

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

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IS GOD THE FATHER OF ALL MEN?

Deut. 32 records the song of Moses after God led Israel out of Egypt. Verse 6 reads, “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise? Is not He **Thy Father** that hath bought thee? Hath He not **made** thee, and established thee?”. Obviously, in this verse the Father is spoken of as the Father of Israel. Note also that the Father “made”, i.e. **created** Israel.

We read in Isaiah 63:16, “Doubtless, Thou art **our Father**, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, Thou O Jehovah art our **Father**, our Redeemer: Thy Name is from everlasting”. Please note the phrase “though **Abraham** be ignorant of us”. This also points to the Father being the Father of Israel.

And we read in Isaiah 64:8-10, “But now O Jehovah, Thou art our **Father**; we are **the clay**, and Thou art **our Potter**; and we all are **the work** of Thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all **Thy People**. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, **Zion** is a wilderness, **Jerusalem** a desolation”. As the context makes clear, the interpretation of this verse is that Jehovah is the **Father of Israel** by virtue of His having **created** them. That is to say, the Father is the “Potter” which points to **creation**, and verse 10 points to **Israel** as the “work” of the Father.

In other words, **God is the Father of Israel by virtue of creation**. However, because God **created all men** I believe that we may conclude that **God is the Father of all men by virtue His having created all men**.

But we read in Jn. 1:12, “But as many as received Him, **to them** gave He power to **become** the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name”. This verse tells us that **those who believe** and receive Christ are “sons of God”. In other words, this verse **limits** those who are the “sons of God” to those who believe in “Him”. Is this a contradiction? Of course not. As this paper will show, God is the Father of all men by virtue of the fact that He created all

men, but **not all men** are the **sons** of God. This seems contradictory, but I believe that every word in the Bible is inspired by God, and as we consider the Greek word translated “offspring” in the phrase “we are the **offspring** of God” all will become clear.

Acts 17 records Paul’s **public address** to the Athenians. Given that the address was made in a public forum, we may conclude that not everyone that heard the address was a believer.

Further, we read in verse 29, “Forasmuch then as **we are** the **offspring** of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is **like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device**”. Here too, the fact that Paul was not addressing **believers** in Athens is substantiated by the fact that he was addressing those whose gods were of “man’s device”. And yet he said of these unbelievers that they are “the offspring of God”. Does that mean that they are sons of God? I believe that God is their Father, but they are not “sons of God”. This will be proved as we search the scriptures so that we may understand **the difference between “sons” and “offspring”**.

The Greek word translated “sons” in Jn. 1:12 quoted above (“**to them** gave He power to **become** the **sons** of God”) is “teknon”. Because words are defined by how they are used, we will determine the meaning of “teknon” by how it is used by the Holy Spirit. The first occurrence of “teknon” is found in Matt. 2:18 where we read of “Rachel weeping for her **children**” (Gr. “teknon”). It is translated “child” or “children” 78 times and “son” or “sons” or “daughters” 19 times. Let us consider a few more occurrences of “teknon” to be absolutely certain of its correct meaning.

We read in Matt. 7:11 of Christ speaking of giving “good gifts unto “your **children**” (Gr. “teknon”). In Matt. 15:26 we read of Christ saying that it “is not meet to take the **children’s** (Gr. “teknon”) bread”. We read in Rom. 8:16-17 that “we are the **children** (Gr. “teknon”) of God, and if **children** (Gr. “teknon”) then heirs”. In Eph. 5:1 we read “be ye followers of God as dear **children**” (Gr. “teknon”).

I believe it is clear that the Greek word “teknon” is used of children in the **familial sense**. That is to say “teknon” is used of sons and daughters.

The Greek word translated “offspring” in Acts 17:28 and 29 is “genos”. Because there relatively few occurrences of the word we will examine **each one** in order to determine how the Holy Spirit means for us to understand the word.

The first occurrence is found in Matt.13:47, “...The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every **kind**” (Gr. “genos”, i.e. of fish).

Matt. 17:21, “Howbeit this **kind** (Gr. “genos”, a devil, see vs. 18) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”. See also Mark 9:29.

Mark 7:26, "The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by **nation** (Gr. "genos").

Acts 4:6, ".....and as many as were of his **kindred** (Gr. "genos") of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem".

Acts 4:36, ".....of the **country** (Gr. "genos") of Cypress".

Acts 7:13, ".....Joseph's **kindred** (Gr. "genos") was made known".

Acts 7:19, "The same dealt subtilly with our **kindred**" (Gr. "genos"), and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live".

Acts 13:26, "...children of the **stock** (Gr. "genos") of Abraham".

Acts 17:28, "...we are also His **offspring**" (Gr. "genos").

Acts 17:29, "...as we are the **offspring** (Gr. "genos") of God...".

Acts 18:2, "...Aquila **born** (Gr. "genos") in Pontus"

Acts 18:24, "...a Jew named Apollos **born** (Gr. "genos") at Alexandria".

I Cor. 12:10, "...to another divers **kinds** (Gr. "genos") of tongues...".

I Cor. 12:28, "...**diversities** (Gr. "genos") of tongues...".

I Cor. 14:10, "...many **kinds** (Gr. "genos") of voices in the world".

II Cor. 11:26, "...perils by my own **countrymen**" (Gr. "genos").

Gal. 1:14, "...many my equals in mine own **nation...**" (Gr. "genos").

Phil. 3:5, "...of the **stock** (Gr. "genos") of Israel...."

I Peter 2:9. "...ye are a chosen **generation....**" (Gr. "genos").

Rev. 22:16, "I, Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the **offspring** (Gr. "genos") of David".

Having considered ever occurrence of "genos" let us take a closer look at some of those occurrences. As we do so, I believe that the reader will be led to the conclusion that "genos" is not to be understood in the sense of "children" or "sons", but rather of the same "**kind**" or "**stock**".

Consider for example the verses which speak of “genos” as **inanimate** objects, such **tongues** in I Cor. 12: 10 and 28, and of **voices** in I Cor. 14:10. “Genos” is also used of **fish as** in Matt. 13:47. Note also those verses in which “genos” is translated “nation” or “country”.

Let us consider more carefully Acts 4:5-6 where, in verse 6 “genos” does appear to refer to family. “And it came to pass on the morrow, that their (Peter and others) rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of his **kindred** (Gr. “genos”) of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem”. Why did the Holy Spirit use the Greek word translated “kindred” (“genos”) rather than the Greek word translated “brethren”, i.e. “adelphos”?

“Adelphos” is often used of brothers of the same family as in Matt. 4:18, which speaks of Simon and Andrew, his brother. But it is also used in a broader sense to include **Israel** as in Acts 1:16, 2:29 and 37 where Peter in addressing a large crowd said, “Men and **brethren**”. But that leaves us with the question as to why, when speaking of certain men of Israel, the Holy Spirit used the word “genos” rather than “adelphos” in Acts 4.

For the answer to that question let us consider Matt. 12:46-50, “While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, ‘Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee’. But He answered and said unto him that told Him ‘Who is My mother? And who are My brethren?’ And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brethren! For **whosoever shall do the will of my Father** Which is in heaven, **the same is My brother, and sister, and mother**”.

In my opinion, because those spoken of in Acts 4 were **preventing** Peter from preaching the truth concerning Christ’s resurrection, (see Acts 4:2-3) they are not referred to as “brethren”, but rather as “genos” indicating “stock”.

Let us also consider Acts 7:19. “The same dealt subtilly with our **kindred**” (Gr. “genos”), and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young **children**, to the end they **might not live**”. Note that this verse speaks of “kindred” (Gr. “genos”) **and** “children”. The Greek word translated “children” is “brethos” and is usually translated “babe” or “infant” or “child”. I believe that, just as in Acts 4 where instead of “adelphos” (“brethren”) the Greek “genos” was used to indicate “stock” rather than “brethren”, so too “genos” was used in Acts 7:19 to indicate that those who “cast out” their own children unto death were not “brethren”, but merely of the **same stock**.

But we read in Acts 7:12-13, “But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the **second time** Joseph was made known to his **brethren**; and Joseph’s **kindred** was made known unto Pharaoh”. Acts 7:13 does indeed speak of family members. How are we to understand “genos” as used in that verse?

Let us go to Gen. 26 which describes the events recounted by Stephen as recorded in Acts 7. We read in Gen. 46:10 of Pharaoh's command to Joseph with regard to Joseph's family. That verse reads, Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for **your wives**, and bring **your father**, and come". And in verse 21 we read, "And the children (i.e. sons) **of Israel** did so". This command referred to Joseph's **sisters-in-law** and to his **father**. Therefore, the term "children" as used in verse 21 would have been incorrect. That is to say, this passage refers to Joseph's "stock" and Jacob's "children". Hence the use of the Greek word "genos" in Acts 7.

We read in Rev. 22:16, "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the **offspring** (Gr. "genos") of David". Obviously this verse is written of Jesus Christ. But Christ is often referred to as the "**Son** (Gr. "whyos") of David" (see Matt. 1:1, 9:27, 15:22 etc.). Why then is He referred to as the "**offspring** of David" in this verse?

I believe that the reason we read of Christ being the "offspring" of David in this verse, rather than the more often used title "**Son** of David" lies in the fact that it comes in the same verse as Christ saying that He is the "**Root**" of David". Therefore, let us consider Rev. 5:5 which also speaks of Christ as the "**Root** of David. That verse reads, "And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the **Root of David**, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof". In this verse, we see that being the "Root of David" allowed Christ to prevail and loose the seven seals. In other words, the title "Root of David" is one that gives Him authority.

In what way does the title "Root of David" give Christ authority? For the answer to that question let us consider Colossians 1:16, "For by **Him** (Christ) **all things were created** that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and **for Him**". I suggest that the title "Root of David" points to the fact that David was created by Christ.

Now let us come back to Rev. 22:16, "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the **offspring** (Gr. "genos") of David". I believe the point of Rev. 22:16 is that Christ was **both** David's Creator **and** his "Offspring" in the sense of being of the **stock of David**.

CONCLUSION

Both the English language and the experience of our natural lives make it difficult to appreciate that although God is the Father of all men, not all men are His children. And yet, as I have tried to show in this paper, that is what the Bible teaches.

This conclusion is based, in part, on the fact that the Holy Spirit has used words that differentiate between being a child of God and being an offspring of God. In the natural, temporal world, if one is an offspring of his father, he is a child of that same man.

In other words, even though the difference is not seen in our temporal lives, it is revealed in God's holy Word.

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