

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching examines the apparent contradiction between Israel being called YHWH's firstborn son and Yeshua being called God's only Son. It begins by showing that Scripture also calls angels, David, a future Davidic king, and people of faith sons of God.

The teaching explains the Hebrew idea of firstborn as including prominence and status, not merely birth order. Ephraim is called the firstborn even though Manasseh was older, illustrating that firstborn can describe the prominent one who receives greater inheritance and respect.

The Greek word monogenes, translated "only" or "only begotten," is explained as referring to the only one of its kind within a specific relationship. Isaac could be called Abraham's only son even though Abraham had other sons because Isaac was unique as the son of the covenant.

The teaching uses the father-and-son relationship as a metaphor for authority and received instructions. A son of God follows the Father's instructions, and the Torah is described as instructions for life that become like spiritual DNA.

The teaching presents Yeshua as the ultimate example of a son of God who perfectly followed the Torah. Through Messiah, believers are adopted into God's family and called to imitate him by walking as he walked, bearing the Father's image, and bringing him glory.

The teaching also explains Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1. Although Hosea originally speaks of Israel, the event can serve as a prophetic pattern that is repeated in the life of Yeshua. The teaching concludes that these uses of son, firstborn, and only Son are not contradictions.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Israel is called YHWH's firstborn son in Exodus 4:22.
- The title "sons of God" is applied to angels, Israel, a Davidic king, and people of faith.
- Firstborn can express prominence and inheritance rather than chronological birth order.
- Ephraim is called firstborn although Manasseh was older.
- Monogenes describes uniqueness within a particular relationship.
- Isaac illustrates this uniqueness as Abraham's son through Sarah and son of the covenant.
- The father-and-son metaphor connects the Father's authority with instructions for life.
- Yeshua perfectly followed the Torah and exemplifies how to be a son of God.
- Following Messiah's example includes bearing the Father's image, bringing him glory, and blessing the nations.
- Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 is explained through events that function as repeated prophetic patterns.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. Exodus 4:22 identifies _____ as YHWH's firstborn son.
2. The Hebrew idea of firstborn can refer to great _____, not only birth order.
3. The Greek term translated "only" or "only begotten" is _____.
4. The instructions for life that a son of God follows are found in the _____.
5. Yeshua is the ultimate example of a son of God because he followed those instructions _____.
6. Through Messiah, believers are _____ into the family of God.

Challenging

1. Jeremiah 31:9 calls Ephraim firstborn although his older brother was _____.
2. Hebrews 11:17 calls Isaac Abraham's only son; Isaac was unique as the son of the _____.
3. The physical analogy for inherited instructions for life is _____.
4. Matthew 5:9 says the _____ will be called sons of God.
5. In 1 John 2:6, whoever abides in Yeshua ought to _____ as he walked.
6. Matthew 2:15 applies the words "out of Egypt I called my son" from _____ 11:1 to Yeshua.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the example of Ephraim and Manasseh help resolve the apparent problem with Israel being called firstborn?

2. How does Isaac's relationship to Abraham explain the use of monogenes without denying that other sons existed?

3. Explain the connection between a father's authority, physical DNA, and the Torah in the teaching's metaphor.

4. Why does calling Yeshua THE Son of God also provide a model for people called sons of God?

5. What responsibilities accompany adoption into God's family according to the teaching?

6. How does the idea of events as prophetic patterns explain Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Israel — Exodus 4:22
2. prominence — Teaching explanation of firstborn status
3. monogenes — John 3:16; teaching lexical discussion
4. Torah — Teaching's father-and-son analogy
5. perfectly — Teaching explanation of Yeshua's example
6. adopted — Teaching conclusion on adoption through Messiah

Challenging

1. Manasseh — Jeremiah 31:9; teaching comparison with Manasseh
2. covenant — Hebrews 11:17; teaching explanation of Isaac
3. DNA — Teaching's physical-to-spiritual analogy
4. peacemakers — Matthew 5:9
5. walk — 1 John 2:6
6. Hosea — Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION NOTES

Suggested responses follow the teaching. Invite discussion and personal application; these are not additional required answers.

1. Jeremiah 31:9 calls Ephraim firstborn although Manasseh was older. The teaching uses this to show that firstborn can express prominence and inheritance, not only chronological order. Compare the status in that example with Israel's designation in Exodus 4:22.
2. The teaching defines monogenes as unique within a particular relationship and cites Hebrews 11:17. Isaac is Abraham's son through Sarah and the covenant son, even though Abraham had other sons. Keep this Greek term distinct from the Hebrew firstborn term; the examples illustrate related questions, not identical vocabulary.
3. The source compares a father's transmitted instructions for physical life with Torah as instructions for living. DNA is an analogy in this discussion, not a claim that belief changes biological ancestry. Ask how receiving and practicing instruction can reflect a family's character.
4. The teaching emphasizes Yeshua's perfect obedience and exemplary role. It connects following him with 1 John 2:3–6. Discuss that practical model without extending the lesson into a complete doctrine of Yeshua's nature, which the guide is not attempting to settle.
5. The source says adoption is through Messiah and gives a purpose: bearing God's image, bringing him glory and blessing the nations. Invite participants to connect one of those responsibilities with a concrete action. Keep the gift of belonging and the response of faithful living connected.
6. Hosea 11:1 speaks of Israel's exodus; Matthew 2:15 applies the wording to Yeshua. The teaching explains this through a recurring prophetic pattern. Preserve Hosea's original referent while tracing the later correspondence, rather than replacing the original historical meaning.