

# Maximising Redemption: Multiple Ancestries

*"Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Matthew 22:39

## Multiple Ancestries

One of the challenges for the biblical religions has been the concept of tolerance and the acceptance of alternative genealogies. There has been a tendency to acknowledge genealogy by birth but not by faith (though both Christianity and Islam demonstrate that adoption by faith is also robust).

The other issue is the desire of one group to dominate the other. This is a human characteristic and not consistent with the nature of God, as is demonstrated many times in the bible. The Muslims create special challenges, because Mohammad claimed to be the descendent from Abraham's son Ishmael that was conceived through Hagar.

There are Christians who have refused to acknowledge Muslims' genealogy because it does not come via Isaac. However, what this group of Christians has overlooked is that God has always intended for there to be descendents from Ishmael and that they were to form their own nations. In fact, if they reread Revelations, they would see that all the peoples of all the nations are to come to proper relationship with God through Jesus, irregardless of their genealogy

In demonstrating why the Muslims should be acknowledged as part of the Book of Life, the precedent is set to consider others also. However, that is not a blanket acceptance; there are conditions for being considered part of God's families. The same conditions apply to any other peoples who would seek acknowledgement by God. These can be summarized by Jesus himself:

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:34-40

God made a promise to Hagar that she would bear a son and his descendants would be too numerous to count ([Genesis 16:7-16](#)). However, Hagar was told to "Go back to your mistress and submit to Sarai." (Genesis 16:9) It is important to note that Hagar was to submit herself, and I would suggest that was part of God's plan to mature Hagar's descendants. She and her descendants were to submit to help them master their strong aggressive tendencies: the trait already identified by the angel in Genesis 16:12: He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." (As an aside, I wonder if this is why Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? [Matthew 21:1-9](#) There a number of other passages where God proves his ability to calm and tame e.g. [Job 40:15-24](#), [Job 41:1-11](#))

Although Hagar's descendants were to submit, it would have been for their development and redemption; that is bring them into a proper relationship with God, and **not** to oppress them ([Genesis 21:8-18](#)). However, when Sarah saw the aggression in Ishmael and said to Abraham to get rid of the slave woman and her son (Genesis 21:10) Abraham was consoled by God himself: "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring." (Genesis 21:22-23)

We can see that the Ishmael's early aggression tendencies continued in [Genesis 25:12-18](#). At the time of the apostle Paul, he writes in [Galatians 4:21-31](#) that Christians are the descendants of Sarah rather than Hagar and are thus seen as being free. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." (Galatians 4:30). This is a historical passage that should be put in context. We do not live in a stagnant unchanging world, where God had not yet completed his reconciliation plans.

Aggression is a trait that God has consistently sought humanity to overcome, both on a personal and on a society level. One of the best passages for describing God's vehemence on excessive aggression comes from the book of [Obadiah 1:1-14](#). It has parallels to current history, because this and similar passages demonstrate that God despises bandits who foster tyranny and pillaging:

"See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' (Obadiah 1:2-3)

There are many times where God expresses frustration at souls whom He nurtures but then turn their backs and forget who cared and nurtured them. For example: [Ezekiel 23:36-39](#), [Hosea 13:5-6](#),

There are other passages such as [Psalm 106](#), [Psalm 107](#), [Lamentations 3:17-57](#) where God cites how He nurtured His peoples, only to hand them over to the consequences of their sins, leading to suffering for an indeterminate period of time, and eventually forgiveness for a remnant. This biblical wave pattern continues throughout much of the prophetic Old Testament (especially Isaiah).

However, there are also examples where parallel descendents are acknowledged and kept in covenant with God. A particularly good example is the Recabites from [Jeremiah 35](#). Here the Lord asked Jeremiah to test a Recabite family with wine:

But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.' We have obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab son of Recab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab commanded us. But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies.' So we have remained in Jerusalem." (Jeremiah 35:6-11)

The interesting thing about this passage is the Recabites' respect for boundaries and obeying decreed commands. This is not a people intent on global domination, but content to accept that which is bequeathed by God. This spirit of thanksgiving is respected by God, and we see other examples of God's respect elsewhere.

In fact, God is so pleased with the Recabites' response that He tells Jeremiah "Go and tell the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, 'Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?' declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 35:13)

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Not only does God use the Recabites to rebuke the recalcitrant Israelites, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, goes further and says: 'Jonadab son of Recab will never fail to have a man to serve me.' " (Jeremiah 35:19)

Jesus himself also acknowledges multiple lineages, and that God rejoices when any of His peoples come back into proper relationship with Him. His parable of the lost son in [Luke 15:11-32](#) should shame all of us to be seeking genuine reconciliation for any who return God with genuine repentance and humility. In this parable the younger son rebels and squanders his inheritance. After becoming completely miserable, the son finally comes to his senses and returns to his father, seeking nothing more than acceptance as a hired hand. However, upon seeing the son's genuine repentance and return; the father is filled with compassion and celebrates his son's return. When the older brother's jealousy threatens to consume him the father comments:

" 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' " (Luke 15:31-32)