

# Romans 9:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

## Analysis

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**Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children**—being sperma (σπέρμα, 'seed') doesn't make one tekna (τέκνα, 'children'). Biological descent ≠ covenant membership. Paul quotes Genesis 21:12: **In Isaac shall thy seed be called** (en Isaak klēthēsetai soi sperma, ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα). God chose Isaac over Ishmael, though Abraham fathered both. The verb kaleō (καλέω, 'to call') introduces the theme of divine calling/election that dominates this chapter.

The choice wasn't based on Isaac's merit—he wasn't yet born when God made the promise (Genesis 17:19). Nor was it arbitrary cruelty—God's purposes in history required a specific lineage for Messiah. Election serves redemptive purposes, not divine whim. Ishmael received promises too (Genesis 17:20), but Isaac bore the covenant line. God's sovereignty operates in history to accomplish salvation.

## Historical Context

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Genesis 16-21 records the Ishmael/Isaac narrative. Abraham attempted to fulfill God's promise through Hagar (human effort), but God insisted on Sarah (divine provision). This typologically contrasts works-righteousness vs. faith—a point Paul develops in Galatians 4:21-31.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's choice of Isaac over Ishmael illustrate grace rather than human merit?
2. What 'Ishmaels' (self-produced religious efforts) do we present to God instead of trusting his promised 'Isaac'?
3. How does divine election in history serve God's redemptive purposes rather than arbitrary preference?

## Interlinear Text

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οὐδ'	ὅτι	εἰσὶν	σπέρμα	Ἀβραάμ	πάντες	τέκνα	ἀλλ'
Neither	because	they are	seed	of Abraham	are they all	children	but
G3761	G3754	G1526	G4690	G11	G3956	G5043	G235

Ἐν	Ἰσαὰκ	κληθήσεται	σοι	σπέρμα
In	Isaac	be called	thy	seed
G1722	G2464	G2564	G4671	G4690

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 21:12** (References Abraham): And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

**Hebrews 11:18** (Parallel theme): Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

**Galatians 4:23** (Parallel theme): But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

