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MINISTRIES

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Brid Hadasha Series: The Firstborn Son – Exodus 4:22

In the Torah, Israel is referred to as YHWH’s firstborn son.

Exodus 4:22

Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the Lord (YHWH) says: **Israel is my firstborn son**

Similar verses are also found in the prophets.

Hosea 11:1

When **Israel** was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my **son**.

Jeremiah 31:9

With weeping they shall come,
and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,
I will make them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
for I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Yet Messiah Yeshua is called the only son in the Brit Hadasha, or the New Testament.

Here is an example...

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave **his one and only (monogenes) Son**, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

So, you see that Israel is called the firstborn son, yet Yeshua is called the only son.

So, do we have a problem? At a quick glance, it appears so. However, before Israel even existed, we

have other mentions of sons of God.

Genesis 6:4

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the **sons of God** came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the LORD (YHWH), and Satan also came among them.

Job 38:7

when the morning stars sang together and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?

Not only do we see sons of God before Israel, we also see other mentions of sons of God after Israel.

David was also called a son of God.

Psalm 2:7

I will tell of the decree: The Lord (YHWH) said to me, “**You are my Son**; today I have begotten you.

YHWH promises David that a specific person in the line of David would be called a “son” of God

2 Samuel 7:12-17

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.** When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

Even Yeshua mentions the idea of other sons of God:

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called **sons of God**.

In the New Testament, everyone of the faith are called sons of God.

Romans 8:14

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

So, to summarize...we have many being called the sons of God.

- Israel is called the son of God
- Angels are called the sons of God
- A future king in the line of David is called the son of God

- Those in the faith are called sons of God
- Yeshua is called the son of God

Counter-missionaries repeatedly criticize that Yeshua is called the son of God when Israel is called the firstborn son of God. It appears to them as a contradiction.

Yet they fail to consider that the sons of God existed before Israel in Genesis and Job. Does this make Genesis and Job wrong? We at least now know that the New Testament cannot be any more of a contradiction than Genesis or Job. How can Israel be the firstborn son of God if sons of God existed before Israel? How can this be reconciled?

We also see that Yeshua is called the only son, yet the fact remains that other sons of God have existed besides just Yeshua. How is that possible? How can that be reconciled?

What is a son of God? What does it mean? The idea of a son of God does not appear to be well understood by those who are generating confusion on this topic. How can we better understand what it means to be a son of God?

Why is Yeshua called **THE** Son of God? That makes it appear as though Yeshua retains this title exclusively. However, even in the New Testament, as we read, we are also called sons of God. Israel is called the son of God. David was called a son of God. Angels are called sons of God. How can Yeshua be THE son of God? What does that even mean?

So, let's start with the first question.

How can Israel be the firstborn son of God if sons of God existed before Israel? How can this be reconciled?

The answer lies in better understanding the Hebrew idea of the firstborn.

The Hebrew word for firstborn can also be used for someone or something of great prominence as the firstborn is the prominent one who receives the greater inheritance and respect from the family.

We can see this idea presented in the prophets.

Jeremiah 31:9

With weeping they shall come,
 and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,
 I will make them walk by brooks of water,
 in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
**for I am a father to Israel,
 and Ephraim is my firstborn.**

Despite the fact that Manasseh was the eldest, we see that Ephraim is considered the firstborn.

This also helps answer why Yeshua is called the “only” son of God.

So, this leads us into our next question:

We also see that Yeshua is called the only son, yet the fact remains that other sons of God have existed besides just Yeshua. How is that possible? How can that be reconciled?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave **his one and only (*monogenes*) Son**, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The Greek word *monogenes* (mo-na-go-neis) the word that was translated into “only” or “only begotten” in the KJV.

So what does *monogenes* mean? According to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BAGD, 3rd Edition), *monogenes* has a primary definition of "*pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship.*"

This is its meaning in Hebrews 11:17 when the writer refers to Isaac as Abraham's "only son".

Hebrews 11:17

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his **only son**,

Abraham had more than one son, but Isaac was the only son he had by Sarah and the only son of the covenant. Therefore, it is the uniqueness of Isaac among the other sons that allows for the use of *monogenes* in that context.

Similarly, as we have already mentioned, despite the fact that Manasseh was the eldest, we see that Ephraim is considered the firstborn in Jeremiah 31:9.

Understanding all of this would be much easier if we simply understood what it means to be a son of God.

What is a son of God? What does it mean? How can we better understand what it means to be a son of God?

Metaphors and symbolism exist everywhere in the Scriptures. Scripture uses metaphorical language to help us quickly and simply understand rather complicated things.

As we often say, the physical teaches the spiritual, and the spiritual teachings the physical.

The idea of a father and a son relationship is something that most of mankind can understand.

The father is the head over the son. The father is the authority. On another level, the son exists because the father passed on his DNA. DNA is the instructions for life. This is the physical understanding.

Here is the spiritual application. The Torah is also instructions, instructions on the way to live, instructions for life, instructions that came from the Father. The son hears those instructions and lives out those instructions.

A son of God follows the instructions found in the Torah. The instructions become part of our spiritual DNA.

Of course, the opposite is also true. A child of the adversary follows the instructions of the adversary, which are instructions that are against the Torah and against the Father.

As an illustration of this Hebraic concept, consider a subset of Yeshua's rant against the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Here, they are called lawless hypocrites consumed by wickedness. The teachings of the Pharisees create the children of hell, or a son of the adversary.

Matthew 23:28

So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (referring to the Pharisees)

Matthew 23:15

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a **child of hell** as yourselves.

This idea is also present in the parables of Yeshua about the good seed and also the good and bad fruit.

Fruit contains seeds. Seeds contain DNA, or the instructions for life. One eats the fruit and thus the seed, or instructions. People are metaphorically called trees in Scripture for this reason (Mark 8:24). Trees produce fruit by obeying the instructions (DNA) found in the tree. That fruit is passed on, creating more trees and thus more good fruit.

So, angels, are sons of God because they exist to do the will of YHWH, to carry out His instructions.

Those in the faith also exist to do the same. We are to have the Torah written on our heart, that we may do it (Ezekiel 36:26-27)(Jeremiah 33:31-33). In that way, we become sons of God.

So that is how the term "son of God" is applied metaphorically in the Scriptures. There are no contradictions, it's just different uses of the term applied in different ways.

Why is Yeshua called THE Son of God?

Now that we know what a son of God is, we can better answer this question.

Yeshua was THE example on how to be A Son of God.

Yeshua followed the Torah perfectly, as a perfect son of God. Why is he THE son of God? Because he is our example in walking out the Torah. He is THE son of God as our example on how we are also to be sons of God.

1 John 2:3-6

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

With that in mind, we can say that the Messiah is the ultimate Son of God.

And when we imitate the Messiah by walking as He walked, and we are conformed into His image, we become worthy of the title “son of God,” too. We are adopted into the family of God (Israel) through Messiah and thus we’re specially chosen by God and appointed for a purpose—bearing His image, bringing the Father glory, and blessing the nations.

So now the following should be understood:

- How Yeshua is called the only son of God despite Israel being called the firstborn of Israel.
- How sons of God existed before Israel even existed
- How those in the faith are called sons of God
- How to understand, define, and apply the phrase “sons of God.”

Before we close the teaching, there is one more rabbit trail worthy of mentioning.

In Hosea 11:1, we see Israel being referred to as a son.

Hosea 11:1

When **Israel** was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my **son**.

In the book of Matthew, as a Hebrew trained Jew, he refers to Hosea 11:1 as a messianic prophecy pertaining to Yeshua.

Matthew 2:15

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, **where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”**

How is this possible? How does it make sense? Hosea 11:1 is clearly about Israel. Did Matthew make a mistake?

Doubtful.

When you read Jewish interpretations of prophecy, it is clear that they often recognized that events in of themselves can be prophetic, or perhaps even repeat.

For example, the event Sodom and Gomorrah are compared to the coming fall of Babylon. (Isaiah 13:19).

Counter-missionaries do not like that idea, because so many stories and events in Scripture have a Messianic feel to them, such as the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22.

However, even a quick analysis of rabbinical writings and their understanding of prophecy will yield countless examples of prophecies being interpreted in this way.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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