era that would follow after. The Jewish people oftentimes point to Abraham as being a Jew. Abraham was something significantly, historically, and religiously greater than the Jewish nation. He was the father of *many* nations. One of the things in looking at and understanding the Jewish people requires us to go back to Abraham and begin to sort through to find out to whom are they related, and how they came about to be the nation that has been preserved in the form we know them today.

Abraham was promised by the Lord that the Lord would make of him a great nation:

...and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3 KJV)

That blessing in the 12th chapter of the book of Genesis applies to Abraham and all of his descendants. Abraham—being promised a son by the Lord, but not having received a son through Sarah—was petitioned by Sarah:

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; It may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. (Genesis 16:2-3 KJV)

And then she conceived, bore a son, and the son was named Ishmael. Thereafter, Sarah conceived and bore a son, and his name was Isaac; thereafter, Sarai died (having received the new name of Sarah), and Keturah bore Jokshan, Zimran, Medan, Ishbak, Shuah, and Midian.

In total, Abraham had eight sons. The promise given to Abraham applied to *all* his sons. The one with whom the covenant would be renewed and restored by the Almighty in the next generation was Isaac, but *all* sons of Abraham inherited the covenant and the blessing given to Abraham.

Now, there may be those who doubt that proposition. There may be those who say, “Wait, it is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, which means the covenant got renewed (that was made) in the next generation with Isaac and in the generation after that with Jacob.” But the covenant with Abram—turning his new name into Abraham—applied to all sons. Stay with this story long enough, and you will see where they intersect. The record that we have in the Torah confirms that the blessings of Abraham rested upon *all* sons. They’ll intersect again generations later.

And so Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham, had 12 sons. Those 12 sons, in turn, bore children. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau had 15 sons, and Jacob had 12 sons.

The birth order of the sons of Jacob are: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin; those 12 sons, born in that order. But one wife was loved above the others, and the one wife bore him two sons, Joseph and Benjamin; and it was to Joseph that Jacob (named Israel) passed along a coat that had been handed down generation after generation as one of the signs of inheriting the birthright, as one of the signs of receiving the continuity of patriarchal rule that began in the days of Adam and passed down through Abram: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

And yet, throughout the record that we have, the tribe of Joseph accomplished very little. The tribe of Joseph's destiny with that birthright relates to a latter-day work, not to the work that would take place during the time that the promises of a Redeemer, of a Savior, of a Messiah would be fulfilled. For *that* fulfillment, the tribe through whom the Messiah would descend was Judah.

Now, this family of Abraham—a total of eight sons in the first generation, 14 sons in the second generation, over a hundred sons in the third generation—all became the fathers of tribes and nations. When the promise was originally given to Abraham that he would make nations—that God would make nations of him, and that all families of the earth would be blessed through him—that had a much more expansive application than just a promise about the descendancy through Isaac, Jacob, Judah; through the generations until there came a Messiah to redeem and save Israel. It had application to all of these people. It had application to all of these nations.

But the one through whom the promise was made, Abraham, was renewed again through Isaac and renewed again through Jacob (who was given a new name of Israel), and his family—because of Joseph receiving favor from the Pharaoh—his entire family moved into Egypt at a time when Joseph was counselor to the Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. And there they resided as sojourners in a land that was *not* given to them, but they were exiled from the land that was given to their forebearer, Abraham.

And so they stayed there for hundreds of years, ultimately resulting in servitude, enslavement, and a life from which they needed redemption. We all know the story of how Moses, who descended from the tribe of Levi, was raised in the courts of Pharaoh, fortuitously. It took the most profound series of coincidences in order for Moses to be raised in the courts of Pharaoh, evidence that there are no happenstance, there are no curiosities. The pattern that God follows in the redemption of mankind, in the deliverance of his people, always involves circumstances that seem so very unlikely. Moses' survival seems unlikely. Moses, having been raised in the courts of Pharaoh, seems yet even more unlikely, and yet it was so. How comes Moses to live in the courts of Pharaoh? Because God willed it, because Moses had a mission, and because the ability of a deliverer to redeem the people and to save them required that he have some knowledge of the workings of the court of the Pharaoh. And so it was that he was planted there by the will of God, putting him in a position so that the will of God could work through him.

He did not leave Egypt willingly. He left Egypt under threat of his own death. And so Moses, in his generation, goes into the wilderness, and he happens upon a family (Jethro) in the wilderness—a priest of Midian (Midian being a descendant of one of the sons of Abraham)—who was a priest in the wilderness who would ordain Moses to priestly authority, proving that the blessings that were given to Abraham existed outside of Isaac, outside of Jacob, outside of Ishmael, and included the sons that Abraham bore in his old age, because it was a descendant of Midian (Jethro) who supplied the wife for Moses and who ordained Moses, showing that the blessings that were given to Abraham in the beginning persisted and existed in all his posterity. And so it was that the priest of Midian (Jethro) *perhaps* helped Moses to understand who the Lord Almighty (the great Yahweh, the one whose name is unpronounceable) was, disclosed to Moses through Jethro.

Later, after Moses had succeeded in returning to the courts of the Pharaoh and bringing them into the wilderness, he returned with his people to Jethro, the priest of Midian, in the wilderness, and we have this record:

When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard...all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt;

Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

And her two sons; of which the name of...one was Gershom; [and] for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:

And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God:

And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.

And Moses told his father in law all the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.

And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of the Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.

And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God. (Genesis 18:1-12 KJV)

Jethro worshiped the true God of Israel. Jethro offered acceptable sacrifice to the true God of Israel. Jethro: a descendant of Abraham but not a descendant of Isaac, not a descendant of Jacob, not a descendant of any of the family of Abraham other than Midian.

So, that God of Abraham, with whom God established a covenant, whose covenant got renewed in Isaac; and through Isaac, the covenant of Isaac was inherited not just by Jacob, but by his brother Esau as well. The covenant blessings follow the covenant recipient.

Well, in our day, that same God of Abraham—who called him and restored him to truth, who renewed His covenant with Isaac, who renewed His covenant with Jacob, who preserved and saved Joseph, who redeemed Israel out of imprisonment in Egypt through the man Moses—that same God of Israel has spoken to us in this day and has told us a message that goes to *all* the children of Abraham. The message the Lord has delivered today is this:

Did not Ishmael and Isaac mourn together and bury their father Abraham? Was not their father's blood precious unto them both? Does not the blood of

Abraham run in both Isaac and Ishmael? Does not the blood of Abraham run in both Esau and Jacob?

Let Ishmael today find the blood of his father, Abraham, precious still. Let Isaac likewise today find the blood of his father, Abraham, precious again. For Abraham's sake, let all the brothers who descend from Abraham now mourn when Abraham's blood is spilled by any of his descendants.

If Abraham's sons do not find his blood to be precious still, there remains nothing between them but the shedding of Abraham's blood. For all his sons who fail to find Abraham's blood to be precious will be held to account by God, who will judge between the sons of Isaac and the sons of Ishmael, the sons of Esau and the sons of Jacob, for father Abraham's sake, with whom God covenanted.

The sons of Abraham will not be permitted to continue this disregard of their common father's blood without provoking God, who will soon judge between Abraham's sons. (T&C 165:2-5)

For reasons that intervene between the days of Abraham and the days of Moses, all the sons of Abraham lose sight of their kindred people. The tribes of Israel, when they were finally led into the promised land, were divided into 12 different tribal lands:

- Two of the tribal lands were occupied by one tribe, Joseph, whose sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) received the double portion, as was the custom.
- One tribe was left without a land inheritance; that tribe was Levi (Levi and his descendants receiving the authority to administer the priestly ordinances that were prescribed under the law of Moses, and so the people of Levi were scattered throughout all the lands of the 12 divisions).
- Judah became a great tribe; Judah's numbers were large.
- Benjamin, for historic reasons, was very small. (At one point, there was an effort made to increase the birth rate from the tribe of Benjamin precisely because there were so few of them.)

Throughout the time of the kingdom of both David and Solomon, all of the tribes were united in the land of Israel under one king: King David at first; King Solomon thereafter. But upon the death of Solomon, the tribes developed a rivalry that could not be reconciled. Ephraim, one of Joseph's sons, was always jealous of the tribe of Judah's right to occupy the land in which the temple had been built and where the center or capital of the nation had been founded, and Ephraim's jealousy and envy of Judah was something Isaiah spoke about.

He predicted that that envy between Ephraim and Judah would not depart until the last days. But he looked forward to a time when that envy and jealousy that separated and divided Judah from Ephraim and Ephraim from Judah would dissipate, would go away, and they would be reconciled in peace, and they would recognize one another as brothers indeed—not something that has yet occurred, but something Isaiah promised would happen as “the word of the Lord” to the people.

Well, after the death of Solomon, there arose two kings (Jeroboam, Rehoboam), leading two nations separated from one another: the north ultimately having 10 of the 12 tribes; the south having two, Judah and Benjamin (though Benjamin was small). So the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom—sons of Abraham, all—fought with one another until the Northern Kingdom was taken away captive into Assyria. It probably came as a great relief to the Southern Kingdom.

It was at the division of the north and the south that the name of the country or the ten tribes in the north came to be known as “Israel” or as “Ephraim” or as the “ten tribes,” and the south (the Southern Kingdom) became known as “Judah” or, eventually, as the Jews. The Southern Kingdom, the Jews, were comprised of:

- the diminutive population of the tribe of Benjamin that was in the southern kingdom,
- the large population of the tribe of Judah that was in the south, and
- those Levites who had been serving in the temple complex in the south.

When the ten tribes were taken captive and removed from the north, and Israel (or Ephraim) was lost, they did not return. They did not cease to exist, but they did not return. Many of those that were taken captive into Assyria left as an organized body, and there is a record of that. (That record is not in everyone’s... It’s not in the King James version of the Bible. It is in the Catholic Bible. Josephus wrote about it.) But when the ten tribes were able to depart from Assyria, the record says that instead of returning back to the land occupied by Judah, they instead turned, and they went north.

And so the ten tribes of Israel (the people of Ephraim) were lost to the north. There’s a lot of speculation. There are a lot of conjecture. There’s a lot of pseudo-histories. There’s a lot of claims that are made by people about who those ten tribes are and where those ten tribes are to be found. But they went to the north. They did not return. And so the record of the Bible, as we have it, fails to include within it any information about what would happen to the ten tribes of Israel.

Like all of the descendants of Abraham (all seven sons’ descendants), like the many sons of Ishmael (he had 12), like the sons of Esau, the record that was kept by the Jews mentions them from time to time, but does not perform the labor of preserving the record of where

all these cousins went. But one thing we know for certain is that when the ten tribes went into Assyria, not all of them left. Some of them remained, and when they remained, they intermarried. Ultimately, their identity was lost. Their association with the ten tribes of the north was lost, and they intermarried. But some of their blood remained in the Assyrian area where cousins also existed.

At about 587 BC, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken captive by Babylon. Immediately before the captivity of the Southern Kingdom, there was a prophet who was warned by that same God of Abraham about the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and he was led out of Jerusalem with his family to become refugees, fleeing the destruction that was soon to be upon Jerusalem. Before departing, he sent his sons back to Jerusalem to find a man who had the same daughters in number as he had sons in number, so that his sons could have wives. And so, the sons returned to Jerusalem, and they persuaded the father to come with them into the wilderness and to bring his daughters so that they might have wives. Now, this record of these events was written beginning at 600 years BC.

It's important. Details are important. Names are important. It's important that when they returned to Jerusalem to secure this man's daughters for wives that the name of the man who lived there in Jerusalem was *Ishmael*. The name Ishmael was not held in disrepute. The name of Ishmael—the “rival to Isaac” in our eyes, but not the rival to Isaac in the eyes of the God of Abraham—that name was held in honorable mention and borne by the father who came to join the prophet in the wilderness, who was a refugee to escape the destruction that Babylon was about to bring upon Jerusalem.

In the history of the Jews *and* the history of the Christians, we have both Jews wishing that they were more distinct from Christians, and Christians wishing to be more distinct from Jews, and so history becomes skewed, and memories are selective. And so the reconstruction from the limited records that we have of “how it was before the Babylonian captivity” has been done in such a fashion as to try to show that when Christianity arrives on the scene, it is altogether unique from the Jewish tradition. And likewise, the Jewish tradition seeks to make itself distinct from what the Christians would later claim.

But the prophet who was led out of Jerusalem at 587 BC, and the record of the man/the prophet/the-one-to-whom-the-God-of-Abraham-spoke-to-take-him-out-of-the-land tells a story that does not make the Christians feel comfortable. It does not make the Jews feel altogether comfortable. Because what we find within that is a form of worship and practice that suggests they looked forward to a coming Messiah, a Redeemer. He would come to Jerusalem, the place they were leaving. But they kept the memory that this Redeemer, this Savior, this Messiah promised long ago would indeed come, and He would come among the Jews. He would not come among these refugees. They would be exiled—and they were.

They left the land of Jerusalem: sons with wives; Ishmael, the father; Lehi, the father of the sons. They went into the wilderness. They were commanded to build a boat. They were given instructions on how to do so. They did so, and they migrated, and they left the land.

They only knew by revelation that Jerusalem had been destroyed, but they never saw it, though they *knew* it had taken place. And they became refugees, foreigners, sojourners in a foreign land, a land that was already occupied by others, but a land in which they were able to establish their own people, and they kept alive (for a thousand years on the American continent) the religion that they had received and inherited before they departed from the land of Jerusalem into the wilderness under the direction of the God of Abraham.

These people are descendants of Abraham. *These people* intermarried with others on this other land. *These people* include, within the promise given to Abraham, all of *their* nations because they intermarried, and they had sons, and they had daughters, and they continued through their generations.

The record that was given through these refugees-led-by-a-prophet confirms that they were not alone and that the God of Abraham has, from time to time throughout history, led away different groups that descend from Abraham and from Isaac and from Jacob into various parts of the world.

A prophet wrote about it in some considerable detail in a lengthy allegory. It's a prophet who was among the northern ten tribes, and it's a prophet whose record is not in any Old Testament that we have, but many, many of his words are quoted in this other scriptural record. This man—this prophet to the Northern Kingdom—this prophet was so well quoted/understood/respected that in the record (that we have from this group that descend from Joseph who kept their record), he is called THE prophet.

His name was Zenos. He was THE prophet, and he likens the house of Israel to an olive tree, in which the olive tree has a root that fails to bring forth good olives. And so branches of the olive tree are taken, and they are placed in other trees—spliced into other trees—all around the vineyard. The allegory is teaching about how Israel has been scattered: *Abraham* has been scattered; *Isaac* has been scattered; *Jacob* has been scattered.

Shortly after the ten tribes were taken captive (roughly 710 BC), at 587 BC, likewise, the Southern Kingdom was taken captive into Babylon, and the records testify that (from Babylon) only a remnant returned, which means that a great deal of the blood of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin remained behind in Babylon. They would intermarry. They would have descendants. They would spread the blood not only of Abraham, but the blood of “Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob” into those other lands. And so, a small remnant returns, and that small remnant that returns—when they reoccupy the land—became the Jews that *we* identify as “the Jews” today.

They are a *fraction* (and a small one at that) of the blood of Abraham. They are a very local, very tiny, almost the “least part” of the blood of Abraham; and yet the Jews alone have been able to preserve, to defend, to protect not only the identity, but the significance of the bloodline of the entire family of Abraham. The persistence/the tenacity of the Jewish people in retaining that identity puts to shame Jokshan and Ishmael, Midian and Zebulon. It puts to shame Esau. It puts to shame all the other sons of Abraham because the Jews alone have fought and have suffered. And as the bloodlines have lost their identity with Father Abraham, they have moved to the other side, and they have regarded with disfavor and with contempt their cousins the Jews.

And so through the loss of identity, the loss of memory—and perhaps also through the jealousy of the Jewish preservation of the identity, of the Jewish persistence in claiming the nobility of that birth descendancy—all have been stirred up to animosity. But if you go to the nation of Israel today and if you look to the north, and you look to the east, and you look to the south, on all sides the nation of Israel is surrounded by their cousins. The nation of Israel is surrounded by people with whom they share descendancy from Father Abraham.

That does not mean that the cousins welcome them. In fact, in many ways, the cousins resent them. The God of Abraham understands that, which is why the God of Abraham, speaking to us in this day, said,

*Let Ishmael today find the blood of his father, Abraham, precious **still**. Let Isaac likewise today find the blood of his father, Abraham, **precious again**. For Abraham's sake, let all the brothers who descend from Abraham now mourn when Abraham's blood is spilled by any of his descendants. (emphasis added)*

We cannot fight in that part of the world without killing some of the blood of Father Abraham. The message needs to be told not to those who would make peace willingly, as the Jews have so often done. The message needs to be taught to the cousins who likewise need to awaken and arise and to realize they share a common father. They share common **fathers**. They dishonor—all of them—their fathers by their persistence in this inter-family fighting. No one fights harder than brothers. They need to awake and arise and realize they are, in fact, brothers.

And the God of Heaven—the God of Abraham—speaking in our day has made it a priority to give to us that message, which message we take (in our weakness, in our few numbers) and offer to all the brothers, to all of the blood of Israel. Because when the promise was given to Abraham in the beginning, it was not limited; it was not small: *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee [Abraham, in thee] shall **all families of the earth be blessed** (emphasis added).*

“All families of the earth” include **everywhere** throughout the Middle East; it includes all the nations of the world. And yet those that seem to respect the idea of Father Abraham the most are the peoples of the Middle East, the descendants that come through Isaac and Ishmael, through Jacob and Esau. So that was the first thing that I wanted to say.